Towards Maturity Research

This report is the latest in a longitudinal research series investigating trends in modern learning practices at work. The research has been ongoing since 2003 and is published in a suite of reports that can be downloaded at: www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark

- Embracing Change: Executive Summary
- Embracing Change: Longitudinal Trends
- Embracing Change: Full Report

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Additional sector specific and subject specific reports will also be available over the coming months. Please visit the Towards Maturity Shop for more details: www.towardsmaturity.org/shop

Acknowledgements

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Find out more about our Ambassadors at: towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors

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Foreword by Dave Buglass, Tesco Bank

For the last 20 years, I have worked in all aspects of learning and development, specialising in the evolution of technology-based training through computer-based training all the way through to current digital learning spaces. Through that time, I have experienced a lot of change personally and in the business environment around me, especially in the finance sector where I have spent all of my career to date. One thing that has remained constant throughout is my passion for driving people performance and seeing individuals improve and do better. My one regret, if I had one, is that I have also been part of a profession that hasn’t always been in a position to fully activate the people power around me.

But things are changing.

Since I first engaged with the very first Towards Maturity Benchmark in 2003, I have seen a lot of changes. The work environment shifted for everyone when the recession hit with force. Now it has changed again. In a new climate of relative stability, staff have more options to explore new career opportunities of their own; they are more promiscuous about moving roles than ever before. The technology that surrounds us has changed dramatically and is more readily available than ever before. It is now an integral feature of how we live our lives, embedded into the way that we work, travel, shop and communicate. In short, more than ever before, ‘we work the way we live’.

Yet, it is disappointing to see in the 2015 Industry Benchmark Report that L&D professionals are still playing it safe; failing to fully adapt to the new world of work and learning. There is real irony in the fact that whilst we have access to more technology than ever before, only 19% of L&D budget has been allocated to investment in learning technologies – a figure that has been static for 3 years, despite the increasingly technical environment we live and work in.

Furthermore, the technologies in use by the majority of L&D professionals are the same, possibly slightly newer models of the technologies we were all using back in 2003.

Technology has evolved, our internal customers have evolved, but can we honestly say that as a profession, we have done as much as we could have in order to evolve ourselves and reinvent our purpose?
Today, we have more opportunities, with more integrated, simple and technical environments to create that one-click buying experience for consumers. That simple consumer experience is the ability to find what we want and access it easily. When it comes to supporting staff, out of all the functions in HR, L&D has the potential to be the most consumer-centric, but when 7 out of 10 do not even know how their staff learn what they need to do their jobs today, we are clearly missing an opportunity.

**It is time to change.**

The question in 2015 is no longer about how should we deliver training more efficiently to a wider audience but how do we as organisations actually improve the experience of our people? How do we make L&D more insignificant and make the colleague more important?

I am excited that the Top Deck organisations understand this. The 2015 Benchmark clearly shows that the top performing organisations are not talking about what the next big technology, framework or model might do for them; they are busy translating their people strategy into a business strategy and using the new opportunities to transform the learning experience of those around them, rather than merely automating it.

The Top Deck organisations show us that the most significant question for an HR professional to ask a business leader is, **“How can I help you deliver what’s really important to the business?”** Forget the training – a new approach requires boldness and it is good to see that this courage is not just for those that are well resourced. The top performing organisations in this study come from all sectors and range in sizes. It is their relationship with the business and the understanding of their role to support performance that sets them apart.

These priorities automatically lead to more integrated approaches to building performance and staff engagement that have been reflected in my own career. My role today is no longer purely about learning, it is also about colleague retention and reward. This creates an opportunity to build a seamless experience for colleagues that is more consumer-centric. Colleagues don’t care about policy, process, or the next big training initiative. They care about achieving their potential, overcoming their challenges and realising their opportunities.

**Top Deck Organisations show that employee engagement and productivity improves when the silos between business functions, HR and Learning come down and we work together to help staff achieve common goals.**
The 2015 Towards Maturity Industry Benchmark Report reveals that the factor hindering our progress in the L&D and HR industry is a lack of communication. When we fail to tell a story that resonates with our audience, it results in a blinkered view of what learning can achieve for the business, clouded by experiences of the past. It is time to move out of a world of risk and management, into a world of performance and behaviour improvement.

I welcome the clear call to action that this report gives to business leaders, learning leaders and to those in the industry as a whole, to think and act differently.

The evidence presented is clear – a consumer-focused, technology-enabled learning strategy builds business performance and employee engagement. But if we continue to do what we have always done, many will continue to fall short of their full potential.

The 2015 Towards Maturity Industry Benchmark Report calls on business leaders to embrace change by demanding more. Demand that your people professionals deliver value, not just courses; that they work together to support focused, business objectives.

The role of today’s people professionals is about understanding and supporting our colleagues. It is about providing positive experiences that help them at their point of need, helping them make better decisions and actively learn through life’s experiences. This report creates a clear pathway for business leaders, L&D and HR professionals to embrace that change, providing proven evidence about the next steps to take, wherever they are on their journey.

Dave Buglass
Head of Organisational Capability and Development
Tesco Bank

Dave Buglass is currently Head of Capability and Development at Tesco Bank. He is the current holder of L&D Professional of the Year for both HR Network Scotland and Training Journal, as well as the holder of the Chief Learning Officer award for the LPI. An original participant in the 2003 Towards Maturity Benchmark, his organisation is also one of the Top Deck Companies in the 2015 Benchmark. Colleagues believe the bank is a great company.
Fast Facts from this report

L&D have high aspirations for their role:

Approximately 9 out of 10 are seeking a wide range of benefits, but those relating to improvements in training efficiency and individual processes are most likely to be achieved.

- 89% seek benefits related to efficiency – but only 41% are achieving this
- 88% seek improved individual processes – 39% are achieving this
- 91% seek improved productivity and engagement – 29% are achieving this
- 88% seek improved business responsiveness – 24% are achieving this
- 89% seek improved learning culture – 21% are achieving this

Some organisations are implementing the future of learning, today:

When compared to those in the bottom quartile for the TMI, those in the Top Deck (those scoring in the top 10% for the Towards Maturity Index) are:

- 3x more likely to agree they are improving efficiency and individual projects/processes
- 5x more likely to agree they are improving organisational productivity, employee engagement and business responsiveness
- 8x more likely to positively impact learning culture

The Top Deck are embracing change throughout the business and are realising their vision of the future, providing a direction for others to follow. A consumer-focused, technology-enabled learning strategy builds business performance and employee engagement.

A Snapshot of Learning Today

- 55% training programmes are entirely face to face
- 26% blended, 19% online only
- 19% training budget spent on learning technologies:
  - 90% use e-learning content
  - 86% use live online learning
  - 79% have an LMS in place
  - 68% use best practice video
  - 67% use mobile learning
  - 31% use games and simulations

N = 600+ L&D professionals

The Self-Directed Learner:

- 88% like to be able to learn at their own pace
- 87% know what learning they need to do their job
- 76% want to be able to do their job better/faster
- 42% learn at weekends or evenings

N = 1,600 staff
Top Deck organisations highlight that business leaders need to expect more:

| Expect to see a contribution to bottom-line business benefits | The modernised learning strategy, underpinned by digital transformation, is delivering tangible business impact in top learning organisations (the top 25%):
| | 12% improvement in productivity
| | 15% improvement in customer satisfaction
| | In addition to efficiency improvements of:
| | 19% reduction in study time
| | 16% cost reduction
| Expect more than just a course | 94% of the Top Deck consider the course as only one option for building workforce skills and performance (53% average)
| | 80% agree their approach is shaped by models that support learning in the flow of work (such as 70:20:10) (47%)
| | 51% encourage staff to collaborate in building knowledge resources together (12%)
| Expect L&D, HR & management teams to work together | 80% pull key stakeholders into a steering group to support programme design and implementation (39%)
| | 67% agree learning reinforces the recruitment process (21%)

Top Deck organisations are active in supporting the self-directed learner:

83% of L&D leaders want to increase self-directed learning, but only 22% are achieving it. However, Top Deck organisations recognise that staff are more self-directed than we think and respond accordingly – taking the following actions:

Establish an active learner voice:

- Listen first: 86% understand how their learners learn (30% average)
- Welcome ideas: 88% welcome innovation and contributions from staff (51%)

Increase access:

- To people: 76% use learning communities (46% average)
- To resources: 71% provide online/mobile job aids (29%)

Empower learners to do their current and future jobs:

- 70% integrate performance management (44% average)
- 78% support career aspirations with technology-enabled learning (21%)
- 79% offer learning and study skills development programmes (51%)

The Top Deck are equipping the L&D Team for change

Overall, 3 in 10 do not offer any professional skills training to their L&D teams, but the Top Deck are increasing the value they add to the business through:

- Applying business thinking: 94% have a learning strategy that allows for hanging business priorities (59% average)
- Thinking digitally: 88% know what technology-enabled learning their current IT systems can deliver (48%)
- Equipping the L&D team with the skills they need for the future: 77% offer CPD programmes for L&D to improve their own skills (54%)

(2015 Benchmarks)
Introduction

Through an investigation of what sets top performing learning companies apart, we are able to visualise what workplace learning might look like for all in the future. How can leaders in enterprises and in learning and development embrace change today to help realise that future?
1 Introduction

There are two major drivers for business leaders in 2015 looking to compete and succeed in the global environment. One is digital transformation changing the way organisations connect with consumers and deliver organisational value. The other is the ability to nurture adaptable talent. Four out of five CEOs are looking for a much broader range of skills today than in the past and say that their business always looks to equip employees with new skills\(^1\). However, whilst CEOs and business leaders continue to rate talent as a top priority in achieving goals, the top hurdle for achieving their digital priorities is insufficient talent or leadership\(^2\). At the same time, only 5% rate their HR performance as excellent and whilst 84% believe that L&D are an important component, only 39% agree that they are ready\(^3\).

In recent Towards Maturity studies\(^4\) we have explored how Learning & Development professionals are supporting this new business agenda. The high performing organisations are reporting improved business agility and performance of both organisations and individuals. They are achieving this by bringing innovation to learning through appropriate digital transformation.

What is more, those organisations at the cutting edge of this change are using data to develop evidence-based arguments to persuade, predict, plan and personalise the learning experience.

1.1 Shifting our thinking

For business and learning leaders alike, is it time to embrace change across the board and to shift our thinking from traditional views of training and development to new ways of building talent and supporting learning and performance.

Organisations have been called to ‘Revolutionise Learning & Development’. In his book of the same name, Clark Quinn challenges organisations to “align more closely to the way that people really think, learn and work”.

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\(^1\) 18th PwC CEO Survey, 2015. http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey
In *Modern Workplace Learning*, Jane Hart articulates how traditional courses (online and face to face) no longer address the way that people learn at work. She challenges organisations to let go of control and deliver a new range of services that do.

Nigel Paine interviewed a number of CLOs for *The Learning Challenge* and found that they are “focused, above all, on business impact and willing to be judged on the effectiveness of that impact.” What’s more, he commented that, “Where those CLOs step today, the vast majority will need to follow.”

The Towards Maturity Benchmark, established in 2003, explores in depth the behaviours of those top performing learning organisations. Our aim in this report is to help CLOs around the globe to embrace change today. We want to raise the game for learning professionals and raise the expectations of business leaders, through clear, evidence-based steps to improving performance.

### 1.2 Underpinning research methodology

We draw from two main sources of data in this report:

- A study of current and planned practice and performance with over 600 L&D professionals from 55 countries, who undertook a detailed online Benchmark review process between September 2014 and August 2015
- A sample of over 1,600 learners who took part in the Towards Maturity Learning Landscape between September 2014 and June 2015

We also reference two recent specialist studies:

- A detailed online survey of 125 L&D leaders responsible for delivering leadership programmes during January to March 2015
- A further survey of 250 L&D and risk professionals responsible for compliance training between March and May 2015

The figure overleaf gives details of the scale and scope of the Benchmark Review and the Learning Landscape. Further information on data sources and respondent demographics can be found in Appendix A.

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7 See Appendix B: Study Design for full details.
1.3 Research Demographics

Over 600 L&D professionals from 55 countries

Europe 71%
Americas 10%
ME, Africa, India 5%
APAC 14%

75% in a managerial role

40% with over 6 years’ experience of using learning technologies

Private sector 69%
Public sector 18%
Non-profit sector 13%

37% over 5,000 staff
35% under 1,000 staff
42% multi-national organisations

17% report to a line of business outside HR/L&D

The Towards Maturity Benchmark

Learner Demographics

- More than 1,600 learners
- 88% manage their own time at work
- 24% directors or senior managers
- 50% have some managerial responsibility
- 88% from the UK
- 54% private sector
- 34% have been in their current role for >5 years

Longitudinal study over 11 years
- Scale: Over 4,400 companies and 18,000 learners have taken part to date
- Over 2,500 organisations have received Personalised Benchmark Reports™ to help them with strategic plans
- 360° review of learning in the workplace: L&D and their staff views both considered
- International reach: 75 countries represented in the last 3 years
- Dynamic annual review: The question-set is informed by input from top thought leaders and practitioners
- Freely available: Supported by Ambassadors from the learning technologies and training industry
- Recognised by academics as a leading authority on benchmarking in learning and development
1.4 About the Towards Maturity Benchmark

Benchmarking is the process of comparing one organisation’s approach against others who are considered to represent the industry standard or best practice. Towards Maturity use a systematic formal benchmarking approach to review evidence from a wide range of organisations to highlight the characteristics of effective practice:

- Performance benchmarks compare values of **Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs) for business impact and training efficiency
- Towards Maturity’s unique **Effective Practice Benchmarks** allow each organisation to compare their approach with those that achieve the greatest impact on business and learning goals

The Towards Maturity Benchmark has been developed from 12 years of comprehensive research and the input of thousands of organisations and learners in order to give unparalleled insights into effective practice.

