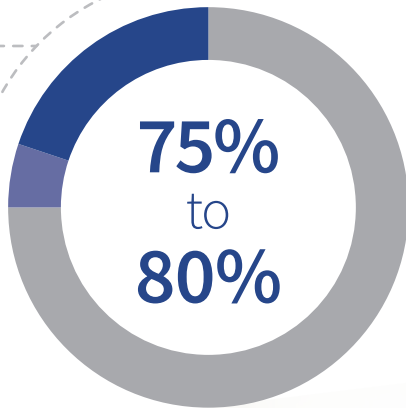


10 Learning and Development Trends to Adopt in 2019



75% to 80% of managers believe effective training is critical to project success, and skill levels linked to business value yield a 10% increase in productivity.

Source: Impact of Training on ERP Project Success, IDC 2012



▶ **As we move into the new year, there is still time to plan your employee learning and development initiatives for 2019. To any business, human capital is its greatest asset and the biggest key to achieving business goals. How can you better prepare your teams to perform in a highly competitive environment? Through training.**

Learning and technology walk hand in hand. As high-tech innovations accelerate, so does the opportunity to create better corporate training programs and delivery methods. Organizations need personalized training that incorporates cutting-edge technology, supports professional development and encourages employee engagement. More than ever, training is effectively providing skills that match the way we learn in a high-tech world. Here are 10 of the top training trends you should pay attention to in 2019.

1. C-suite and HR work together better to align goals

The biggest mistake that keeps an organization's learning and development efforts from reaching their full potential is a lack of planning and commitment from the C-suite. Leaders who don't plan exactly what they want their training to accomplish are wasting resources. In a learning culture, management and HR work together to define the values, processes and practices that employees, departments and the organization can use to increase their performance and competencies. Employees freely share the knowledge and skills acquired and applied in a learning culture, creating a sustainable and adaptable organization.

2. Develop short- and long-term visions for learning

While you must have a plan for how your employees are learning right now, don't fail to create a five-year plan as well. Why five years? For three reasons. First, your business and industry are fluid and subject to change at a moment's notice. Additionally, technology used to deliver training is constantly evolving, so planning every five years ensures you're never too far behind. Finally, and most importantly, five-year plans guarantee that you will continue talking to your employees about their needs. Today's employees are used to personalized, intuitive and user-friendly consumption of information and entertainment in their personal lives, and you can guarantee they'll want the same in their professional lives as well.

56% of employees say they will spend time learning if their managers told them to complete a specific course to improve on or gain a new skill.

Source: LinkedIn, 2018

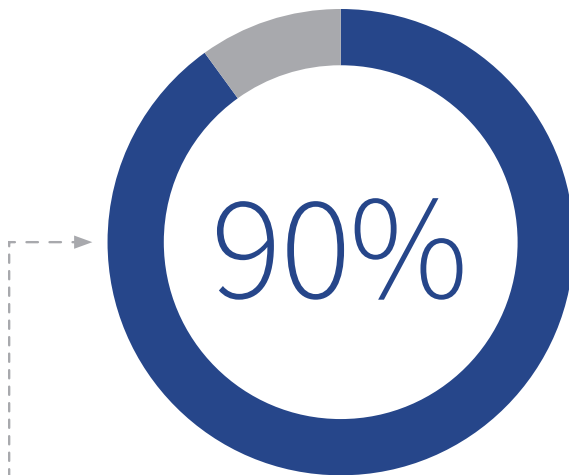


3. Develop competencies for future organizational goals

To maintain the continued health of your company, management must target employees who can take over future leadership roles. Immediately begin training current employees on leadership development, communication and problem-solving skills. If they aren't already, HR can target job candidates with leadership potential in all their talent acquisition efforts. Management can help develop future leaders and managers as soon as new employees enter the door by providing mentors and helping them build professional networks. Improving your leadership development program helps you build teams that are agile and capable of evolving with the times.

4. Learner analytics are key to effective training

While communication between you and your learners is important, you absolutely cannot rely solely on what they tell you. However, numbers never lie. Use your learning management system (LMS) to glean hard data about how your team is accepting, completing and utilizing your training. Data can tell you if your people are taking much too long to complete a section of training and if their scores are acceptable. Your L&D people can then adjust the training or provide resources to help your employees. If you simply ask how they are doing with the training, chances are that you'll get a simple, "it's fine" statement in response.



More than 90% of leaders rate soft skills as a critical priority.

Source: Deloitte, 2016

5. Emphasize communication skills

As organizations become more diverse and broaden their reach, company leaders see the value in developing their employees' soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, collaboration and negotiation. In fact, more than 90 percent of respondents to a 2016 Deloitte survey rated soft skills as a "critical priority." They also indicated that soft skills could foster employee retention, improve leadership and build a meaningful culture.

However, there is widespread concern among recruiters that the soft skills gap is widening with the technologically savvy, but soft-skill-poor, Gen Z employees entering the workforce. Learning and development personnel can overcome this challenge by offering soft skills training to employees and encouraging them to refine their social skills. An introduction to soft skills training may include

holding brainstorming sessions where employees list the possible uses for various soft skills or helping them role-play to discover different situational outcomes.

