

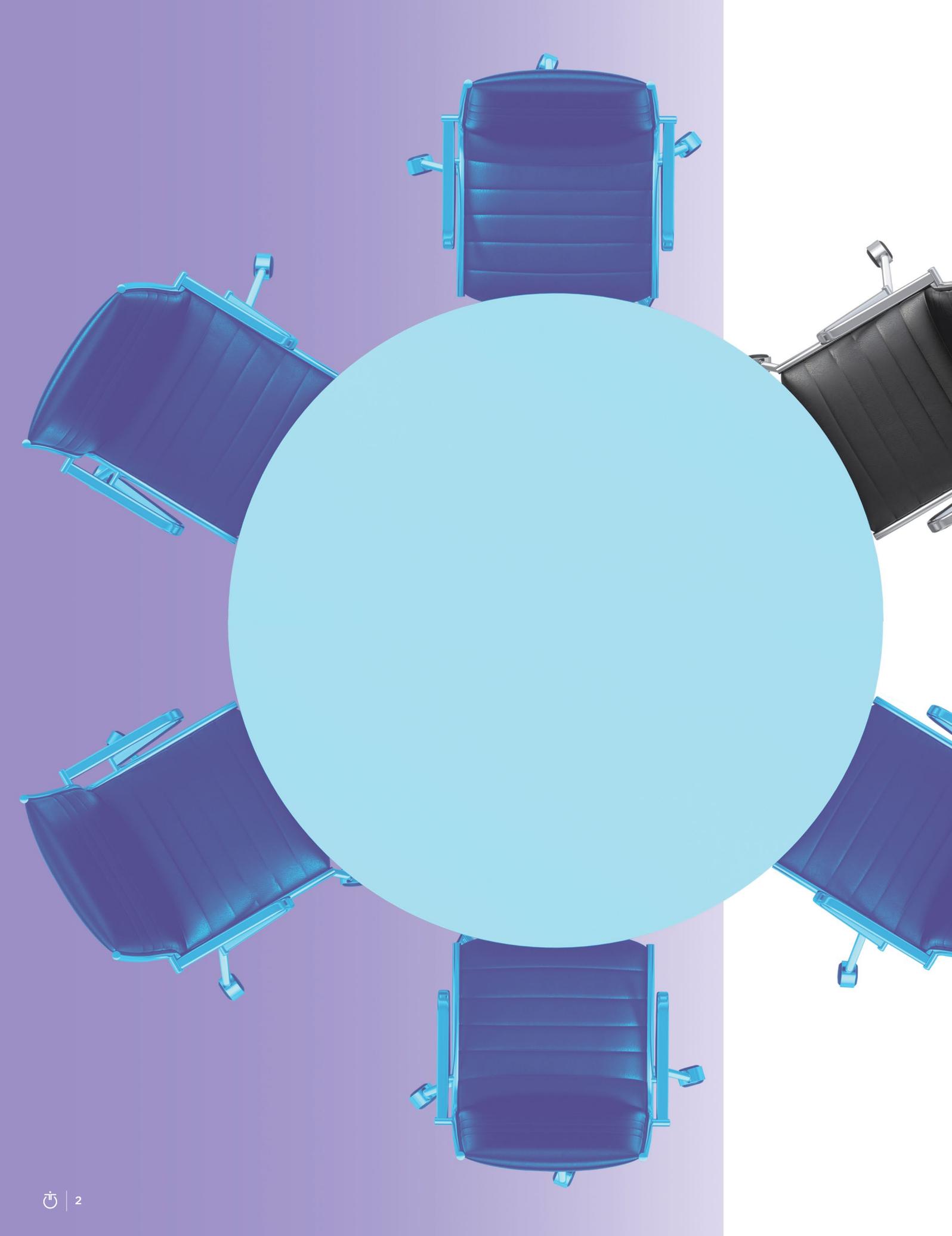


TRAINING
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MAGAZINE

TRENDS

2022

BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGING WORLD-CLASS TRAINING





TRENDS 2022

ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE TRAINING FUNCTION

By Ken Taylor and Michelle Eggleston Schwartz, CPTM

**LEARNING LEADERS
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The training function has proven to be adaptive, resilient and responsive to the changing needs of the business by delivering timely and relevant training to employees. Learning leaders [have risen to the challenges](#) facing their organizations over the past few years, helping leaders manage long-term change and ambiguity and providing employees with new and renewed skills.

To lead this change, the best learning leaders have deployed new training programs and repurposed existing ones to align with shifting goals. They've purchased new tools and technologies to create a more robust learning experience for employees, and they've leveraged new engagement strategies and techniques to bridge the divide between dispersed employees.

With so much in flux in recent years, it's essential for learning leaders to pause, reflect and reevaluate existing processes and tools to ensure they are delivering value to the business. This could mean eliminating technologies that do not integrate with current workflows and tools or revisiting your training portfolio to eliminate outdated courses and materials.

