



L&D playbook 2025: skills, alignment, and AI's impact on learning

Enterprise learning 2025 annual report



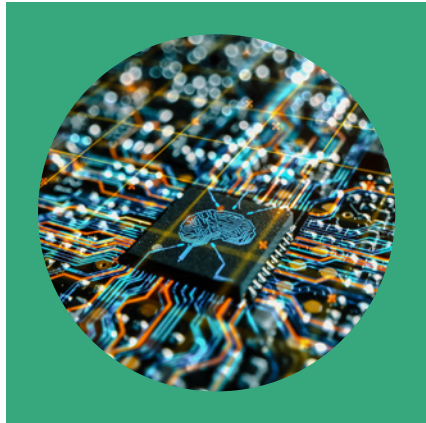
“We’re not just adapting to AI; we’re reimagining L&D through an AI-first lens. The question isn’t whether to use AI, but how to leverage it most effectively to drive both learning outcomes and business results.”

Chief Learning Officer
Fortune 500 technology company



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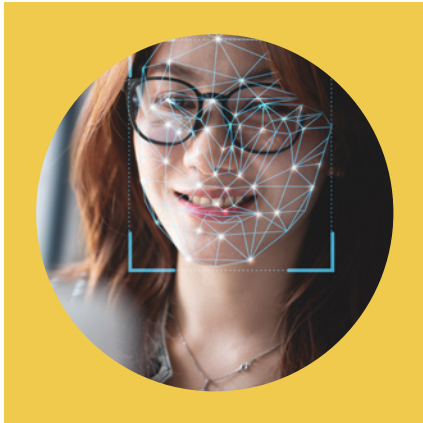
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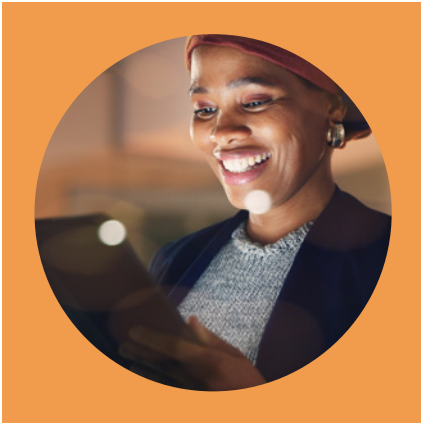
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Executive summary: embrace the AI-powered future of learning

The Learning and Development (L&D) landscape is at a pivotal moment of transformation. Organizations are grappling with the dual challenges of rapid technological disruption and shifting workforce demands. In this context skill gaps have emerged as the single largest barrier to business transformation. The World Economic Forum found that 63% of employers identify them as a critical hurdle. Yet, this challenge also presents an unprecedented opportunity: **85% of employers are prioritizing upskilling and reskilling initiatives by 2030, recognizing that workforce agility is essential to staying competitive in an AI-driven world.**

While 61% of respondents from large organizations (5,000+ employees) in our survey express satisfaction with their current learning programs, the remaining 39% of respondents from large organizations (5,000+ employees) express a dissatisfaction with their current learning programs, which represents a critical opportunity to improve and address unmet needs in creating a workforce ready for future challenges.

This report is your roadmap to thriving in this era of change. Drawing insights from a survey of 200 L&D leaders and informed by global trends, we'll explore how leading organizations are leveraging AI to close skill gaps, align learning strategies with business goals, and deliver measurable results.

Key findings we'll explore:

- **AI adoption surge.** 53% of organizations are already using or planning to implement AI in their L&D strategies by the end of this year, a significant increase from 38% in our previous survey.
- **Strategic alignment is your compass.** 65% state that their executive leadership prioritize aligning L&D programs with business goals to ensure initiatives directly contribute to the bottom line.
- **Demonstrating ROI is key to securing buy-in.** While 42% of respondents find it challenging to showcase learning impact, we'll provide strategies to overcome this hurdle.
- **Reskilling and upskilling are non-negotiable.** 57% of organizations emphasize these initiatives to prepare for AI-driven workplace changes — equip your workforce for the future.