The aim of the Benchmark is to provide independent evidence that will help organisations understand the role of technology in learning and improve the impact of learning innovation.

Our emphasis is on learning outputs throughout.

*Figure 1: The Towards Maturity Model*

The continually evolving Towards Maturity Model provides the framework for the Effective Practice Benchmarks, six workstreams of implementation behaviours that directly relate to improved business performance (see Appendix B for full details).

The **Towards Maturity Index™ (TMI)**, based on this model, gives a single, unique measure that organisations can use to benchmark against their peers.
In, *Modernising Learning: Delivering Results*, we introduced the concept of the **Top Deck** as those in the very top 10% of the TMI. These organisations report better business results, better staff engagement, better responsiveness to business change and fewer barriers to implementation. Facts and figures relating to the Top Deck are highlighted in pink in this report. The characteristic behaviours of the Top Deck provide inspiration and ideas for those struggling to realise their ambitions for modernising learning in their organisation.

Last year, we described four elements of the ‘DNA’ of Top Deck organisations. These are the actions areas influencing the best results and as such, provide stretch and focus – as well as some quick wins – for all:

- Learning aligned to need
- Active learner voice
- Design beyond the course
- Proactive in connecting

This year, when compared to those in the bottom quartile for the TMI, those in the Top Deck are over 8 times more likely to report that they are:

- Improving talent/performance management
- Increasing sharing of good practice
- Improving application of learning in the workplace

Those in the Top Deck are over 6 times more likely to report that they are:

- Improving productivity
- Responding faster to changing business conditions
- Delivering greater value for money

*Learning innovation, done well, is impacting bottom-line business results.*

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Top Deck organisations provide us with a glimpse of the future of workplace learning. We believe that those that are achieving the greatest impact can help us to articulate a vision for the future and provide everyone with a route map to emulate their success. But these are not impossible goals to strive for. Top Deck organisations span all sizes, sectors and industries. Some are large multinational organisations; some operate from a single site. Some are relatively new to the use of learning technologies and some have more than ten years of experience.

Some of those that have contributed to this research are right at the start of their modernisation process. Like all journeys, we believe that it is important to have aims in sight and that it is helpful to have leaders to follow.

We are confident that the data we present will challenge business leaders and those in L&D to think deeply about what they are trying to achieve and the tools that they are employing to realise their aspirations.

**EACH CHAPTER INCLUDES A CALL TO ACTION:**

For business leaders: to engage in new ways with their L&D teams to drive business performance.

For L&D leaders: to implement some of the ideas and accelerate performance.

The remainder of this report will explore how Top Deck organisations today can teach us about embracing change and stepping into the future of learning from the perspective of the business leader, the self-directed learner and the L&D team. Before we embark on this journey, we take a look at what learning looks like today across the whole sample and describe our activities, aspirations - and our challenges.
This section explores learning today: the audience, skills, technologies and barriers to learning and development. Whilst budgets and team sizes hold steady, L&D are spending more on technology without delivering the wholesale range of improvements they seek.
2 Learning Today

Across the board, L&D leaders are investing increasingly in technology to keep up with the pace of change and extend the reach of their provision. However, some are more successful than others.

What does workplace learning look like today?

Towards Maturity have been tracking various aspects of L&D operations (budgets, skills, technologies and barriers) over the last eleven years, to highlight shifting trends in the learning industry. Our Longitudinal Trends report, updated each November, gives full details of year-on-year changes.11

2.1 Resourcing

In 2015, Training budgets and team sizes remain relatively static, particularly for organisations in the private sector.

Team sizes show a net increase in 11% of organisations in the last 2 years. 36% report that they are planning to increase numbers and only 16% forecast that their teams will be trimmed back in the next two years.

The largest numbers of L&D professionals are working in training delivery roles, with one in three team members in classroom or face-to-face training roles. One in seven work in learning management or strategic roles, with the rest in content development, instructional design, coaching, performance support or technology-related roles. In smaller organisations, operating without the luxury of a large well-defined team, one or two people fulfil all these roles.

Figure 3: Shifts in training team size – how current teams have changed and plan to change

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11 Longitudinal trends: www.towardsmaturity.org/2015Benchmark
“There is currently 1 member of the L&D team; HR has been outsourced. There is a lack of budget to increase and develop skills of the L&D staff member.” Services Company, Australia

With a different set of organisations benchmarking each year, there is little evidence of a trend in the job roles of the L&D team, apart from a gradual reduction of the number in purely learning administration roles (reducing from 16% in 2012 to 4% in 2015).

The greatest areas planned for recruitment to the L&D team are:

- Online training delivery (planned by 53% of respondents)
- Social and collaborative learning facilitation (49%)
- Coaching/mentoring (48%)
- Content development (45%)
- Data analytics (40%)

Over the last two years there has been a net increase of 9% in the number increasing their training budget, with a net rise of 13% planned for the next two years.

- 38% report an increase in training budget in the last 2 years (varying from 19% in the public sector to 44% in the private sector)
- 36% plan to increase their training budget in the next two years (varying from 18% in the public sector to 42% in the private sector)

“[We will be] more centralised at a global level – our current model is highly dispersed. There will be greater centralisation of people, budgets and activities.” Professional Services, UK

![Figure 4: Training budgets now and in two years' time](image)
On average, 19% of training budget is spent on e-learning and learning technologies; the same proportion as in 2014.

Global Comparisons: Percentage of L&D Budget Spent on Learning Technologies (on average)

- Middle East/Africa/India (18%)
- Australia (19%)
- Finance (20%)
- Retail (20%)
- IT & Telecoms (21%)
- USA (29%)

2.2 Technologies

When it comes to technology, what are we spending our budgets on?

Each year, we report on the current and planned use of a range of learning technologies. Whilst the balance does not change markedly from one year to the next, interesting trends emerge from the longitudinal study.12

Are L&D leaders sticking to the familiar?

With over 50 different technologies included in our analysis (they increase in range each year), this is the most comprehensive investigation into their use. This data shows that L&D professionals are still fairly conservative in their approach, sticking to the tried and tested methods for learning content, social and collaborative learning and tools to support learning management and administration.

Some are exploring newer technologies such as MOOCs, software as a service, learning analytics and performance support systems, but these appear to be slow to gain momentum.

Technologies used by over 70% of respondents

- 90% All e-learning content (93% in 2014)
- 86% Live online learning (86%)
- 81% Surveys and questionnaires (81%)
- 79% Learning Management Systems (78%)
- 79% Virtual meetings (77%)
- 76% Custom in-house e-learning (75%)
- 74% Job aids (66%)
- 72% Online assessment (74%)
- 76% Enterprise-wide information services (70%)

12 Longitudinal Trends: www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark
What has changed in the last three years is the rapid and faster than predicted rise in cloud-based content and the increased use of Voice over IP conferencing, job aids, immersive games and complex simulations.

Figure 5: Technology trends: cloud computing

For some, ‘use’ is perhaps too strong a word as they are just ‘experimenting’ with technologies like communities of practice (16%), internal best practice videos (15%), open education resources (14%), provision of tablet devices (13%), in-house social media (12%) and immersive games and simulations (12%). For achievement goals and MOOCs, over half of ‘users’ are ‘just experimenting’ with the technology.

Figure 6: Technologies where a high proportion of users are ‘just experimenting’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Experimenting</th>
<th>All Use now</th>
<th>Using in 2 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement goals, Badges, Points systems (e.g. Mozilla OpenBadges)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Record Store (e.g. Experience API/Tin Can)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeds/curation and social bookmarking (e.g. Curatr)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersive learning environments (such as serious games and simulations)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
L&D are less cautious in their forward plans, although long-term trends would indicate that changes seldom materialise within the planned timescale. Over the next two years, the greatest increases are predicted in:

- Communities of practice (up 28% to 78%)
- Virtual classrooms (up 27% to 72%)
- Learning communities (up 26% to 72%)
- Competency management systems (up 26% to 60%)
- Online evaluation of business impact (up 25% to 57%)

"We're certainly investigating the use of MOOCs, online portals, social media and user generated content as progressive ways of learning.” Financial services, UK

Figure 7: Technology Trends going up and down over the last 12 months

Going up...
- Immersive learning environments (up from 23% in 2014 to 31%)
- Job aids (66% to 74%)
- Cloud-based content (32% to 49%)
- Integrated LMS (38% to 44%)

Going down...
- Diagnostic tools (down from 45% to 35%)
- Open source development tools (40% to 35%)
- Content curation tools (18% to 12%)
- Podcasts (31% to 26%)
- User generated content (43% to 32%)

Percentage of total sample using technology
LRS = Learning Record Stores
SSO = Single Sign-On
2.3 Getting the blend right

Despite compelling evidence over a number of years (for example, Clive Shepherd’s book More than Blended Learning\textsuperscript{13}) that blended learning is a core component of the modern learning strategy, as a proportion of delivery methods, only 26% of current delivery is in blended programmes:

- 26% blend (24% in 2013)
- 55% face to face (56% in 2013)
- 19% online only (unchanged since 2013)

The proportion of blended programmes and those that are only offered online have not increased significantly over the last 3 years, despite large numbers predicting these would increase.

The proportion of face-to-face learning has remained static, but nearly three out of four organisations continue to predict that this will fall in the next two years, with a corresponding increase in blended and online programmes.

As one of the Towards Maturity Technology Take-up Indicators, the proportion of all formal learning that is e-enabled remains static at 26%.

\textit{Figure 8: Predicted shift in blend of face-to-face and online learning}

\textsuperscript{13}Clive Shepherd, \textit{More Than Blended Learning}, 2015. \url{www.morethanblended.com/the-book}
2.3.1 So what skills are most likely to be e-enabled?

Organisations are offering a wide range of skills programmes to their staff and extended enterprise.\(^\text{14}\) The offer changes little from one year to the next, however, for many of these programmes, less than half of the delivery is technology-enabled. Compliance training is still the most likely programme to be e-enabled.

"Online learning is used today primarily for statutory / compliance training for frontline employees and it has been successfully adopted within the business" Food Manufacturing, UK

Two-thirds of staff employed by the organisations in this study now access technology-enabled learning for mandatory, compliance-based learning. The proportion is much lower for non-mandatory learning at 36%, although both proportions have increased slightly year-on-year. Completion rates for mandated training have also risen over the last three years from 63% in 2012 to 71% in 2015. Those operating learning academies are having particular success, as illustrated in the feature on page 26.

\(^\text{14}\) See Table 7; page 87.
However, we are beginning to see a shift. Whereas five years ago learning technologies were primarily used to support the more process-driven skills such as technical skills in IT, health and safety or to introduce new business systems and processes, we now see relatively more technology-enabled programmes for the soft skills of leadership, communication, problem solving and team building. The level of technology use for these on average is 43%, compared to 59% of the process-driven skills (increased from 42% process-driven skills and

### Table 1: Technology take-up indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology Take-Up Indicator</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What % access technology enabled learning for other, non-compliance-related learning?</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What % of employees access technology-enabled learning for compliance-related or mandated courses?</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What % of them complete these compliance-related courses?</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What % of formal learning is currently delivered using e-content or virtual classroom?</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mandatory training for compliance purposes forms the largest part of the training calendar in many organisations. 78% of organisations taking part in our 2015 Excellence in Compliance Training research participate in compliance training every year.

- 39% is mandated by external regulators
- 73% is mandated internally

Most have moved to a technology-enabled model, with an increasing % of training budget used for online learning and an increasing % of online content compliance-related:

- 70% use technology in this training
- 45% of all online content is compliance-related

In 2013, we reported that completion rates for compliance were at 84%, but this year the completion rate has fallen.

- Virtual classrooms and webinars are increasingly popular in large organisations, with 81% expecting to use them in the next 2 years.
- 61% of organisations are using videos or user stories, and 38% are using games and simulations

Source: In-focus: Excellence in Compliance Training: <www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/compliance2015>
32% soft skills over the last four years). This trend reflects the general shift to more blended or online programmes for critical business skills.

**Figure 9: Technology-enabled skills**

![Bar chart showing technology-enabled skills from 2011 to 2015.]

However, there is a mismatch between the skills that are offered by most organisations and the skills that are e-enabled. Whereas induction/onboarding skills and leadership and management skills are offered in nearly all organisations, it is skills in IT and health and safety that are most likely to be e-enabled.

We also ask which skills respondents are planning to e-enable within the next two years. The greatest increases are in the following areas:

- Induction/onboarding (planned to increase from 58% e-enabled to 79%)
- Leadership/management (rising from 51% to 70%)

Compared to other key skills, relatively few organisations actually offer skills development in innovation or creativity (63%), learning or study skills (51%).