6. Increase the gamification of training

There is a misunderstanding about gamification and training programs in the real world. Unwitting business owners will scoff at the notion of gamification because they believe it means turning their training programs into video games. Understandably, they feel that their critical and potentially life-saving OSHA-compliance training should not be equivalent to Donkey Kong. What they don't realize is that gamification is simply a process of building a progressive reward system into training that imitates modern video games.

Badges, points, leaderboards and community involvement incentivize the online training experience for even the most jaded learner. Learners who lack the passion and drive to participate can use these tools as a springboard until their core motivation kicks in.

7. View training as an employee benefit and bait for talent acquisition

Training can be a key differentiator between companies competing for talent. Employees want to work for organizations that provide personal and professional development, and they consider it a deciding factor when looking for new employment or determining if they should stay with their current employer. Learning and development plays a critical role in engaging—and retaining—employees. Leverage your training as an employee incentive, and add it to your existing benefits package alongside retirement and health and wellness options.

8. Weigh learner-centric against content-oriented training

Training in the past focused solely on content that was “one size fits all,” which made it difficult to engage with the learner. Today, we must zero in on the learner, including his or her experience, work environment, performance and technological fluency, to create a training program. Any effective training program is one developed for the individual and offers social activities to share their experiences.

Employers said workers making time for learning was the No. 1 challenge facing talent development in 2018. Aligning development opportunities with employee aspirations and engaging them in platforms where they are already spending time can help overcome that challenge.

Source: LinkedIn, 2018

As you train, think of your employees as consumers. They are used to getting 500,000 results per search on Google, YouTube automatically playing related videos based on what they've just watched, and Netflix suggesting content matches based on viewing pattern algorithms. For the learning consumer, training clips on your YouTube channel, a classroom training session, a MOOC (massive online open course) or a post shared on Facebook Workplace are elements that could be learning content.

9. Digital and mobile content and delivery are more critical than ever

According to a 2018 study by LinkedIn, the biggest challenge for talent development is getting employees to make time for learning. Employees would agree that they don't have the time to take away from their primary jobs to get the training. Delivering your training on multiple platforms, such as classroom, mobile and on-demand can help eliminate the time crunch for busy employees.

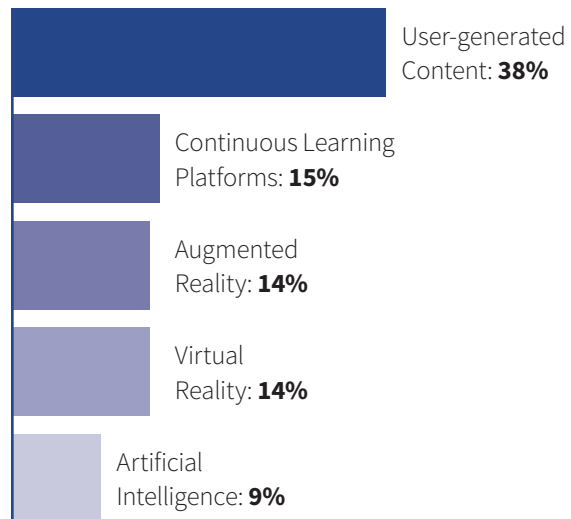
10. Augmented reality and virtual reality training will revolutionize learning in certain industries

The exorbitant costs and safety issues of training a new employee on how to use a piece of equipment in a warehouse, construction site, medical or waste facility—or any number of other similar workplaces—has been lessened by the cost-effectiveness of

augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). Now an employee can use VR to be trained to operate a construction crane, for example, and develop skills, muscle memory and ingrained reactions in complete safety for the employee and his or her co-workers. What's more, via micro training, the same employee can quickly go over a procedure he is not comfortable with before starting that day's work. The quick refresher means the learner retains much more information for a longer time, which is the goal of all training sessions. AR and VR will spread more quickly throughout all industries.

These 10 learning and development trends provide a good indication of where the training industry is heading. It is about personalization, ongoing support and making the most of today's cutting-edge technologies. The incentives and social interactions actively engage your employees as well.

Top trending technologies in learning and development departments worldwide:



Source: Statista, 2017

About the Author



Throughout his career, Cam Bishop has worked in positions where industry dynamics and growth opportunities allowed him to develop skills and gain experience for a broad range of business scenarios. Today, he is the CEO and president of SkillPath, the premier company providing public seminars and conferences, corporate and federal learning and development programs, and online eLearning courses for business professionals.

Cam began his career as an advertising copywriter for a publishing company. Over 23 years, he moved through the company ranks, helping to grow the business to become a \$400 million company with 1,700 employees in 23 offices. He also has specialized agency experience, with focus on custom content and marketing services using print, digital, mobile and social media channels. Putting his business building knowledge to work, Cam has advised private business owners to develop and execute exit/transition plans to sell their companies.

About SkillPath

A leader in learning and development since 1989, SkillPath provides professionals worldwide with strategic and innovative training solutions.

Our mission is to provide the highest quality training for companies and businesspeople around the world, so they can benefit personally and professionally from the experience.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, our revenue funds scholarships for students at Graceland University. We have a long history of partnering with programs that develop individuals' leadership and innovation skills, and our mission aligns with companies that share a goal to invest in mentoring and scholarship opportunities for students and young professionals.

To learn more about this topic or other workplace challenges, download additional free resources at es.skillpath.com/resources.