This report will provide you with actionable insights, practical tips, and real-world examples to help you:

- **Navigate the AI revolution:** understand the key trends and opportunities.
- **Align L&D with business strategy:** make learning a strategic driver of organizational success.
- **Demonstrate measurable impact:** prove the ROI of your L&D initiatives.
- **Build a future-ready workforce:** prepare your team for the challenges and opportunities of the AI-driven workplace.

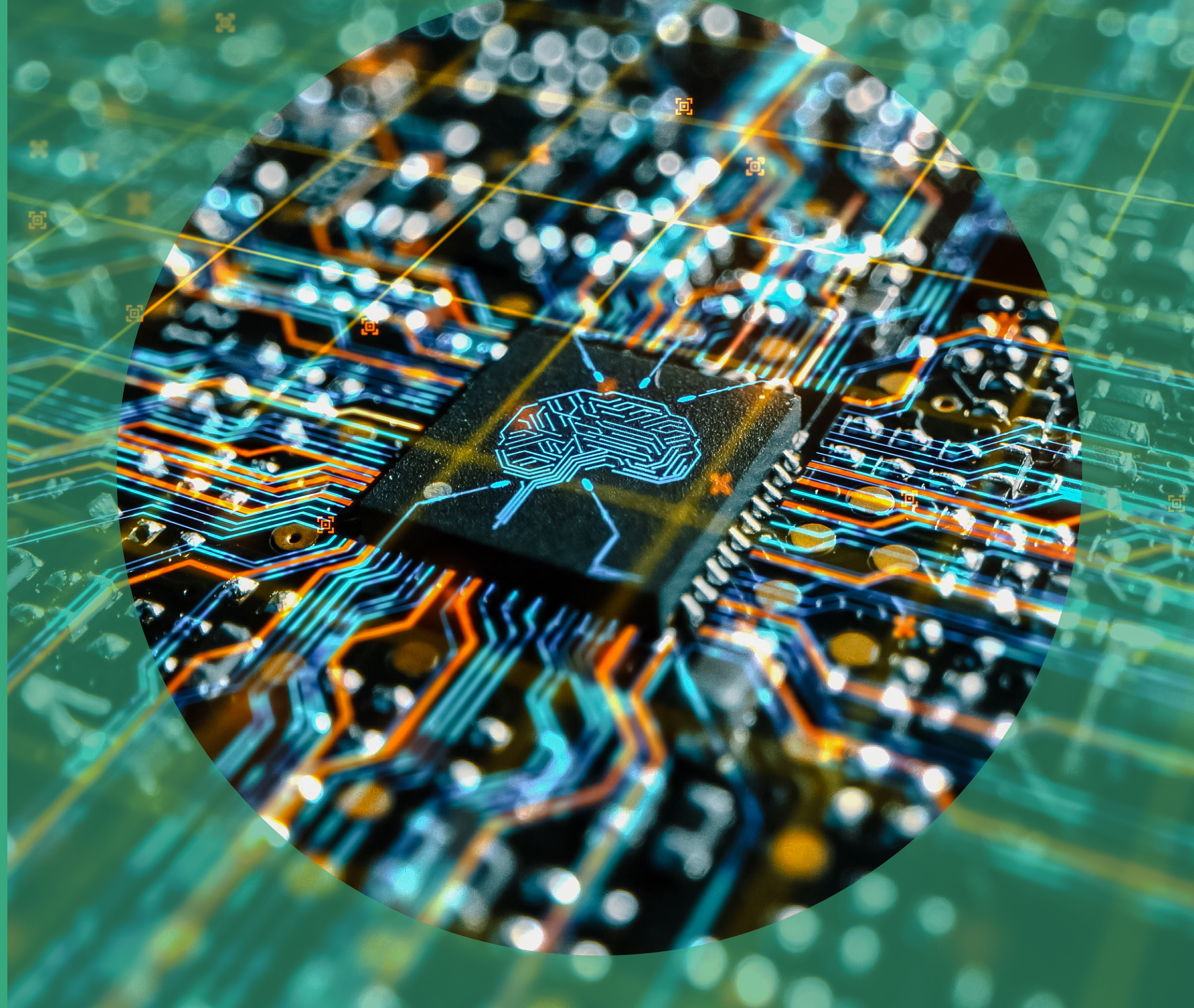


Let's get started!