These two skills areas been included in the Benchmark study for the first time this year. However, of those that do, they are expecting to see an increase in the use of technology to support those skills over the next 2 years with 66% planning to e-enable learning and study skills (rising from 41% today) and 61% planning to e-enable skills around innovation and creativity (rising from 36% today).
2.3.2 The Role of Academies

21% of the sample are creating an academy for their staff to engage with learning and development, up slightly from 18% last year. They are three times likely to be seen in multinational organisations where 62% of organisations are using some form of academy approach. The definition of academy varies considerably from organisation to organisation (see box out) and whilst the approach does not appear to impact overall training efficiency or staff engagement, there are a number of business benefits that those with academies are reporting which may make them worth investigating further.

Those with academies are twice more likely to report that their programmes are helping to drive business innovation than those not operating an academy model.
The Skills Academy

How are academies being used?

21% of the sample are using an academy approach (39% of the Top Deck) – with both physical and virtual models operating and in some cases simply a brand name for a learning portal. There is no one-size-fits-all definition, but some characteristics emerge frequently:

- Single centre of excellence, or hub-and-spoke model
- A competency-based curriculum aligned to delivery of the business strategic plan
- Linked to grades in the organisation with set courses at each career stage prior to ‘graduating’ in the role
- Focus on delivery of role-specific technical and professional skills
- Often a single-issue focus, such as leadership or sales
- Centralised budget and development, local execution
- Supported by business-aligned teams

What are they doing differently?

When compared with those not operating Academies, those with them are more likely to:

- Offer a comprehensive range of skills (average across 20 skills of 81% vs. 72%)
- E-enable skills programmes (0.61 vs. 0.46)
- Use more technology tools and environments
- Report 10% fewer barriers
- Assign board level accountability for learning (56% vs. 36%)

What impact are they having?

Those with academies are twice as likely to report that their programmes are helping to drive business innovation.

They are also more likely to:

- Achieve a wider range of benefits (43% vs. 34% on average)
- Report higher compliance course completion rates (78% vs 68%)
- Report greater savings of time and cost against the KPIs

And record higher scores on the Towards Maturity Index (55.56 vs. 46.93)
2.4 L&D aspirations for the future

Learning and development have the resources and technologies to deliver a strong and reliable service to their organisation. Our analysis has shown that they have clear aspirations and most seek to offer not only efficient, high quality and cost-effective training, but also tangible business improvements in productivity, agility, customer service and talent management.

CIPD research since 2014 has shown that there is an increasing desire for L&D to be aligned and integrated with the business which is echoed in this study. The number of respondents wanting to realise significant business goals continues to increase year on year. Out of 25 business goals listed, 16 are set by over 90% of respondents in 2015. In 2011 there were no significant goals that were listed by over 90% of respondents!

The panel below shows the top drivers for change and highlights a number of new areas that are beginning to feature as drivers for many organisations this year. A full list of drivers can be found in the longitudinal trends.

---

**Most important drivers (2014 level in brackets)**

- 98% improve learning access and flexibility (96%)
- 97% improve quality of learning delivered (96%)
- 96% increase ongoing sharing of good practice (95%)
- 96% improve the way we gather and analyse data on learning impact (94%)
- 96% speed up and improve the application of learning in the workplace (93%)
- 96% achieve greater consistency of the learning experience (94%)
- 95% improve induction/onboarding process (91%)

**New drivers explored in 2015 rate strongly for over 75% of the sample**

- 85% improve organisational performance (NEW)
- 83% increase self-directed learning (NEW)
- 82% improve performance management (NEW)
- 80% integrate learning into the workflow (NEW)
- 80% drive business innovation (NEW)
- 78% improve compliant behaviours (NEW)
- 76% manage risk more successfully (NEW)
- 76% increase ability to attract talent (NEW)

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*The feature overleaf shows some of the longer term aspirations of participants.*

---

“What will learning and development look like in your organisation in five years’ time?”

The over-arching themes of comments from the hundreds of respondents who expressed their view included:

- Improving business performance
- Increased use of technology
- Better alignment with business need
- Better integration of learning into the workflow
- L&D as enablers rather than trainers

“Co-ordinated professional function that supports both practical, skills-based learning as well as leadership, innovation and creativity.” Health sector, Australia

“Advanced users of technologies, involved in helping people with the 70:20:10, seen more as a business partner, learning will be instantly accessible.” Financial Services, Ireland

“Fully integrated system that is intrinsically linked to the business strategy.”

Process Industries, Australia

“Proactive strategists who are working to deliver capability change with a long term view.”

Pharmaceutical industry, UK

“Providing sophisticated metrics that will drive our priorities and projects and illustrate the impact of L&D on key business metrics.” Logistics, USA

“Integrated in the workflow by using "on demand" and social networking solutions.”

Electronics, USA

“Move from transactional organizing training events to a more holistic approach with focus on Talent Management as a full process from acquisition through career development and post-employment.” Oil & Gas, Netherlands

“A key and strategic factor in the business.” Professional Services, Spain

“We want to change the culture of the organization so that learning happens at the speed of need, is supported by line managers and that it makes a demonstrable difference in the workplace.” Higher Education, UK
2.4.1 Achieving our aspirations

Despite high aspirations and a vision for the future, there is a large and growing gap between the level of those seeking each business driver and those achieving the benefits they aspire to.

Whilst 85% on average of the sample are driven by a desire to deliver a range of benefits relating to the business, its people and their own training efficiency, only 29% report that they have achieved their goals. This ‘performance gap’ which we investigated in detail in 2011 (Bridging the Gap\textsuperscript{16}) has only widened since as Figure 12 below illustrates. Those in the Top Deck are having more success and achieving 61\% of their goals on average - twice the level of achievement compared to the average.

\textit{Figure 12: The ‘performance gap’ between goals and their achievement}

![Performance Gap Diagram]

Despite little change in the performance gap, the reported barriers to digital learning, whilst changing little over the last five years have all started to decline this year\textsuperscript{17}. Cost, however, remains the number one barrier to progress:

1. Cost (reported by 63\%)
2. Lack of employee skills to manage own learning (63\%)
3. Unreliable IT/ infrastructure (60\%)
4. Lack of L&D skills to implement (56\%)
5. Line manager reluctance (55\%)

\textsuperscript{16}Towards Maturity, \textit{Bridging the Gap}, 2012. [www.towardsmaturity.org/2012benchmark](www.towardsmaturity.org/2012benchmark)

\textsuperscript{17}See Appendix E for details of all barriers reported.
The Top Deck generally report fewer barriers. Out of a core list of 16 barriers that have been included in the study for each of the last five years, on average organisations report 7. In the Top Deck, this falls to 5.¹⁸

Whilst, on average, only 29% of organisation achieve the goals they set, the actual level of achievement varies from 11% to 73%. Across the goals, Top Deck organisations are doing better, but there is no room for complacency here either, as one-third of them are failing to meet their goals.

“Achieved: Better relations across business and greater transparency of learning needs across functions & business units.

Wanted: Greater understanding in the business on the role of training and that of the line manager.” Finance sector, UK

Deeper analysis shows that some of these goals appear to be easier to achieve than others. For example, those relating to training efficiency and improvements in business processes, as illustrated below, are easier to achieve than wider organisational benefits of creating a more agile organisation with a culture of continual learning.

Figure 13: The five stages of benefits

¹⁸ A full analysis of barriers, see Appendix E: Data tables (Table 9: Barriers to online learning)
Figure 14 highlights how the Top Deck organisations are delivering significantly more benefits in each of the maturity stages as defined by the quartile they are in on the Towards Maturity Index.

*Figure 14: Benefits achieved by the Top Deck*

When compared to those in bottom quartile for TMI (Q4), the Top Deck are:

- **3 times** more likely to achieve benefits relating to efficiency and business process improvement
- **5 times** more likely to achieve benefits relating to productivity and business responsiveness
- **8 times** more likely to achieve benefits relating to culture

They are also more likely to report benefits in intangible areas, with **58%** of Top Deck organisations agreeing that in doing so, they create a learning environment that illustrates the aspirations of L&D professionals.19

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**We seek to: “Improve the use of new technology to make learning accessible to all employees; Deliver solutions that address performance challenges and support employees to be more productive and responsive to the business needs.” IT sector, USA**

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19 For a full analysis of intangible benefits, see Appendix E: Data tables (Table 8: Benefits of a technology-enabled learning strategy).
CALL TO ACTION:

**Business Leaders:** Be clear about which organisational goals are important and engage your people teams to help achieve them.

**L&D Leaders:** Focus on what is critical to your business and how to achieve it, rather than investing in the latest technology fad.

For the remainder of this report, we will highlight how Top Deck organisations proactively bring business leaders, learners and L&D together to achieve business and individual performance objectives. The Top Deck are giving us a glimpse of the future of learning at work and provide practical ideas for embracing change.

Organisations in the Top Deck come from all sectors, sizes and locations. They could be your client, your supplier – or your competitor. Whilst their names are confidential, in the next 3 sections, we share their tactics in order to challenge the way we think about learning.

The role of business leaders is critical; L&D teams in Top Deck organisations enjoy proactive business commitment. The chapter challenges business leaders to think differently about what to expect from learning innovation.
Challenging the Business Leader

This section specifically challenges business leaders to reconsider their assumptions and expectations about performance outcomes, about how learning is supported and about the need for stakeholders to work together towards mutually agreed goals.

It is time to demand more than just courses, it is time to embrace change.
3 Challenging the Business Leader

We know that talent is a critical issue in a growing economy but how do organisations attract great people? How do they keep them? How do they ensure that the business has the skills that will keep the organisation agile, innovative and ready to succeed in a competitive digital global environment?

In this fast changing, complex world, your people teams should be some of your greatest allies – yet only 15% of business leaders feel that HR are helping them to become more agile and only 19% say HR departments demonstrate a shared sense of direction.20

This summer, the Harvard Business Review challenged CEOs not to look at their people teams as just administrative functions, but to elevate them to a role where they can build and assign talent and work to unleash the organisation’s energy.21

At a time when individuals in the business have more choice and more mobility than ever before, this research with top performing L&D leaders around the globe shows that your learning function has the potential to play a considerable role in building organisational success. Yes, there is much need for change if this is to occur. The evidence in the following pages highlights that many organisations are building the bridges between business and the people function and delivering considerable bottom line value to organisations around the world.

To achieve similar results, the traditional view of L&D as a cost centre needs to be challenged by both L&D and business alike. Top Deck organisations in this study show that business leaders should encourage more from L&D in two specific areas:

- Bottom-line impact on the things that matter
- Building performance in innovative ways

But do to this, there needs to be an integrated approach: shared mutual objectives of the management team, the HR function and the L&D leaders in achieving common performance goals.

This is where business leaders come in.

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## 3.1 Expect greater impact

Nine hundred organisations have contributed specific data on performance improvement to the Towards Maturity Benchmark in the last 3 years. Collectively, this data shows us that learning innovation, done well, is delivering tangible results for business. The majority of contributions have come from top performing L&D teams. Some of these maybe your peers, your suppliers or even your competitors.

The results highlight that digital transformation of learning is supporting improvements in productivity, revenue, customer satisfaction scores, business agility and staff retention.

In the Top Deck, 70% report that learning innovation has contributed to a 12% increase in productivity across the organisation. Learning innovation offers a significant opportunity to build business performance.

Not all organisations pursue the same goals. We track 13 Key Performance Indicators for business and staff impact to monitor how digital transformation of learning can improve performance (compared to traditional methods):

### Table 2: Key Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Impact Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to change procedures or products has improved by:</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our measure of customer satisfaction has improved by:</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to speed up the rollout of new IT applications has improved by:</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning interventions have increased organisational productivity by:</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning interventions have increased organisational revenue by:</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Impact Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our measure of staff satisfaction/engagement has improved by:</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to competency has improved by:</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications gained by staff have increased by:</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff turnover has been reduced by:</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures represent 3-year averages from a minimum of 393 responses (Business Impact) or 375 responses (Staff Impact). See Appendix for calculation methods.*
These improvements are not isolated examples but are widely recognised as evidence of the impact of an innovative learning strategy, delivered well. In the Top Deck:

- **54%** agree that learning innovation has made a significant contribution to increasing revenue (24% across the sample as a whole)
- **65%** agree that it has made a significant contribution to increasing productivity (26%)
- **65%** managers agree that it has delivered additional business benefit (31%)

Training efficiencies are also directly attributable to the digital transformation of learning. Across a minimum of 830 organisations in the last three years that have measured these results, costs have reduced by 16%, study time by 19% and delivery time by a massive 23%.

Table: Training Efficiency Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Efficiency Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of training has reduced by:</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach/volume of learning has increased by:</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery time has reduced by:</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study time has reduced by:</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reach of training has also increased as a result, with an average of 22% more staff involved in learning. In the Top Deck:

- **74%** agree that the proportion of staff on learning programmes has increased (42% average)

These figures are conservative views on the potential impact of learning innovation compared with traditional courses associated with the L&D function. If just a fraction could be achieved in your organisation, is it worth considering a new conversation with your L&D team about how they could be achieved?