01

The AI revolution in learning: seize the opportunity

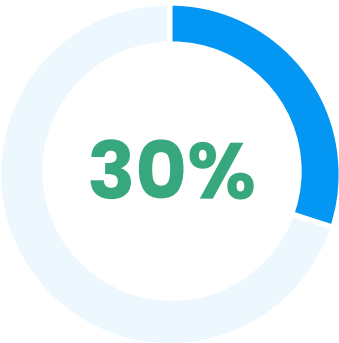
Artificial intelligence is no longer a buzzword—it's the driving force behind the future of work and learning. 53% of organizations are actively integrating or planning to integrate AI into their L&D strategies, marking a significant shift from the previous focus on basic digitization and remote learning solutions. This shift isn't just incremental; it's transformative.



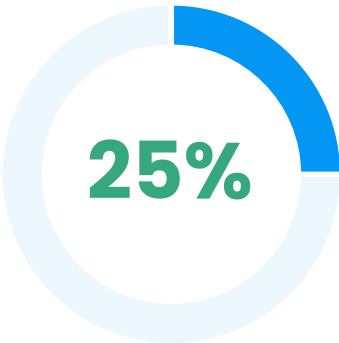
The impact of AI is multifaceted:

- 1 **Personalized learning:** 57% of organizations expect to increase their use of AI for creating adaptive learning paths, tailoring content and pace to individual learner needs.
- 2 **Content creation:** generative AI is being leveraged for rapid course curation and learning program development, enabling L&D teams to create more targeted and relevant content faster.
- 3 **Analytics and ROI measurement:** AI is seen as a crucial solution to the long-standing challenge of demonstrating learning impact, providing data-driven insights into learning effectiveness.

While the potential is huge, adoption is still in its early stages in the Learning department. **Only 13% of organizations have fully integrated AI into their L&D strategy, while 33% are experimenting.** This means you have a real opportunity to become a leader in AI-driven L&D.



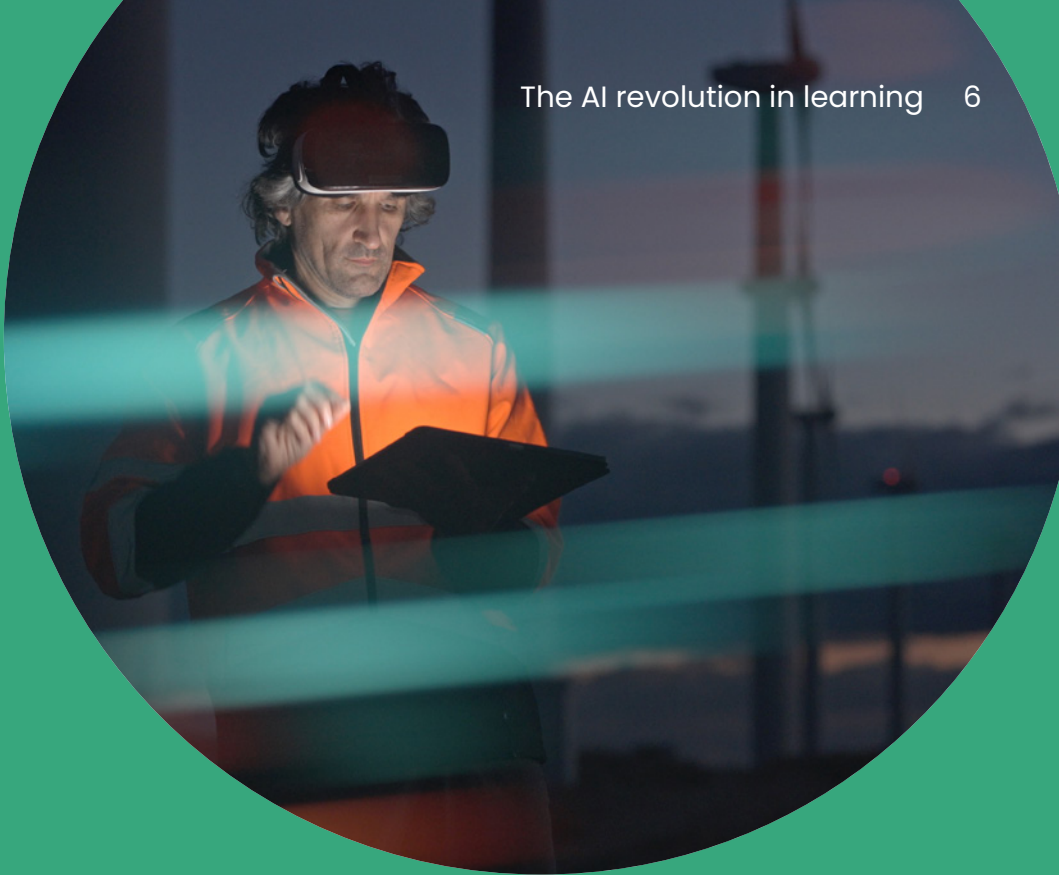
30% increase
in relevant skill
acquisition



25% reduction
in time-to-
proficiency
for new roles

Tip: Start small, scale smart

Don't feel overwhelmed by the possibilities. Begin with targeted pilot projects in areas where AI can deliver quick wins. Think personalized learning recommendations or automated content tagging. Use these successes to build momentum and expertise before tackling more complex applications.



EXAMPLE:
Proactive skills gap reduction in action

A global manufacturing firm, facing rapid technological advancements, implemented AI-based roleplay to address a growing skills gap. The tool analyzes employee competencies against evolving job requirements, automatically adjusting coaching and personalizing learning paths. This resulted in a 30% increase in relevant skill acquisition and a 25% reduction in time-to-proficiency for new roles.

“AI isn’t just enhancing our L&D efforts; it’s redefining how we approach workforce development,” notes the Head of Global Learning at the firm. “We’re now able to address skill gaps before they impact our business performance.”

02

Reskilling and upskilling: an investment in the future

The rapid pace of technological change, especially in AI, has intensified the focus on reskilling and upskilling. 57% of organizations recognize these initiatives as crucial for workforce agility and competitiveness in the face of AI-driven disruption.



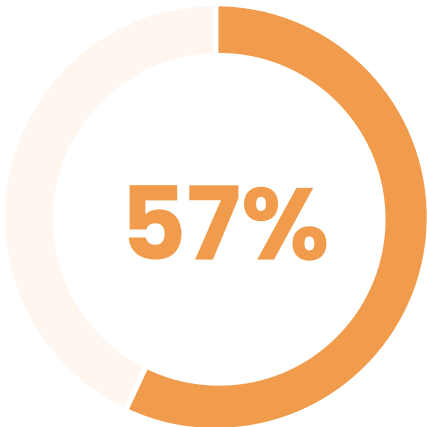
Focus on these key areas:

Technical skills: 75% of organizations prioritize industry-specific technical skills, including data science, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.

Human skills: 70% emphasize uniquely human skills like emotional intelligence, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, which become even more valuable in an AI-driven world.

Data literacy: 52% are focusing on developing data analysis and interpretation skills across the workforce to make data-driven decisions.

Human-AI collaboration: The future is about humans and AI working together. 29% are proactively developing skills in human-AI collaboration, teaching employees how to work effectively alongside intelligent systems.