"We have been able to increase programme reach across Africa utilising technology." Professional Services, South Africa
These results are not achieved by the L&D or HR team alone. When compared to the sample average, Top Deck organisations are, for example:

- **2x** as likely to assign board level accountability for learning (78% vs. 40% average)
- **2x** as likely to agree that L&D work in partnership with senior managers to identify business metrics that they want to improve (78% vs. 31% average)
- **3x** as likely to use those metrics when evaluating the impact of learning interventions (51% vs. 17% average)

“For business leaders, it is clear that we must recognise that we have to define purpose and outputs at a board level. We need to put effort into making what we are doing at board level relevant at an individual level. We must say to our staff, ‘You matter and your contribution matters.’”

Dr Chai Patel CBE FRCP, Chairman HC-One

All of this suggests that the L&D leaders of Top Deck organisations are working hand in hand with their leadership teams, addressing past criticisms of their functions as being divorced from the workflow and not contributing to bottom-line performance. Alignment and engagement achieve significant performance benefits.

**CALL TO ACTION:**

**Business Leaders: Significant business improvement can be achieved through the digital transformation of learning strategies when business leaders demand more than just efficiency.**

Be clear about the specific business goals that you want to achieve, define clear targets, then expect and enable your L&D professionals to achieve them in innovative ways.

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22 *Modernising Learning: Delivering Results*, see: www.towardsmaturity.org/2014benchmark

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3.2 Expect more than just a course

Business leaders around the globe understand how digitisation can bring competitive advantage in a global economy. From a business perspective digital transformation of a business not only brings efficiencies but new definitions of how organisations can add value and interact with customers.

Recent research from McKinsey\(^23\) shows that executives cite a number of hurdles to achieving their digital objectives the top 4 being:

1. A lack of internal leadership or talent for digital projects
2. A lack of understanding of the impact of digital trends
3. Inability to keep pace with the faster speed of business
4. Inability to adopt an experimentation mind-set

These opportunities and challenges also apply for your L&D leaders as they apply digital thinking to the support of learning. When we apply the principle of understanding the consumer journey to the way that staff learn what they need to do their jobs, we see how learning and development needs to change.

Early research with business leaders\(^24\) showed that successful leaders identified that their career was influenced mostly by what they had learned through direct experience (about 70%), then through the networks and contacts that they have (20%) and then through the formal learning they had received (10%).

Towards Maturity’s research with over 2,000 leaders and managers highlights similar findings\(^25\) – overleaf we see that most leaders learn through communities, via the web and through experiences.

Top Deck organisations understand that modern day learners across the business need to be supported across their ‘consumer journey’ if they are to enjoy peak performance. The numbers may change but staff at all levels are also learning through experience, through social networks and through formal learning. To support them, today’s L&D professional needs to redefine their role in supporting learning beyond the course.


\(^{24}\) Centre for Creative Leadership (CCL), read more from Bert De Coutere at: [http://towardsmaturity.org/article/2015/09/24/origins-of-702010](http://towardsmaturity.org/article/2015/09/24/origins-of-702010)

\(^{25}\) Excellence in Leadership Development, see: [www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/leadership2015](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/leadership2015)
Developing Today’s Business Leaders

How are leaders learning?

Research with over 2,000 leaders and managers* reveals some distinctive features about the way in which they develop the knowledge and skills they need for their job. Learning predominantly comes from their on-the-job experience and relationships with others.

- 49% learn more from finding things out for themselves than from the classroom or formal training, (rising with level of seniority from 48% in line manager roles to 54% for those in senior management.)
- 91% learn from working in collaboration with others
- 83% from general conversations and meetings
- 73% Google/other search for web resources
- 73% of directors and senior managers learn on the way to work
- 44% can’t find what they need!

80% of leaders are willing to share what they know to help others learn with 55% of leaders saying they are motivated by technologies that help them network and learn with others. However, whilst a quarter of them are already sharing what they know to help others learn, others need:

- More opportunity to get involved in collaboration - 36% of directors would share if the opportunity arose (rising to 46% of line managers)
- Help getting started - 23% of directors need help getting started (16% of line managers)

How are L&D and HR teams currently responding?

Despite 25% of organisations’ overall L&D budget being applied to leadership development,

- 92% use classroom courses as part of learning offering
- Only 39% use mobile content
- 14% is spent on learning technologies to support leaders

Source: Excellence in Leadership Development: www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/leadership2015

We are working towards implementing 70:20:10 in the organisation, especially with a focus on social and performance support. Until now we have mainly done traditional formal (10) learning in the classrooms, but 80% of our learning is now moving into the online and informal space.” Oil & Gas sector, UK
Top Deck organisations understand how their staff need to be supported to learn continually through experience, social interaction and formal environments, making sure that they are developing skills where they are needed. To do this, they are ahead of the game when it comes to embracing new models of learning:

> 86% of Top Deck organisations agree that their approach is shaped by models that support learning directly in the flow of work (47% average)

Global Comparisons: Learning in the Workflow

Over 50% of companies in the following regions and sectors strongly agree that their learning approach is shaped by models that support learning in the flow of work:

- Australian organisations (57%)
- Middle East, Africa and India (50%)
- Retail (70%)
- IT and telecoms (54%)
- Professional services (55%)

One such approach – the 70:20:10 framework – was born out of the Centre for Creative Leadership research with business leaders.

The 70:20:10 framework provides a context for improving and extending traditional training and learning into the workplace. The ‘70’ refers to learning within the workflow, including workplace learning and performance support. The ‘20’ refers to social learning, including informal coaching and mentoring as well as building and exploiting strong and effective social networks. The ‘10’ refers to formal learning, including courses (live and online) and reading.

This framework is less about the proportion of learning delivered in each of the areas; rather it is a recognition of where learning occurs, that backs the move towards supporting learning at the point of need.

So what does this look like in practice for Top Deck organisations? The feature overleaf illustrates the some of the behaviours that characterise these three learning approaches, illustrating the benefits of supporting learning innovatively.
New Learning Frameworks in Action in the Top Deck

The Towards Maturity Benchmark programme deconstructs and investigates the different behaviours within the 70:20:10 framework to understand the extent to which different aspects of this framework are being applied by L&D professionals in today’s workplace.

Charles Jennings, expert in 70:20:10 who has influenced the Towards Maturity Benchmark over the years, highlights that 70:20:10 is a framework to help us have a balanced focus on the way that we support learning at work.* The proportion of learning activity in each area will vary from organisation to organisation. As part of the 2015 Personalised Benchmark Report™ we introduced 3 new indices to help organisations reflect on the extent to which they implement 70:20:10 in their practice and plan actions to bring their focus in line with this important model.

These new indices show that Top Deck organisations are proactive in improving across all 3 areas rather than focussing on just one. Here are some examples of characteristic behaviours of the Top Deck:

**10 Formal learning:**
- 84% blend use of learning technologies in design (from social media for collaboration to content delivery) (compared to 22% on average)
- 80% apply storytelling techniques in instructional design (32%)
- 55% use defined performance support practices to support learning transfer after formal learning (13%)

**20 Social learning:**
- 43% encourage staff to solve problems together using social media (11%)
- 51% encourage staff to collaborate in building knowledge resources together (12%)
- 88% use coaching and mentoring as an important part of work culture (40%)

**70 Learning in the workflow:**
- 71% provide access to job aids online or via mobile devices (29%)
- 90% expect managers to take responsibility for developing the skills of their staff (60%)
- 78% encourage staff to learn from their mistakes as well as from peers and managers (41%)

* Charles Jennings. [http://charles-jennings.blogspot.co.uk](http://charles-jennings.blogspot.co.uk)
Frameworks like these are starting to shift the balance of L&D from delivery of formal training programmes to supporting social learning and integrating learning into the workflow. In our recent study on *Excellence in Leadership Development*, over 90% of organisations are investigating how they can put this new thinking into practice in their leadership development programmes.

“As business leaders, we have to let go of our embedded beliefs that classroom is the most effective means of delivering skills. Now, more than ever, we need to be able to access our learning quickly in digestible bite sized chunks and find support as and when we need it.’ Customer Services Director, Finance, UK

The implications for business leaders are clear. Learning professionals can offer so much more than the formal course catalogue by reaching into the heart of the workplace to proactively support performance where it counts.

As a business leader, if you ask for a course, that is just what you will get. It is important to define the enterprise outcome that you need and to use the expertise of the L&D leader and their team to design an innovative solution that will address a business need. They can advise on the most appropriate methods and media to use.

**CALL TO ACTION:**

*Business Leaders: Think performance – do not think course! Share your business vision and expect your people professionals to come up with a thoughtful and creative solution to help achieve it. Ask learning professionals for an innovative solution rather than a formal course. Expect them to challenge and inspire you.*
3.3 Expect more integrated thinking from your team

We have shown in previous studies, that when learning is closely aligned to business objectives, results are better and programmes have greater business impact\(^\text{26}\). Identifying and engaging the key stakeholders in any programme is an important part of this process. Senior managers, line managers, subject matter experts, HR, IT professionals, learning professionals and the learner themselves all need to work together with clear aims in mind.

As the business leader you are the one person who can demand that stakeholders come together to focus on achieving a common business goal and facilitate that collaboration. We have already seen that Top Deck teams are \(3x\) more likely to identify key business metrics to improve through learning and are \(2x\) more likely to pull key stakeholders together into a steering group to support programme design and implementation (\(80\%\) vs. \(39\%\)).

The Top Deck illustrate some of the ways in which this type of joined-up thinking is making a difference. When compared to those in the lowest quartile of effective practices within this sample, they are:

- \(50x\) more likely to improve talent strategies to keep their best people (\(49\%\) vs. \(1\%\))
- \(11x\) more likely to improve performance management (\(43\%\) vs. \(4\%\))
- \(5x\) more likely to increase their ability to attract talent (\(43\%\) vs. \(7\%\))

Specifically, there are two stakeholders that Top Deck organisations highlight need to work closely with the learning team: those in HR and line managers.

3.3.1 Demand integrated thinking between HR and L&D

Attracting and maintaining the right talent is a constant challenge when the workforce is highly mobile and frequently networking with peers in other organisations. The Top Deck illustrate how a modernised learning strategy can become a part of the overall talent integration process when integrated into the workflow rather than HR and L&D operating in separate silos. For example, in the Top Deck:

- \(76\%\) integrate succession planning into staff development (26% average)
- \(67\%\) agree that their learning reinforces their onboarding and recruitment processes (21% average)

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\(^{26}\) Towards Maturity, *In Focus: Aligning Learning to Business*, 2015.  
www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus-alignment2015
Where does learning fit within the organisation?

Integrating the approaches of L&D and HR teams does not imply that the L&D team should automatically be part of the central HR team. Each organisation will work out the best structure for supporting learning and development - whether it operates as a discrete team, as part of HR or within each line of business. There is no right or wrong solution. The box overleaf illustrates some of the features and apparent benefits of each approach. What is important is that that the stakeholders are working together towards common business goals.

And as the business leader, you can influence the success of your people and management teams by providing them with a common business goal and permission to work creatively together towards that goal – and that includes harnessing the power of learning for business improvement.

3.3.2 Integrated thinking with Line Managers

We have already seen that learning for the Top Deck organisation does not stop with the course. What happens back at work is critical and yet in the Learning Landscape study, only 59% of staff report that their manager expects them to apply the learning afterwards.

Those L&D leaders in the Top Deck show us how they are twice as likely to engage with line managers at all stages to ensure that learning is relevant and applied. The charts alongside show some of the ways in which they are taking action.

“We have communicated our blended learning strategy across the firm and used senior leadership and managers to support and encourage the use of online learning. We provide feedback to key stakeholders on the results of our use of learning technologies.” Law firm, UK
Where does learning sit in the organisation?

In this study, two thirds of the sample report to HR/L&D central. 15% report to HR/L&D within a line of business and 17% report to a line of business outside HR/L&D.

**Those within HR/L&D central** are more likely to align their implementation practice to business need. They are more likely to be developing the skills of their L&D teams, using internal and external networks (57% use internal networks vs. 38% for those in the line of business). However, they also report more barriers to learning online and are less likely to achieve the benefits they seek.

**Those working in HR/L&D within the line of business** are more likely to seek to link learning and talent strategies. They are also more likely to agree that staff can access learning directly relevant to their job (60% vs. 46% for those in HR central).

**Those outside HR/L&D** are more likely to report success in integrating learning into the workflow and speeding up the application of learning. They are also having greater success across a range of benefits, extending the reach of learning, tailoring learning to need and driving business innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>HR/L&amp;D Central</th>
<th>HR/L&amp;D Line of Business</th>
<th>Line of Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating learning into the workflow</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed up the application of learning into the workplace</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving business innovation</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critically, those in the line of business are reporting the greatest impact in the following areas:

- 52% ability to improve compliance behaviours (39% for those in HR/L&D)
- 50% ability to implement new IT systems (41%)
- 18% improvement in customer satisfaction (13%)
- 13% increase in revenue (6%)

And 37% of managers agree that technology-enabled learning delivers additional business benefits (28%)

Formal performance management processes do not appear to be giving them the edge. Rather, it is the way in which managers are actively engaged in supporting learning. Those in the line of business are proactive in understanding what learners need to do their job (35% vs. 26% of those in HR/L&D) and staff know how to identify the right information they need (38% vs. 21%). They are more likely to involve trainers, business leaders and line managers in decision-making.
Business leaders need to provide effective mechanisms in the business context where the effectiveness of learning activities can be evaluated and planned. The role of L&D providing feedback to learners is relatively well understood, but too few recognise the importance of management and L&D professionals working together to understand the impact of programmes, the value of providing good feedback to line managers and of communicating success to the wider business community.

**CALL TO ACTION:**

Business Leaders: Direction needs to be placed by the board on integrating the thinking of all legitimate stakeholder functions. If you expect them to work in silos, then they will.

A focus on business outcomes is essential.

*The next 2 chapters show how L&D teams need to respond. The first revisits the concept of the self-directed learner introduced in this chapter and what needs to change to support them better.*
Learners are taking more control over their personal and professional development, thanks to the improved communications and ease of access to resources that technology affords. In this section, we explore how learning professionals need to improve the way that self-directed learners are supported, rather than wrestling them for control.
4 Supporting the Self-Directed Learner

People in today’s organisations have access to more content, more networks and more opportunities to learn than ever before. With technology underpinning every area of life, they are increasingly accustomed to finding things out for themselves, searching and sifting a mass of online knowledge resources and communicating confidently online with both those they know – and with those that interest or can help them. They are also concerned with their own longer-term career development.

The workforce is becoming more mobile. Typically, in the UK, each worker will have many jobs during their career, with job-hopping part of a new freedom to fulfil lifetime job ambitions rather than remain in the one job-for-life. Technology has also facilitated the extended enterprise, with remote working becoming more frequent.

So how are people learning what they need to do their jobs? Figure 15 provides a snapshot from a sample of over 1,600 learners from our Learning Landscape study. We see that they are:

- Proactive in learning from each other (90% finding team collaboration essential for learning)
- Harnessing technology
  - Reliant on web search for learning resources (essential for 73%)
  - Using mobile devices (90% now own a smartphone or tablet)
- Demanding flexibility (88% like to be able to learn at their own pace)

What is more, these findings not only echo previous published studies.\(^{27}\) They illustrate common behaviours across job role, time in job and age.

\(^{27}\) Towards Maturity, Learner Voice 1 and Learner Voice 2: [www.towardsmaturity.org/learner](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/learner)
TOP 3 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GREAT ONLINE LEARNING

- Tutor support: 31%
- Quality: 35%
- Relevant & Timely: 42%

THE TOP 10 LEARNING METHODS
Rated as essential or highly useful methods for learning what they need for their job:

- 90% team collaboration
- 87% conversations / meetings
- 83% manager support
- 73% web search
- 62% internal company documents
- 55% classroom courses
- 54% internal networks / communities
- 53% support from mentor / buddy
- 53% mobile

WHAT MOTIVATES STAFF TO LEARN ONLINE?
- 76% want to be able to do their job faster and better
- 75% like to learn just for personal development
- 60% want to increase productivity
- 47% want to keep up with new technology
- 42% want to obtain professional certification
- 40% want to be eligible for promotion
- 38% want to be enabled to earn more money
- 23% want to pass an assessment
- 19% want to achieve/maintain a higher certification level
- 10% want to compete against colleagues for a high score

WHAT STOPS THEM FROM LEARNING ONLINE?
- 63% lack of time for self-study
- 32% lack of somewhere appropriate to study
- 32% find learning content uninspiring
- 31% technology issues such as low bandwidth
- 29% find current online learning not relevant to their need
- 25% can’t find what they need
- 18% learning objectives are not clear

WHO INFLUENCES PEOPLE TO LEARN ONLINE? (TOP 3)
- 28% Managers
- 16% Colleagues
- 5% L&D

WHAT INFLUENCES PEOPLE TO LEARN ONLINE? (TOP 3)
- 28% Managers
- 16% Colleagues
- 5% L&D

41% ARE USING THEIR OWN DEVICES TO ACCESS JOB-RELATED LEARNING

42% evenings and weekends
42% at point of need
29% travelling to/from work

88% LIKE TO BE ABLE TO LEARN AT THEIR OWN PACE

75% ARE WILLING TO SHARE WHAT THEY KNOW

© Copyright Towards Maturity CIC, 2015 London.
83% of L&D leaders want to increase self-directed learning but only 22% are achieving it

The concept of the ‘self-directed learner’ has been around in education since at least 1985. Today’s workers reflect many attributes of the original ‘self-directed learner’: they understand their role in the organisation and resulting learning need, is motivated, takes the initiative and can identify and access the resources they need.

Top Deck organisations are almost twice as likely to agree that self-directed learning is common practice in their organisation (63% vs 36%). Their actions provide us with 3 insights into how we can support the self-directed learner:

- Establish an active learner voice
- Increase access to opportunity
- Empower learners to take control

Figure 16: The Self-Directed Learner

4.1 Establishing an active learner voice

94% of organisations seek to improve employee engagement with learning, but only 21% of organisations are succeeding.

Despite high aspirations for engaging staff with learning, it is apparent that the majority of L&D professionals have a poor understanding of how staff actually learn what they need. For example:

- 30% are proactive in understanding how their learners learn (86% in the Top Deck)
- Only 16% of those in L&D are aware of how their staff are using social media outside of work (41%)
- 21% of L&D leaders perceive that their learners are unwilling to share with each other (13%)

Our work with learners on the other hand shows that they:

- **Are willing to collaborate**
  - 75% of learners in the Learning Landscape are willing to use technology to share their knowledge in order to help others learn
- **Like to learn at their own pace**
  - 88% of learners like to be able to learn at their own pace
- **Are active on social media**
  - 59% are motivated by using technologies that enable them to network and learn from others.
  - 52% value the recommendations for courses from others on social networks
- **Are switched off by current content**
  - 32% find current content uninspiring or not relevant to their need

These findings show that time is a greater barrier to staff learning online (reported by 63% of staff) than inclination.

Across the whole sample, those in L&D estimate that 37% of learning is taking place outside their formal remit. They may be underestimating this proportion, but they won’t know as less than a third make time to find out.
In the meantime, learners are listening to each other: 16% agree their peers are most likely influence engagement (compared to just 5% agreeing that L&D influence them). They also use social media widely to select a course, make recommendations or to find out what others think about a course. The active learner will vote with their feet if the learning resources that are provided at work do not meet their needs, so L&D can ill-afford to ignore the learner voice.

Figure 17 shows how the Top Deck organisations recognise that their staff are already collaborating and highlights how they are more likely to provide an active learner voice within the process of learning.

**Figure 17: The active learner voice**

**Listen First**
- 76% involve users in design of the most effective learning approach (35% avg.)
- 86% are proactive in understanding how learners currently learn (30%)

**Welcome Ideas**
- 88% welcome innovation and contributions from staff (51%)
- 80% encourage peer-to-peer feedback (40%)
- 33% use social rating systems to gather feedback (14%)

**Facilitate Contribution**
- 51% actively encourage learners to collaborate in building knowledge resources, using tools such as wikis, forums, podcasts and videos (12%)
- 59% encourage user generated content (32%),
- 76% use learning communities (46%)

**CALL TO ACTION:**

What can L&D do to give learners an active voice?

- Bring end users into the planning and design stages - as well as asking for feedback once the solution is online
- Use social media as a medium for learners to provide feedback, rate and comment on courses
- Encourage collaboration by learners, perhaps as part of action learning groups, to create new knowledge resources such as user videos and blogs
4.2 Increasing access to learning opportunities

On average, 98% are looking to increasing learning access and flexibility; 41% are achieving it.

Staff generally know what learning they need, but one in four report that they can’t find what they need or that current online content is not relevant to their needs. What is more, only 47% of staff agree that L&D professionals understand and are able to provide help with their performance needs. The fact that only 59% of learners report that their company clearly communicates the learning opportunities available to them is a wake-up call for L&D.

Figure 15 shows that despite lack of time, many are prepared to study job-related content at times outside their normal working day:

- 42% learn at evenings and weekends
- 32% study during their lunch hour
- 29% study on the way to work
- 26% use their breaks for learning

Pressure of work forces many learners to simply access learning resources when they need them the most (42%) or if they receive a specific alert of something new (19%). With 90% of learners now owning a smartphone or tablet, most of whom (86%) are happily downloading apps, implementation of mobile learning becomes an important consideration for L&D.

“I need encouragement from my manager to feel able to access online resources in work time.”

When 63% of learners say that lack of time is the biggest barrier to learning online, what can L&D do to improve access to learners, to simplify their learning experience and to save them time?
84% of Top Deck organisations believe that their staff know how to identify the right information for their job (compared to 27% on average). This is not surprising given the proactive focus they provide in improving access to learning:

**Figure 18: How do the Top Deck providing access to learning?**

- **Access to community**
  - 76% use communities of practice (50%) and learning communities/action learning groups (46%)
  - 84% help staff locate in house experts when needed (38%)

- **Access to content**
  - 71% provide staff with access to job aids online or via mobile devices (29%)
  - 73% provide micro content of under 10 minutes where appropriate (27%)

- **Access to technology**
  - 69% have clear policy around Bring Your Own Device (33%)
  - 67% use a Single Sign On process (47%)

- **Access to clear communication**
  - 88% ensure a communications plan is in place for key stakeholders (39%)
  - 86% ensure individuals can access clear information on learning opportunities available to them (48%)

- **Access at the right time and place**
  - 84% learners can choose to access e-learning provision at any time (58%)
  - 67% can choose to learn in places convenient to them (35%)

**CALL TO ACTION:**

What can L&D do to help learners access the learning they need?

- Curate learning resources so that they can be easily located and provide greater clarity about what resources are available
- Create learning spaces that are well equipped and easy to access for short periods
- Consider the times when learners can learn – are they able to make the most of short periods during breaks or when travelling?
4.3 Empowering learners

90% of organisations want to improve staff motivation as a result of learning innovation, but only 22% are achieving it.

Learners are increasingly taking control of their own learning with 75% saying that they like to learn just for their own personal development. 27% are learning online on their own outside work with 14% for Continued Professional Development purposes. We also find learners undertaking courses independently in IT user skills (6%) and leadership and management (5%).

4.3.1 Motivating learners

It’s clear that learners don’t need much to motivate them to learn. Promotion and money, whilst important, actually score below job productivity and career development as incentives for learning (see Figure 15).

Furthermore, 65% of learners can see how online learning opportunities available can help them further their career. Recognition that they have completed online learning is also very important for 62% of learners and many find professional certification or even just completion certificates very motivating.

The L&D team can help empower self-directed learners by being proactive in supporting both the immediate on-the-job productivity and the career journey of the individual within the organisation.

The Top Deck are already proactive in this area and provide us with insights that all can apply to address this issue (see overleaf).
4.3.2 Building learner capability

We also see that whilst staff are being proactive in learning for themselves they may also need an extra helping hand to learn how to learn and share in a fast moving world. And yet, from an L&D perspective:

► 63% of those in L&D think their learners lack the skills to manage their own learning (dropping to 44% in the Top Deck who are more confident in their staff ability)
► 19% agree that learners have the confidence to manage their own development (27%)
► 19% agree that staff know how to work together to productively connect and share knowledge (63%)
► 47% believe that users are reluctant to learn with new technology (33%)

Learners on the other hand are more confident in their own capabilities.
This might indicate that staff have considerably more confidence in their ability to learn what they need for their job than L&D professionals give them credit for. However, there are situations where learners need more help:

- 12% of learners feel uncomfortable sharing with others
- 17% would like to use technology for sharing but need help to get started
- 52% of learners learn more by finding things out for themselves than from the classroom or formal courses (implying a potential lack of confidence for others)

L&D can help empower learners by helping them with their own learning and study skills programmes. Again, Top Deck organisations are proactive in this area:

*Figure 20: Empowering learners in the Top Deck 2*

**Active in building study skills**
- 79% offer learning and study skills training (51%)
- 62% e-enable the support of those skills – modelling effective practice (40%)

**Provide Permission**
- 67% learners are encouraged to organise their own personal learning strategies (34%)
- 78% encourage staff to learn from their mistakes (41%)

**Proactively support**
- 88% offer coaching/mentoring as an important part of the work culture (40%)
- 65% provide line managers with resources so that their teams can get the most out of learning (21%)
- 74% have personal development plans in place for all staff (57%)

**Encourage staff to work out loud**
- 45% encourage learners to keep reflective learning logs (16%)
- 45% use in-house wikis (30%)
- 57% use blogs (30%)
It is clear that today’s learner is more confident and self-directed than many L&D professionals give them credit for. The L&D teams in Top Deck organisations on the other hand recognise their staff as active consumers of learning and are embracing new ways of supporting them on their journey.

In the next chapter we consider how the role of the L&D team is shifting to support both organisational and individual objectives.

CALL TO ACTION:

What can L&D do to empower the self-directed learner?

- Give them permission to take ownership of their development plan
- Implement a competence-based system to help learners prioritise their learning in conjunction with their line managers
- Offer study skills training
- Provide space for learners to reflect on what they have learnt
Top Deck L&D teams are not only meeting new expectations of business leaders and self-directed learners; they are also re-thinking their role as a modern day L&D function. We explore how these teams are being equipped to apply more business and digital thinking to their learning strategy.
5 Equipping the L&D Team

The role of L&D has changed radically in the last ten years. The opportunities and pressures that organisations and their staff currently face demand a new and agile response from today’s L&D teams. The availability of new learning technologies and new theories and models for workplace learning are starting to inform practice.