57% of organizations recognize technical human data literacy and human/AI collaboration as crucial for workforce agility and competitiveness in the face of AI driven disruption



Tip: build an AI-ready workforce—here’s how

Create a comprehensive AI readiness program that blends technical skills (data analysis, machine learning) with uniquely human skills (critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence). **Emphasize how AI augments human capabilities versus replacing.**

03

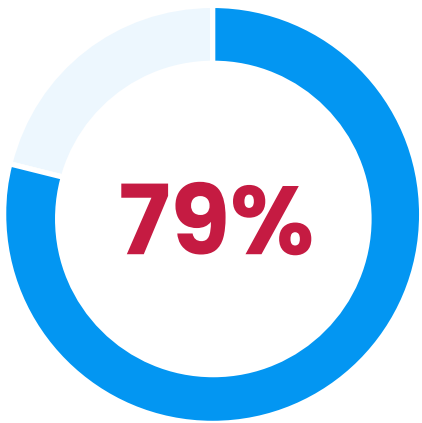
Blending AI with the human touch

The way learning is delivered
continues to evolve towards more
flexible AI-enhanced models.



Trends in learning delivery:

- AI-driven personalization:** 62% of organizations plan to increase their use of AI for personalized learning paths, tailoring content and learning journeys to individual needs and preferences.
- Blended learning:** 59% anticipate growth in blended learning approaches, combining traditional learning methods with emerging tech, and blending AI-powered modules with human facilitation to create a more engaging and interactive learning experience.
- Microlearning:** 48% are leveraging microlearning modules for just-in-time learning, providing employees with bite-sized content at the moment of need.



79% of organizations provide on-demand access to curated training materials

Tip: humanize AI-driven learning with coaching and collaboration

While leveraging AI for personalization and efficiency, ensure that human elements remain central to the learning experience. Use AI to enhance, not replace, human-led components like coaching, collaborative projects, and peer learning networks. AI should augment human interaction, not eliminate it.



The state of L&D in 2025: themes beyond AI

AI is transforming L&D, but it's not the only story. This year's survey reveals that L&D leaders are juggling a wider range of critical priorities, underscoring the need for a more nuanced understanding of what truly drives learning success. L&D leaders are navigating a complex landscape filled with opportunities and challenges.

The crucial themes leading the priority rankings in 2025:

- Strategic alignment
- Demonstrable ROI
- Employee engagement
- Continuous learning
- Organizational resilience
- Breaking organizational silos
- Keeping up with technologies
- Budget constraints



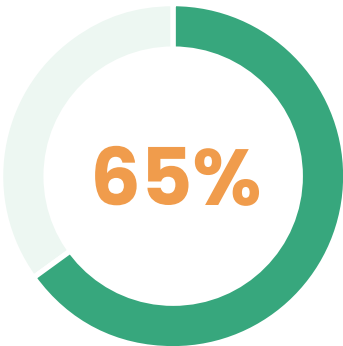


01

Strategic alignment and business impact

L&D’s role as a strategic business partner is more vital than ever. 65% of executive leadership expect L&D programs to align directly with business goals. This isn’t just talk; it’s reflected in budget allocations, with a hefty 16.4% dedicated to strategic initiatives like digital transformation and leadership development.

Tip: create a crystal-clear link between learning initiatives and key business outcomes. For example, if your company’s moonshot is to boost sales by 10%, show precisely how specific L&D programs will equip sales teams with the skills and knowledge to crush that target.



65% of executives prioritize L&D alignment with business goals



EXAMPLE:
Real-time learning business alignment dashboard at a quick service restaurant

A global quick service restaurant partnered with CGS Immersive to build a real-time dashboard that visually maps L&D initiatives to specific business objectives. This isn’t just a pretty picture; it’s a powerful tool. The dashboard integrates data from the LMS, HR systems, and business performance platforms, giving a holistic view of learning impact. The result? A 20% jump in budget allocation.

“We’ve moved beyond activity metrics to true impact measurement. Now, when we talk to the C-suite, we speak their language: business results, not just completion rates.”

Sr. Manager of Learning Systems

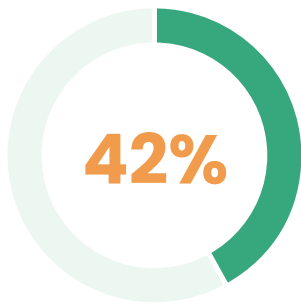


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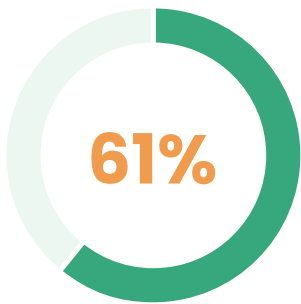
The ROI challenge and opportunity

Even with strategic focus, proving ROI remains a major hurdle. 42% of respondents struggle to measure learning impact. This underscores the urgent need for advanced analytics tools. An additional 61% of L&D professionals are pursuing better data analytics capabilities.

Tip: focus on measuring impact. Tie learning outcomes directly to business metrics that resonate with the C-suite: increased productivity, happier customers, reduced employee turnover, or a boost in sales.



42% of organizations wrestle with measuring learning impact



61% of L&D leaders are seeking better data analytics



EXAMPLE:

Predictive learning-impact model at a healthcare organization

A healthcare organization developed a predictive analytics model that correlates learning activities with key business outcomes: patient satisfaction scores, treatment efficacy, and operational efficiency. This isn't just guesswork; it's data-driven prediction. The model uses machine learning to analyze historical data and predict the potential impact of different learning interventions. The payoff? A 25% improvement in the ROI of learning programs and a 15% increase in patient satisfaction scores.

“We’ve moved from justifying our existence to driving strategic decision-making. Our predictive model doesn’t just tell us what happened; it helps us make data-driven decisions about where to invest for maximum impact.”

Learning Analytics Manager
Healthcare organization



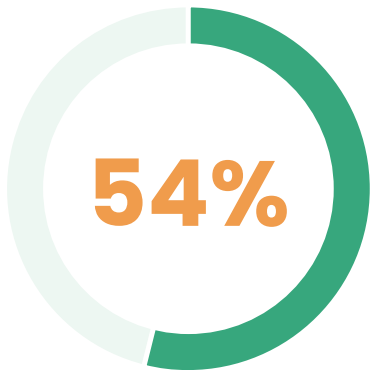
03

Employee engagement and retention

Data insights:

- 54% of executive leaders prioritize employee engagement and retention as a key L&D focus, recognizing its crucial role in boosting organizational resilience.
- 71% of organizations use employee satisfaction/engagement as a primary metric for measuring L&D success.

Tip: make learning irresistibly relevant and engaging for employees. Offer personalized learning paths, bite-sized microlearning, and on-demand access to content. Show employees how learning will supercharge their careers.



54% of executives
prioritize
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engagement
and retention

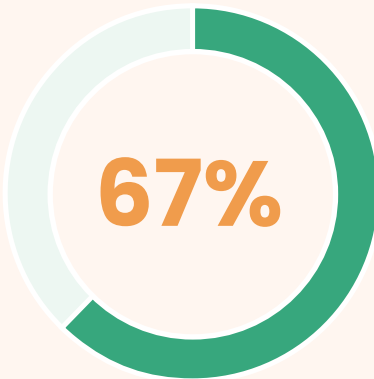
04

Continuous learning culture

Data insights:

- 42% of leaders prioritize building a culture of continuous learning as a strategic priority.
- Organizations that reassess their L&D strategy quarterly report significantly higher alignment with business goals (67%) compared to those with longer update cycles.

Tip: weave learning into the everyday workflow. Integrate learning opportunities directly into the tools and processes your team already uses. And don't forget to encourage peer learning and knowledge sharing—it's a powerful multiplier.



67% of organizations
employing quarterly
strategic check-ins
report better alignment

05

Building organizational resilience

Key insights:

- 64% of organizations now have proactive plans to manage major events (market shifts, mergers, technological disruptions), a significant increase from 50% in 2021.
- Revamping learning materials and addressing skills gaps are identified as top strategies for building resilience.

Challenges (opportunities in disguise):

To identify these key challenges, we analyzed 200 open-ended survey responses, carefully coding and categorizing the comments to reveal recurring themes and pain points. These challenges, however, also represent significant opportunities for L&D leaders to innovate and improve.