Following their annual L&D survey, the CIPD urge L&D professionals to look beyond learner satisfaction and measure initiatives in terms of how they add value to the organisation as a whole, and society in general. Technology can play a critical role in this in helping to establish a learning culture through facilitating knowledge sharing and social learning. Digital thinking is also transforming access to learning and building the flexible, agile approach to staff development that underpins business success.

This study has shown that whilst L&D teams have the vision and aspiration to deliver a modernised learning strategy, they lack the skills they need internally to make it a reality. We’ve seen that the Top Deck L&D teams are consistently delivering greater benefits:

- 72% report business benefits related to efficiency (41%)
- 63% report business benefits related to productivity improvement (29%)
- 48% report business benefits relating to organisational culture (21%)

They are not only meeting the challenges of business leaders and the self-directed learner, they are also rethinking their role as a modern day L&D function. There are 3 areas that stand out:

1. Applying business thinking to learning strategy
2. Acting digitally
3. Equipping their teams for change

5.1 Applying business thinking to learning strategy

Across the sample as a whole, 85% are looking to learning innovation to improve organisational performance, but only 27% are achieving it.

"Increasingly L&D needs to become more aligned with the business drivers and become as central to the strategy and operation of the business as any other function." IT Company, UK

Since 2003, our research has shown that what sets high performing L&D teams apart is their ability to apply business thinking to learning strategy.

The Towards Maturity Model that underpins our measures of effective practice provides a reference framework for L&D professionals to re-think their learning strategy in business terms. In every aspect, the tactics of those in the Top Deck are underpinned by sound business thinking, scaling activity to the desired business priorities and driven by outputs.

Yet, on average:

Only 48% regularly review their programmes against business goals

The feature overleaf provides insights into how Top Deck organisations apply business thinking to learning strategy across all aspects of the Towards Maturity model.

"We are becoming Agents of Change: working with people across the organisation to take responsibility for change and development and providing support structures for them to access as required." Consultancy form, UK

30 See Appendix C: The Towards Maturity Model.
### Prioritise Outputs, Not Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Analyse the problem before recommending a solution (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Agree that their strategy for learning allows for changing business priorities (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Agree that everyone on the L&amp;D team understands the strategy, plans and priorities of the business (59% average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Have a plan for how they will meet agreed business metrics (36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus on the Customer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Are proactive in understanding how learners currently learn what they need for their job (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Agree individuals can access clear information on learning opportunities available to them (48%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building Strong Stakeholder Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>Agree that training decisions are taken by business leaders not by trainers (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88%</td>
<td>Involve managers in the design of the most appropriate solution (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Understand the critical questions that we need to ask of external providers (55%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Address Critical Skills Gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>L&amp;D role is shifting from that of learning delivery to consultancy (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Have audited the skills of our L&amp;D staff against those required (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td>Of L&amp;D staff are confident in incorporating the use of new media in learning design (28%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Manage Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Complete and report on pilot projects before implementing major learning initiatives (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>Agree that top managers are involved in promoting learning (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evidence-Based Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51%</td>
<td>Measure specific business metrics when evaluating the effectiveness of a learning programme (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td>Use learning analytics to improve the service they deliver (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Use benchmarking as a performance improvement tool (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.1 Value versus courses

Underpinning the Towards Maturity Model and the success of the Top Deck organisations is a focus on delivering value over courses and a shift to new models of learning to achieve it – see chapter 3.

Historically, L&D have taken a catalogue approach to workplace learning – offering a selection of courses, increasingly online, to anyone lucky enough to be given time or space to attend.

The size of the course catalogue is not necessarily L&D’s most important measure of success, just as the number of course completions is not necessarily the best measure of programme impact. These old style L&D benchmarks merely confirm to the business, L&D’s function as a cost centre.

Top Deck L&D teams are more likely to seek new learning benchmarks that will support performance improvement and demonstrate the value they bring to the business, as opposed to emphasising the cost:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Learning ‘Benchmarks’</th>
<th>Benchmark Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business KPIs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Productivity gains</td>
<td>‣ L&amp;D providing added value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Agility improvements</td>
<td>‣ Business expectations = increase resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff KPIs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Engagement rates</td>
<td>‣ Prioritised actions that deliver results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Time to competency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L&amp;D frameworks proven</strong></td>
<td>‣ Firm foundations: L&amp;D prepared for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to deliver results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Harnessing the power of our data and looking at what it gives us is going to make us even more agile. I think it’s also going to really help us understand what is working and what is not”
Sarah Lindsell, PwC 31

5.2 Digital thinking

In addition to a business driven approach to learning, the Top Deck are clearly turning to technology to turn their strategy into a business reality. They spend a higher proportion of their budget at 25% (19% average). Whilst this is less than last year (35%), they continue to increase the number and range of technologies used.

Technology is becoming an imperative not just for introducing efficiency but also for transforming the learning experience in line with consumer expectations. Top Deck use a wider range of technology tools and delivery media than most: often twice as many use each tool as the sample average. For example:

- 29% use curation tools (12%)
- 33% use achievement goals or badges (19%)
- 46% use Learning Record Stores (21%)
- 44% use mobile app development tools (16%)

“We are actively exploring and developing products beyond the LMS where flexibility, personalisation, speed and cost are more attractive.” Media sector, UK
Out of a list of 50 technologies tracked each year, the following tools are used by over four out of five Top Deck organisations:

- **98%** use virtual meetings (79% average)
- **94%** best practice videos (68%)
- **96%** surveys and questionnaires (81%)
- **100%** e-learning content (90%)
- **92%** online assessment, e.g. to support certification (72%)
- **84%** use virtual classrooms (45% average)
- **84%** information portals – paid for services (56%)

### 5.2.1 Blended Learning in the Top Deck

Those in the Top Deck are more likely to use blended learning (42% vs. 26%) and show a clear shift away from face-to-face delivery towards blended or online learning looks:

- **71%** plan to increase the proportion of blended learning (77% average)
- **76%** plan to increase the proportion of online learning (69%)

Top Deck organisations are also differentiated by the skills programmes that they offer and the extent to which these programmes are supported by technology:

- **88%** offer problem solving skills (71%)
- **88%** L&D professional skills (69%)
- **78%** sales and marketing (68%)
- **88%** innovation/creativity (63%)

The Top Deck e-enable **82%** of process-driven skills and **69%** of ‘soft’ skills – half as much again as average.
Those in the Top Deck are **less likely** to report barriers to technology-enabled training, notably due to:

- Management priorities (27% vs. 48% all)
- Lack of L&D skills (38% vs. 56%)
- Trainer reluctance to adopt new technologies (19% vs 30%)
- User reluctance (33% vs. 47%)
- Access to computers (8% vs. 21%)
- Learner IT skills (17% vs. 33%)

Not only do the Top Deck use more technology, e-enable more programmes and address the barriers to technology-enabled learning more effectively, but they are achieving greater benefits as a result.

Building an innovative approach through technology demands the support of the IT function as well, but for too many organisations, the IT department is not consulted sufficiently at the planning stage, with the result that some of the key barriers to online learning reported by learners relate to the IT infrastructure.

Across the whole sample of learners:

- 34% report lack of, or unsuitable IT equipment
- 31% report unreliable IT infrastructure/bandwidth or firewall problems

Those in the Top Deck enjoy good relationships with their IT department (90% vs. 51% on average), are able to leverage every opportunity as they know what technology-enabled learning their current IT systems can deliver (88% vs. 48% average) and include IT people in the steering group for new initiatives. Whilst some do get involved with the IT policies that impinge on learning innovation, this is an area where there is plenty of scope for further engagement.

- 37% influence the organisation’s BYOD policy (11%)
- 33% influence the organisation social media policy (19%)

**CALL TO ACTION:**

What can L&D do to facilitate digital thinking across the organisation?

- Find out who has responsibility for the organisational policies for social media and Bring Your Own Device. How can L&D exert an influence?
5.3 Equipping for the Future

With 31% of organisations predicting an increase in their L&D team size over the next two years, the Top Deck organisations highlight that new approaches and new skills are going to be needed if the team is to be equipped to deliver change.

Figure 24 shows that all organisations share a common view that a new set of skills are needed in the L&D team moving forward.

Figure 24: Priority skills held in-house

![Figure 24: Priority skills held in-house](image)

What is evident, is that L&D team strengths currently lie in classroom/face-to-face training delivery, learning management/strategy and instructional design. Whilst Top Deck organisations report a higher proportion of their L&D team with each of these eleven skills already in place, the balance is still towards the same elements. Whilst all are moving in the same direction, the Top Deck are more proactive in terms of CPD and are getting there faster.

3 in 10 do not offer any professional skills training to their L&D teams
Given the gap between the skills that L&D leaders know they need and those that they have already, it is perhaps surprising that only 69% offer some form of L&D professional skills training, (88% in the Top Deck). It is also surprising that only 41% (60%) of this training is supported by technology, at a time when so many of the skills required are in technology-enabled learning.

L&D leaders recognise the need to have skilled staff in all these areas and plan the greatest increases in their teams in the areas of online delivery, coaching/mentoring and facilitating social and collaborative learning. Fewer than one in four organisations are planning to strengthen their teams in classroom training delivery or learning management/strategy, although instructional design specialists are increasing for one in three organisations. Those in the Top Deck are primarily planning to expand their teams in the areas of:

- Coaching/mentoring
- Online delivery
- Content development

There are some areas where not even the Top Deck are very active in planning for the future, such as supporting ongoing workplace performance, marketing and stakeholder engagement.

In the New Learning Agenda, we presented evidence for the need to develop L&D professionals as change agents in their organisation. Two years on, whilst the proportion offering CPD has increased from 45% to 54%, there are still too few taking advantage of the many external networks or professional bodies that might help. Those in the Top Deck are less likely to leave L&D development to chance.

- 88% of Top Deck organisations offer formal development programmes for L&D to improve their own skills (69% average)
- 83% encourage their L&D staff to join professional bodies or external networks to help in their own skills development (67%)
- 77% are investing in CPD for their L&D staff (54%)

---


Page | 70 © Copyright Towards Maturity CIC, 2015 London.
With 56% of organisations reporting that their L&D staff lack the skills to implement and manage technology-enabled learning and 50% saying their L&D staff lack knowledge in the potential use and implementation of technology, there are some quick wins to be made. Those with a highly skilled team in place are storming ahead when it comes to getting results.

Those in the Top Deck have audited the skills of their staff and provide CPD where it is needed, including training their classroom trainers – historically a group that have embraced change more readily than some of their more senior colleagues. In the Top Deck:

- **84%** train classroom trainers to use technology to extend learning beyond the classroom (25%)
- **19%** of classrooms trainers are reluctant to adopt new technology (30%)

### Global Comparisons: CPD for L&D Staff

The following percentages show the proportion of organisations providing CPD for their L&D staff:

- Higher Education (79%)
- Middle East, Africa and India (74%)
- USA (60%)
- Charity/Third Sector (55%)
- Australia (38%)
- IT and Telecoms (33%)
- Professional services (55%)
**CALL TO ACTION:**

How can L&D build the skills to embrace change more readily?

- Promote internal and external networking opportunities to your L&D team
- Take a critical look at the skills of your L&D team. When did you last complete a skills audit and plan appropriate CPD to support them?

_In the final section, we will consider the steps that L&D leaders can take to be more ready to embrace change, regardless of your starting point._
The Top Deck are embracing change; they offer a vision for the future. Not only have they made a sea-change in their approach to learning and development, but they are delivering results.

In this section, we set out a call to action for teams at all stages of their journey, to help them take the next step up in developing their learning culture.
6 Embracing Change: Stepping Into the Future

Learning and Development leaders around the globe are no longer just looking to provide an efficient, quality service that improves processes and skills. They also want to facilitate an environment that improves overall business productivity and agility. Their ultimate goal is to support a self-sustaining learning culture where learning becomes work and work becomes learning.

Those at the beginning of their modernisation journey are making strides in improving training efficiency and business processes, but finding it more difficult to respond to change and shift the organisational learning culture.

We have presented the results from the Top Deck to show that some L&D teams are realising their vision of the future right now. Their actions provide a direction for others to follow.

Figure 26: Differences in reported achieved benefits by the Top Deck compared to the bottom quartile of the TMI

The Top Deck organisations are letting go of traditional models of learning and are thinking beyond the course to find new ways of improving business performance. To achieve this, they are working hand in hand with business stakeholders to identify performance improvement needs, proactively understanding how to support self-directed learners and, in doing so, are redefining the services offered by the L&D Team.
Top Deck organisations show us the secrets of delivering organisational value and creating a culture to nurture adaptable talent:

- **Business leaders** play an active role—they expect L&D first and foremost to improve performance and work with them to achieve it.
- **L&D, HR and lines of business** work collectively together to achieve those common goals.
- **Staff** are being empowered to learn for themselves.
- **L&D teams** are applying business and digital thinking to adapt service offerings to the modern workplace.

This involved embracing change throughout the business. However, sometimes this level of change can be overwhelming when there is much to do. Even for those in the Top Deck, there are a number of action areas where they can still strive for excellence.

To help you prioritise your next steps into the future we have analysed 33 behaviours across the Towards Maturity Model discussed in this report. We have identified the actions that will make the greatest difference at each stage of your journey. The figure overleaf summarises the key activity areas that will help you:

- **Establish firm foundations** – activities exhibited by at least 50% of the whole sample in this study, which contribute to efficiency and process improvement
- **Embed and engage** – activities that kick in at the next stage of maturity, where organisations move beyond the course to support productivity, engagement and agility.
- **Fine-tune performance** – activities that consistently set the Top Deck apart from the rest of their peers in the top quartile, as they start to influence learning culture
- **Dig deeper** – Finally, the activities that are making a difference for the Top Deck (but are still reported by fewer than 50% of them).

This report lays out the foundations of what needs to change in the way we support learning in business today and why.

*The Top Deck point the way, but these quick wins are for those seeking to make change happen, one step at a time.*

---

33 See Appendix C: The Towards Maturity Model
Figure 27: Stepping Into the Future: Recommended Actions

**ESTABLISH FIRM FOUNDATIONS**

- Align L&D team activity with the strategic goals of the organisation
- Make sure all on the L&D team understand those goals
- Analyse the problem before recommending a solution
- Ensure your offering supports the skills the business needs & is delivered in time
- Establish and communicate the role of managers
- Welcome innovation and contributions from users
- Help staff be confident users of technology
- Formalise approach to working with SMEs & classroom trainers when designing learning
- Review and remove programmes when no longer relevant

**ENGAGE AND EMBED**

- Agree business KPI’s that you want to improve with senior managers
- Establish a plan for how you meet those targets
- Equip Line Managers to get the best out of learning
- Proactively find out how staff learn what they need to do their job (with or without you)
- Encourage individuals to organise their own personal learning strategies
- Help them proactively connect and share
- Model change through learning design:
  - Integrate learning into the onboarding process
  - Innovate approaches to leadership development
  - Blend technologies
  - Use storytelling to capture attention
- Build relationships with the IT department
- Have a communications plan for all stakeholders
- Audit the skills of your L&D team against those required (fill the gaps!)

**FINE-TUNE PERFORMANCE**

- Routinely involve users and managers up front in design
- Help staff understand how to identify what they need to do their job
- Use content curation strategies to help make sense of resources available
- Focus on the blend of interventions:
  - Micro-content
  - Existing performance support to encourage learning transfer
  - Games and sims
- Don’t just consider the course as your option for building performance
- Use learning analytics to improve the L&D service

**DIG DEEPER**

- Capture financial data relating to business improvement and analyse L&D contribution to success
- Encourage staff to keep reflective learning logs
- Use benchmarking as a tool to improve learning performance
- Volunteer to influence key IT policies that impact learning (e.g. BYOD, Social media)
- Use all available support systems to promote a culture of self-reliance not dependency

**Be proactive:**

- Be aware of how staff are already using social tools to share ideas
- Encourage staff to solve problems using social media
- Use technology more effectively to adapt and personalise learning
- Support managers to make time for continuous learning
- Help staff build the confidence in managing their learning journey
Appendices

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About Towards Maturity
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B: Study Design

This study draws on the perspectives of both leaders in Learning and Development and the learners themselves in order to understand the factors that influence successful modernisation of learning and development across organisations of all shapes and sizes.

Data collection

Data for this report is drawn from 3 main sources:

Online Benchmark review through the Benchmark Centre

Individuals who have taken part in previous studies with Towards Maturity were invited to review their learning and development strategy using an online Benchmark Centre. The review is a 7 stage in-depth process which the L&D leader can revisit repeatedly to check and update their answers as their circumstances and approaches change. All data used in this report was updated after September 2014.

Online Benchmark review through an online survey tool

Individuals with responsibility for modernising learning strategy in the workplace were invited to participate in a two-part online review between June and August 2015. The online review mirrored the questions in the Benchmark Centre such that data could later be uploaded for participants to revisit and refresh their data. The questions followed the process shown below:

For the purpose of this study, we define the term technology-enabled learning as: “the use of any technology across the learning process, including skills diagnostics, learning delivery, support, management (of learners and content), informal and formal learning.”

Learning Landscape Audit

This report also references data from a sample of responses from over 1,600 learners that took part in a Towards Maturity Learning Landscape Audit between September 2014 and June 2015.

The Benchmark question set

The Towards Maturity Benchmark questions have been developed following extensive industry collaboration to reflect current trends and thinking. We are particularly grateful to Charles Jennings, Clive Shepherd, Jane Hart, Jay Cross and others who have provided input into the 2015 question set. Many questions have remained consistent with earlier studies to enable a longitudinal analysis over time.
The questions are of four main types:

- **Factual questions**: Details of the benefits and barriers, skills and technologies, users and locations for learning – continuing a longitudinal study first reported in 2010\(^{34}\).
- **Forecasts**: Participants were asked to forecast the changes in budgets, L&D teams and technologies expected by 2017 and comment on their challenges and vision for the future.
- **Quantitative questions**: Development costs, training costs, study time, delivery time and time to competency resulting from implementing learning technologies. Responses were used to derive Key Performance Indicators in each of these areas.
- **Benchmark review**: Consisting of 123 action statements that respondents were asked to agree or disagree with on a 9 point scale. Questions were largely opinion-based and used to derive the Towards Maturity Index™ first introduced in 2010.

**Promotion and communications**

An extensive email campaign ran from the beginning of June to the end of August 2015. The study was distributed by our Ambassador network and supporting media and networking organisations.

As an incentive, all respondents were offered access to the Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre™ to revisit their responses and received a Personalised Benchmark Report™ to support performance improvement. This report provided benchmark data on both factual performance indicators such as the Towards Maturity Index™, efficiency benefits, take up and business agility together with a benchmark profile of their own implementation practice in order to highlight areas of strength and weakness.

**Data Analysis**

In most cases the analysis and data presentation is a summary of the data, expressed in percentage terms. Since respondents could opt out of any section as they progressed through the study, the actual number of the sample varies from question to question. Responses are segmented on the basis of several factors:

- Quartile / Percentile in the Towards Maturity Index™. Those in the top quartile are referred to as ‘Top Learning Companies’. Those in the top decile are referred to as the ‘Top Deck’.
- Organisation location, size, industry, sector and length of time using learning technologies
- The job role and line of reporting of respondents.

Differences between groups are given only when there are over 30 data sets in the group and the difference is statistically significant.

---

Benchmark Participant Demographics

About the individuals taking part

Over 600 individuals provided detailed information for this study. 475 individuals completed every section and received their Personalised Benchmark Report™. Dropout was greatest amongst those in very small companies, those not in L&D roles or with limited experience of using learning technologies and those reporting in the line of business – who either did not have the knowledge to hand to complete all the questions or felt that they were not the best suited to answer.

Over 84% of participants stated that simply taking part in the Benchmark review had provoked food for thought and generated new ideas to aid implementation.

“We need to speak to organisations currently embracing technology for learning”
“The questions would appear to form the best ever best practice guide!”

Two thirds were L&D leaders reporting either to HR/L&D central or within a line of business:

- Reporting to HR/L&D central: 67%
- Reporting to HR/L&D within a line of business: 15%
- Working within the line of business: 17%

69% had responsibility for e-learning strategy and management as all or part of their job role. A further 6% were business leaders or senior managers not in L&D or HR.
About the companies and organisations that they represent

Participants were evenly distributed between industries and all sectors were represented:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit sector</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single site</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-site – single nation</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multinational</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisation size varied, ranging from micro businesses with fewer than 10 employees, to large multi-nationals operating globally from a number of locations worldwide.

The 2015 benchmark attracted respondents from around the world.

61% of participants were from the UK, with 10% from other European countries.

Organisation size:

- 1-9 employees: 17%
- 10-249 employees: 13%
- 250-499 employees: 9%
- 500-999 employees: 10%
- 1000-4999 employees: 28%
- 5000-19999 employees: 20%
- 20000+ employees: 3%

Figure 29: Organisation size

Industry sectors of Benchmark participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European countries</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada/USA</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-East/Africa/India</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South/Central America</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants reflected a similar pattern of perceived maturity to previous years. The majority still considered that they were starting to develop and co-ordinate their use of learning technologies. The majority of organisations describing themselves as embedded were from the private sector.

Figure 31: Maturity of Benchmark participants
Top Learning Companies could be identified at all stages of experience of implementing a technology-enabled learning strategy. However, 45% of them were drawn from those with over 10 years’ experience (35% in 2014). 15% of those who had over 10 years’ experience were to be found in the bottom quartile. 47% of those who were just getting started were in the bottom quartile.

Top Deck companies had greater than 4 years of experience. Most were organisations from the private sector and those with between 1,000 and 20,000 staff.

Table 4: Distribution of participants between the TMI quartiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>% of Top Deck</th>
<th>% of Top Learning Companies</th>
<th>% of Bottom Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 years plus</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C: The Towards Maturity Model

Through our previous research, we have been able to identify six workstreams of implementation behaviours that characterise maturity and directly link to the successful outcomes of learning strategy modernisation.

Now, with 12 years of Benchmarking data from over 4,400 unique organisations, the reliability of the Towards Maturity Benchmark is established in the UK and across the world; many organisations are using the Towards Maturity Model to help inform ongoing strategy development.

**Towards Maturity Model Work Streams**

**Top performing organisations, mature in their use of learning technologies, are increasingly likely to:**

**Defining Need**

Align implementation with strategic and tactical needs of the organisation. **Strategic alignment** supports long term organisational goals with clearly defined vision (endorsed by business leaders) which is flexible enough to shift with changing business priorities. **Business alignment** ensures relevance, delivering short term results.

Provide staff with the confidence, motivation and opportunity to learn in a way that suits them best. They consider **choices** for their staff (in terms of control, access and information available to them) as well as addressing issues of **motivation** (such as recognition, career development and supporting work life balance).

**Learner Context**

Maximise opportunities to integrate learning into the wider working context. They consider **technical environment** (IT relationships and infrastructure), **work culture** (line management and workplace performance culture) and **talent management** (proactively supporting the wider talent strategy).

**Work Context**

Build the skills and confidence of the L&D professionals who are supporting workplace learning and performance. This includes understanding current skills and attitudes (L&D essentials), designing and transferring learning, supporting performance and facilitating collaboration.

**Building Capability**

Focus on change management and marketing activities to engage influential stakeholders. **Implementing change** effectively within the business includes **involving leaders** for top down support, **engaging trainers** providing critical integration with the classroom and **empowering individuals** to create engaged and confident learners.

**Ensuring Engagement**

Understand and highlight business impact by **gathering feedback, measuring effectiveness** in terms of business metrics and **communicating benefits** back to key stakeholders.

**Demonstrating Value**

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35 For a more in-depth article on the Towards Maturity model – see *Impact*, the journal of applied research in workplace e-learning at: http://www.towardsmaturity.org/article/2010/01/15/impact-journal-applied-research-workplace-e-learn/
The **Towards Maturity Index™** is a single benchmark of implementation maturity across all six of the workstreams in the Towards Maturity Model. Improving the TM Index will help organisations improve adoption and overall performance.

Note that the Benchmark score is defined as the score exceeded by 25% of the sample. Where four or more entries have been made by a single organisation, their scores are averaged for the purposes of calculating the Benchmark scores.

The following tables illustrate the benchmark scores for 2015.

*Table 5: Towards Maturity Model Benchmark scores: overview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work stream</th>
<th>2015 Average</th>
<th>2015 Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining need</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>7.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner context</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work context</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>6.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building capability</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring engagement</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating results</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average TMI</th>
<th>2015 Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.39</td>
<td>58.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find out your Towards Maturity Index™ and Benchmark scores go to: www.towardsmaturity.org/mybenchmark
Table 6: Towards Maturity Model benchmark scores: 19 activity areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towards Maturity Workstreams</th>
<th>2015 Average</th>
<th>2015 Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic alignment</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business alignment</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>7.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual choices</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual motivation</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical environment</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent management</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work culture</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>6.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building capability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;D essentials</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing learning</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring learning</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting performance</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating collaboration</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering individuals</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging trainers</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving leaders</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing change</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering feedback</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring effectiveness</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating benefits</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D: Organisations in this research study

The following organisations responded in full to the Benchmark review and did not withhold permission to publish their names in this report:

AbbVie Ltd
ADCU
Addaction
Adviza Partnership
Agilon
AITD
AkzoNobel UK
ALDI
All Leisure Holiday Group
Allen & Overy
American Express
APAC Ltd
AQA
Aramco Overseas
Avon and Somerset Constabulary
AXA UK
Barclays Africa
BBC
BNZ
Bournemouth Independent Group
Bracknell Forest Council
Brambles Ltd
British Council
British Gas
British Red Cross
BSH Home Appliances Ltd
BT plc
Business Stream
BWBSL Ltd
Cafcass
CARE International
Cerner Ltd
Charities Aid Foundation
Citco
Citi (EMEA)
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
City of London Corporation
CM Group
CME MedicalUK Ltd
Colt Technology Services
Compassion in World Farming
Cotswold Outdoor
CRI
Cross Country Trains
DAS Group
Day Lewis Pharmacy
DB Mobility Logistics AG
Defence Science & Technology Lab
Devon County Council
Dimensions (UK)
Direct Line Group
DLNR CRC
Domtar
DWP
Eddie Stobart
EDF Energy
Elgar Learning
Eras Ltd
Essex County Council
Fairfax Media
Farmfoods Ltd
Fidessa
Financial Conduct Authority
Fisher & Paykel Healthcare
FiveTen Group
Footprint Media
Forever New
Four Seasons Health Care
Francis Crick Institute
GateGroup
GDS
Getinge Infection Control AB
Getty Images
GSK
Hall & Woodhouse
Hanover Housing
Harrison Catering Services
Hiscox Insurance
House of Fraser
HSE
Intelligent Energy Ltd
Interfleet
Interroll Holding GmbH
Iomart Group
Janssen
Janssen EMEA - J&J
John Lewis Partnership
Jurys Inn Group
Keep Wales Tidy
Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Kotter UK
Labour
Loughborough University
LRMG Performance Agency
LV=
Manor
Mars Incorporated
Mazars LLP
MDB Consulting
Meallmore Ltd
Mercy
Michael Hernandez
Milestone Engagement
Ministry of Defence
Mortgage Advice Bureau
Multivac
NatCen Social Research
National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT)
National Foundation for Educational Research
National Grid
National Nuclear Laboratory
Nestle
Newton Europe
NFU Mutual
NHS Education for Scotland
NIHR CRN
Oracle
Ordina NV
PA Consulting
Parkinson's UK
Pendragon PLC
PMA Companies
PPG industries
Premier Foods plc
Prior's Court Foundation
Prosell learning
Pwc
Real Time Education Limited
Renfrewshire Council
Richmond Fellowship
Roche Products Limited
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Rubio's Restaurants, Inc.
Save the Children
Scott Baderp
Sense
Sika Ltd
SimCorp A/S
Skills Funding Agency
Somerset County Council
Specsavers
Spirax Sarco
Sporting Edge
St John Ambulance
St Vincent's Health Australia
Staffordshire County Council
Subsea 7
TACT
TAFENSW
TalkTalk Business
Telefonica UK (O2)
Tesco Bank
Tesco PLC
Thames Valley Police
The Body Shop International
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
The LR Management Group
The Priory Group
The Zenith
Together Trust
Tony Gee and Partners
TUI
UCB
University of Bristol
University of Northampton
UNOCHA
Veale Wasbrough Vizards
Village Roadshow Limited
Virgin Media
Volvo Group UK and Eire
Warringah Council
Warwickshire County Council
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
Whistl UK Ltd
Whitbread
Wolters Kluwer Belgium
World Vision International
Worldmark International Ltd
Wulvern Housing
Yorkshire Building Society
# E: Data tables

## Table 7: Extended enterprise audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interns</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our customers / service users</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our contractors / freelancers</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our suppliers</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 8: Intangible benefits of a technology-enabled learning strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intangible Benefit</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business benefit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology-enabled learning has made a significant contribution to increasing our revenue</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology-enabled learning has contributed to improvements in productivity across the organisation</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers agree that e-learning delivers additional business benefit</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff impact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have increased the proportion of staff who are now on learning programmes</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff can access learning directly relevant to their job</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners can determine their own path through a programme of learning</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners put what they learn into practice quickly</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have noticed positive changes in staff behaviour</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners recommend technology-enabled learning to colleagues to improve job performance</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9: Barriers to online learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not seen as a management priority</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;D staff lack knowledge about the potential use and implementation of technology</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills amongst L&amp;D staff to implement and manage e-learning</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills amongst employees to manage own learning</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance by classroom training staff to adopt new technology</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance by users to learn with new technology</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance by senior managers to use online materials</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance by line managers to encourage new ways of learning</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of set-up, development and maintenance</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of attractive, high-quality e-learning that supports our business goals</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past experience of e-learning hasn’t fulfilled our expectations</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-learning too generic and not sufficiently tailored to our needs</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable ICT infrastructure/low bandwidth/technical restrictions/firewall</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient staff access to computers to be worthwhile</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner ICT skills</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from IT department</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace of technological change</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F: Towards Maturity Ambassadors

This report is free to download thanks to the support of Towards Maturity’s Ambassadors, who share our values that independent research should be freely available to all.

We’re the CIPD — the professional body for HR and people development. We are the voice of a worldwide community of 140,000 members committed to championing better work and working lives. We’ve been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. Through our expertise and independent research we provide a valuable point of view on the rapidly changing world of work.

Brightwave Group is the leading global agency for next generation learning solutions, systems and services. We place our expertise, innovation and creativity at the centre of our work, designing award-winning learning solutions that deliver your business objectives and truly engage your learners. Our experts work in collaboration with clients to create a perfectly tailored solution for their requirements – from onboarding and systems training to major business transformation and beyond.

We provide affordable eLearning to more than 120 third sector organisations, helping to develop 500,000+ staff and volunteers. Our unique collaborative concept, with networking, workshops & awards, supports learning and development success.

More than a million leaders and managers turn to the online Toolkit for Managers for instant inspiration – our Toolkit is the perfect resource to support learning in the flow of work. New for 2015: We’re launching the UK’s first 702010 Practitioner Programme with Charles Jennings, accredited by the ILM - just one of the unique ways we support learning and development success.

With keynote addresses, case studies, café sessions, theory presentations, practical debate, google hangouts and a wide range of collaborative and networking opportunities, the conference programme is a great opportunity to listen to – and interact with – some of the leading thinkers, visionaries and practitioners in workplace learning today.

In a faster, more complex world than ever before, LEO sits alongside organisations to help them move learning to the heart of their business strategy. With an unrivalled combination of experience, expertise and capability, we design and deliver a strategic mix of world-class multi-device learning content, media, tools, and platforms. This enables us to deliver end-to-end learning architectures that fit seamlessly into global businesses and transform performance.

SuccessFactors provides the leading cloud-based SuccessFactors HCM Suite, which helps HR drive business execution with solutions that are complete, beautiful, and flexible enough to start anywhere – optimizing your workforce today and preparing them for tomorrow. With approximately 25 million subscription seats globally, we strive to delight our customers by delivering innovative solutions and best practices insights from serving our broad and diverse customer base.

Acteon develops award-winning communication and learning solutions to empower growth, change and development. Acteon’s solutions reflect the specific requirements of their clients – from bespoke blended programmes on induction, product knowledge and compliance training, to support with improving engagement and driving change. Whether the need is a single ‘course’ or a global corporate programme, Acteon creates learning interventions that align with individual and organisational goals.
Docebo’s Cloud-based, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Enterprise learning management system (LMS) is sold in more than 80 countries. Established in 2005, Docebo (Latin for “I will teach”) has over 28,000 installations and offers an enterprise solution for mid-sized to large organizations. Customers benefit from Docebo solutions thanks to a scalable pricing model, a third party integration (via API), and reliable service available 24/7 to further enhance the user experience.

DPG is at the forefront of developing and professionalising the L&D sector, and is sole partner with CIPD Training to deliver the CIPD Level 7 Advanced Qualifications. Always innovating and pushing boundaries, DPG provides a unique Award-winning Community and cutting edge delivery methods. Committed to driving forward and professionalising the L&D industry, the research gained from Towards Maturity helps keep our programmes current and relevant.

eCom is focused on the delivery, tracking and reporting of workforce learning and development, through innovative technologies. Our products and services address a range of workforce management, development and training challenges, including eLearning, online assessment, blended learning, competency management and badging. We have a strong belief in client partnership, working with public and private organisations across many countries and sectors.

GoodPractice provides toolkits, e-learning and development assessments for a wide range of different organisations. These can be utilised as standalone resources or seamlessly integrated into a blended learning solution. All of our products can support a 70:20:10 learning and development strategy. www.goodpractice.com

Kallidus is a leading provider of learning and talent solutions, with 15 years’ experience in supporting performance improvement for over 200 clients. Dedicated to customer excellence, Kallidus works in partnership to support the development of talented people and to deliver real business change within organisations of all sizes, in all sectors, including well-known names like Boots, O2, Transport for London and Eurostar.

City & Guilds Kineo helps the world’s leading businesses improve performance through learning and technology. We combine 130 years of quality in learning, with award-winning customer service and innovation. We’re global, and we love to share. We’re here to help make our clients heroes through a range of products and services including multi-device and bespoke e-learning, LMS and learning portals, blended learning, consultancy, apprenticeships and qualifications.

KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax, and Advisory services. Our clients choose us for our breadth and depth of knowledge coupled with our learning technology skills. We develop bespoke digital learning solutions that are designed with the learner experience at the heart. We have a wide range of simulations, bite-sized modules, and off-the-shelf resources across a diverse selection of content areas.

Kydon is a leading provider of learning technologies and technology-enhanced learning solutions in Asia. Our mission is to revolutionize learning methods by fusing advanced pedagogies with cutting-edge technologies to deliver learning environments that engage learner’s intellect and imagination.

LRMG is a performance agency, aligning people and environments to optimal performance through a variety of performance-enhancing solutions that include Management Consulting, Blended Learning, eLearning, Custom eLearning, Video-Based Learning Resources, Learning and Talent Management Technology, IT Talent Solutions, Data Visualisation and Organisational Charting. LRMG currently has offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Mauritius and representation in another 18 African territories.
Lumesse Learning provides learning content solutions to organisations across the UK and Nordics enabling them to engage and nurture employees to fulfil their potential. Lumesse provides Talent Solutions to more than 2,300 organisations in over 70 countries. Our unique and highly adaptable Solutions allow customers to capitalise on the fast evolution of new technologies and disruptive business conditions, while meeting all business needs locally and globally.

Raytheon Professional Services (RPS) is a global leader in training services and training outsourcing. For more than 90 years, in 125 countries and almost 30 languages, RPS has helped organisations transform the way they provide learning across the enterprise. A proven leader in the design, development, administration and delivery of performance-driven training solutions that align employees, customers, suppliers and other partners with key business goals and project objectives.

A market leader in learning solutions, Redware are revolutionising the way people do business through systems with a difference. Designed to get the most out of the user experience, their platforms empower organisations to learn in a way that's flexible and creates engaging learning journeys.

Reed Learning has evolved from a leading training course provider to a global learning consultancy. They use a unique approach, underpinned by data and research, to help leading organisations in the private and public sectors to deliver a measurable impact through learning. They have a strong track record across five key areas: bespoke learning solutions; learning consultancy; measurement and evaluation; managed services; qualifications and courses.

Saba delivers a cloud-based intelligent learning and talent management solution used by leading organisations worldwide to hire, develop, engage and inspire their employees. With machine learning at its core, Saba Cloud offers proactive, personalised recommendations on candidates, connections and content to help employees learn, develop and engage better in their organisation. Saba has more than 31 million users and 2,200 customers across 195 countries and 37 languages.

Skillsoft is a pioneer in the fields of learning and talent management with a long history of innovation. Skillsoft provides cloud-based learning solutions for its customers worldwide, ranging from global enterprises to mid-sized and small businesses. Skillsoft’s customer support teams draw on a wealth of in-house experience, flexible delivery platforms and a comprehensive learning e-library to develop off-the-shelf and custom learning programmes tailored to cost-effectively meet customer needs.

Speexx is empowering communication for more than 8 million users in 1,500 multinational organisations all over the world. The cloud-based solution features blended language learning for all users across all devices, as well as administration services, business analytics and APIs for enterprise customers, from SMB to Fortune 500. Speexx is headquartered in Munich, New York, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Sao Paulo, Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore.

Sponge UK creates custom-made e-learning solutions designed to supercharge workplace performance. The company supports global organisations with tailored courses and campaigns that lead to accelerated productivity, increased sales, compliant workplaces and enhanced staff effectiveness. The team focus is on making learning absorbing so people can connect with the content and apply what they learn. Sponge UK is the 2014 Elearning Development Company of the Year.

Find out more at: www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors
About Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity is an independent benchmarking practice that provides authoritative research and expert advisory services to help assess and improve the effectiveness and consistency of L&D performance within organisations. The Towards Maturity portfolio includes:

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study™
http://towardsmaturity.org/benchmark
The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognized longitudinal study on the effective implementation of learning innovation based on the input of 4,400 organisations and 18,000 learners over 12 years. Towards Maturity continuously surveys and studies how people learn at work. This data is used to help L&D leaders assess and improve the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their learning provision. Previous research papers and sector specific reports are available through the Towards Maturity Shop.

Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre™
http://mybenchmark.towardsmaturity.org
A dedicated centre to complete your Benchmark and apply everything we know about good practice to gain personal, practical time saving advice in one place. Follow the online three-step continuous improvement process and Benchmark your current approach with your peers.

Towards Maturity Strategic Review™
http://www.towardsmaturity.org/strategicreview
The Towards Maturity Strategic Review is a deeper analysis and comparison of your Benchmark against those who are already utilising learning innovation to deliver bottom line results and success. It helps you analyse and interpret your personal benchmark report to establish a base line and identify the next action steps for performance improvement leading to good practice within your organisation.

Towards Maturity Learning Landscape™
www.towardsmaturity.org/learner
The Towards Maturity Learning Landscape provides critical insights to help you understand the behaviours of your staff so you can design learning solutions that can be embedded more effectively into the workflow. It supports new learning technology strategies whilst mitigating risk when introducing new programmes or models of learning.

Towards Maturity Sector Benchmark Groups
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmarkgroups
Join senior L&D leaders in your sector three times a year to use the Towards Maturity Benchmark to support performance improvement, prioritise action planning and accelerate progress. Attendance supports faster business results, strategic and tactical insights and an invaluable opportunity to network.

Visit www.towardsmaturity.org for more information.
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