- Rapid external changes are an opportunity to develop agile and adaptable learning programs that can respond effectively to evolving circumstances.
- Limited scenario-based training is an opportunity to equip employees with the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to navigate uncertainty.

“We’ve moved from justifying our existence to driving strategic decision-making. Our predictive model doesn’t just tell us what happened; it helps us make data-driven decisions about where to invest for maximum impact.”

– Learning Analytics Manager

Tips for strengthening resilience:

Develop scenario-based training: Create realistic learning modules that simulate potential crises (market volatility, hybrid work challenges, supply chain disruptions) to provide employees with practical experience in managing unexpected events.

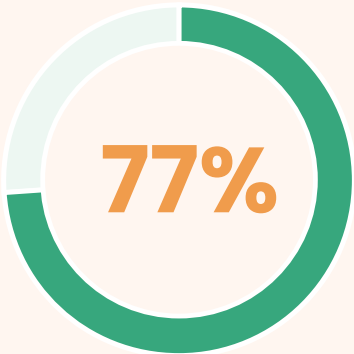
Focus on cross-skilling: Encourage employees to develop competencies beyond their core roles to enhance organizational flexibility and adaptability during periods of change.

06

Enhancing cross-departmental collaboration

Key insights:

- Collaboration between L&D, HR, and business units is recognized as essential for aligning learning initiatives with strategic objectives.



77% of organizations now conduct quarterly cross-departmental meetings, instead of annually, to align training with business needs

Tips for improving collaboration:

Establish cross-functional teams: create task forces comprising representatives from L&D, operations, and leadership to collaboratively design training programs that address diverse needs.

Use shared dashboards: implement real-time dashboards that track learning progress and its impact on key business metrics across departments, promoting transparency and shared accountability.



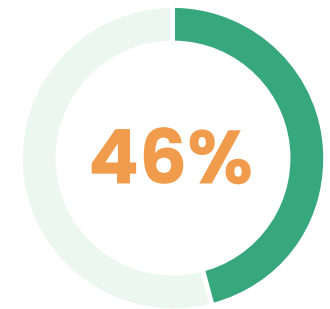
EXAMPLE:
Predictive learning impact model at a healthcare organization

A leading healthcare organization utilized VR simulations to train phlebotomists during the pandemic, resulting in a 75% reduction in ramp-up time and a 92% improvement in instructor productivity. The program combined virtual reality modules with live coaching sessions to maximize learning outcomes. The program continues to onboard and upskill employees while building ‘muscle memory’ before they ever meet with a donor. **To date, this transition has saved the organization \$54M.**

07
Gradual adoption of emerging technologies

Key insights:

- AI-driven personalized learning paths are projected to grow by 57%, reflecting the increasing demand for adaptive learning solutions.



By the end of this year, 46% of organizations plan to adopt immersive technologies (AR/VR), up from the current 12% adoption rate

Challenges (opportunities in disguise):

- The high cost of building tech expertise is an opportunity to adopt a phased approach, starting with pilot projects, expert vendors with flexible models and scaling strategically.
- Integration challenges are an opportunity to prioritize solutions that integrate seamlessly with existing systems and workflows.

Tips for leveraging emerging technologies:

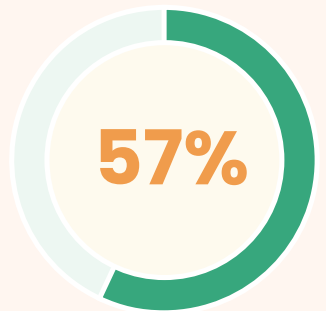
Start small with pilots: conduct targeted pilot projects with AR/VR solutions in high-impact areas (safety training, customer service simulations) before broader implementation.

Combine tech with human facilitation: integrate immersive technologies with instructor-led sessions to enhance engagement while retaining the valuable human element of learning.

08
Addressing budget constraints

Key insights:

- Most organizations allocate 11–25% of their L&D budgets to technology, highlighting the need for strategic spending.



Budget constraints challenge 57% of L&D leaders, limiting tech investments and large-scale reskilling

Challenges (opportunities in disguise):

- Competing priorities are an opportunity to demonstrate the value of L&D and secure necessary funding.
- Difficulty measuring ROI is an opportunity to develop robust measurement frameworks and clearly articulate the return on L&D investments.

Tips for maximizing impact with limited budgets:

Prioritize high-impact areas: focus resources on programs that directly address critical business needs (leadership development, compliance training) to maximize ROI.

Embracing the AI-powered future of L&D

The future of L&D extends beyond the immediate impact of AI. This year's survey results underscore the critical need for a holistic approach that addresses broader organizational needs and fosters a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. By embracing strategic alignment, demonstrating measurable ROI, fostering employee engagement, and prioritizing reskilling and upskilling, L&D leaders can position themselves as strategic partners in driving organizational success.



Key takeaways:

- AI is a powerful catalyst, but it's not the sole driver of L&D success. A holistic approach that integrates technology with human-centered principles is essential.
- Strategic alignment with business goals is paramount. L&D must demonstrate its contribution to key business outcomes to secure necessary resources and support.
- Demonstrating ROI is crucial. Developing robust measurement frameworks and showcasing the tangible impact of learning initiatives are essential for securing buy-in and securing future funding.
- Employee engagement and retention are critical priorities. Investing in employee development, providing opportunities for growth, and fostering a positive learning culture are essential for attracting and retaining top talent.
- Continuous learning is no longer optional – it's imperative. Cultivating a culture of continuous learning and equipping employees with the skills they need to adapt to a rapidly changing world is essential for long-term organizational success.
- Reskilling and upskilling are strategic imperatives. Identifying and addressing critical skill gaps are essential for maintaining a competitive advantage and ensuring the organization's future success.

To thrive in this evolving landscape, L&D leaders must:

- **Embrace a data-driven approach:** leverage analytics to measure impact, identify areas for improvement, and make data-informed decisions.
- **Foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation:** encourage experimentation, embrace new technologies, and prioritize employee development.
- **Build strong partnerships:** collaborate closely with business leaders, HR, and other stakeholders to ensure alignment and achieve shared goals.
- **Demonstrate the value of L&D:** clearly articulate the return on investment of learning initiatives to secure necessary resources and support.
- **Embrace a growth mindset:** continuously adapt and evolve L&D strategies to meet the changing needs of the organization and its workforce.

The future of L&D is bright, but it requires proactive leadership, strategic thinking, and a commitment to continuous improvement. By embracing these key principles and leveraging the power of AI and human ingenuity, L&D leaders can position themselves as strategic partners in driving organizational success in the years to come.



06

Comparative
data: 2024 vs.
2025—a look at
the trajectory



To provide context on the rapid evolution of L&D, let’s compare key metrics from the 2024 CGS report to our 2025 findings:

Comparative data: 2024 vs. 2025—a look at the trajectory

Metric	2024	2025	Change
Proactive L&D Plans	64%	79%	+15%
Focus on Reskilling/Upskilling	50%	57%	+7%
Emphasis on ROI	39%	61%	+22%
AI Adoption	46% (planned)	53% (implemented/planned)	+7%
Technology Budget	34% (11-25% range)	42% (11-25% range)	+8%

This data shows the rapid acceleration of change in L&D, particularly in strategic alignment, AI adoption, and ROI.

07

Survey demographics and firmographics





The 2025 Learning and Development (L&D) survey gathered insights from 200 L&D professionals, representing a diverse cross-section of industries, company sizes, and job roles.

Company size

- 65% of respondents represent large organizations with over 1,000 employees, showcasing trends from enterprises with significant learning needs.
- 35% of respondents work in small to mid-sized companies (fewer than 1,000 employees), reflecting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by smaller teams.

Job roles

Respondents span a range of leadership levels:

- 40% Managers: Directly involved in executing L&D strategies.
- 30% Directors: Overseeing broader program development and alignment with business goals.
- 15% Vice Presidents or Senior Executives: Providing strategic direction for L&D initiatives.
- 6% C-Level Executives: Offering insights into how L&D integrates with overall organizational strategy.