The key trends for 2022 focus on improving efficiency across the training function – from better identifying employees' training needs to developing and delivering programs and resources that motivate, nurture and retain talent.

In today's competitive job market, learning and development (L&D) can play a critical role in elevating the employee experience to reduce turnover and improve engagement at all levels of the business. Welcome to your seat at the table!

Upskilling Requires Effective Skills Assessments

There has been a growing emphasis on **upskilling** and **reskilling** in the training industry. While the skills employees need to succeed in their roles are changing, learning leaders are challenged with effectively evaluating skills gaps, specifically identifying the skills employees already have. Without an accurate understanding of the skills that employees are lacking, training will be highly inefficient and, in many cases, unnecessary in pursuit of building a highly skilled workforce.

Assessments of specific skills at the task level are needed to measure proficiency. For the most accurate evaluation, assessments should mirror the real-world environment and be relevant to the learner's job role. For instance, if you're testing an employee on using an accounting software, the assessment should evaluate how the employee would use the software. Testing on a broader scale by focusing on the entire software would not be beneficial at targeting the specific tasks the employee needs to master. However, even if we do help the employee master the use of a

particular technology, did we correct a potential underlying lack of confidence in using the system? Should that have been the first step? Needless to say, on an individual basis this can be complicated, but the complexity grows when considering how to close gaps across a team, division and the entire company.

Your assessment strategy is an integral part of identifying the strengths of employees, allowing leaders to identify internal subject matter experts more accurately. Technology can help simulate the real-world environment and allow employees to practice skills in a controlled environment. Learning leaders can also collect useful data from learning technologies to provide more insight into employee performance. So, at its core, the upskilling of our workforce will need a robust assessment strategy, monitored practice and ongoing reinforcement to provide a real return on our training investment. In short, we will need much more measurement data than most of us have access to today.



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L&D's Role in Talent Retention

Organizations are grappling with a high rate of employees quitting their jobs, or “The Great Resignation” as this trend has been coined. According to Gallup [research](#), 48% of the U.S. working population is job searching or waiting for opportunities. The highest quit rates are among not engaged and actively disengaged workers, according to the research. If you combine that with your most market-ready employees who have skill sets in high demand, many organizations could be in a rough place very quickly.

L&D plays an integral role in helping to engage and motivate employees, as training is heavily involved throughout the entire employee lifecycle, from onboarding new hires to helping employees build new skills and competencies. Adapting current training processes to the new world of work is going to be critical to attract and retain talent.

Providing visibility into career progression is a necessary step to increase employee

engagement. The combination of career and learning pathways for employees can help them develop a vision for future growth opportunities and the skills they will need to develop to meet those goals. We believe this is the opportunity for leaders to make the connection between development and career progression, helping employees understand the direct benefits of training and the impact it can have on their career.

The consulting and advisory services industry has long made it a practice to offer their employees access to world-class training in focus areas that extend beyond their job role in an effort to extend the employees’ tenure when they are at peak performance. Best-in-class programs include involvement from managers and those outside the formal management structure to coach and advise employees as they develop the skills they need. Putting strategies in place to support and engage employees throughout their employee journey is critical in meeting their current and future needs.



Designing Learning in the Flow of Work

Dedicating days — or even hours — to training is difficult for most employees. Having learning resources that employees can access in the flow of work can improve productivity and encourage problem-solving on the job. To optimize success, learning should be automated and “pushed” to employees at the task level.

As an example, let’s consider a salesperson who is in a customer relationship management (CRM) system reviewing a client’s profile to prepare a sales proposal. During this process, a reminder pops up in the system that outlines the steps and items to include in the proposal. Pushing this information to the sales rep reinforces the process and helps to ensure that the proposal meets the company’s standards before submission — improving the overall efficiency of the process.

Utilizing [microlearning](#) or other bite-sized content can distill complex information into more digestible chunks of information for learners. Digital tools that leverage artificial intelligence (AI) can deliver adaptive, personalized content

in the flow of work. We’ve seen the popularity of microlearning in recent years and this trend is not going away any time soon. Organizations need to invest in optimizing their learning content so that learners receive the information they need, when they need it most, to perform their jobs.

Our challenge to migrate learning into the employees’ work experience is the hunt for “triggers” to create targeted learning. We talked about the CRM example, but in the context of an entire work environment there can be many triggers. Observations from managers and system triggers can be used to start the process. For instance, if a manager witnesses an employee lift an object with incorrect form, they can send the learning management system (LMS) a trigger to deliver lifting training as a short-form module to the employee’s hand-held device. AI and machine learning will become more involved in making recommendations as employees work. L&D’s challenge is to get training materials to fit the need and nothing more, keeping the work flowing.



Developing Robust Learning Experiences for a Dispersed Workforce

Today's dispersed workforce requires versatile training solutions to meet learners where they are. Whether it's virtual, in person or hybrid, learning leaders must create a seamless learning experience. This requires ensuring content is consistent across delivery methods to ensure all employees receive the same quality of information.

Training technologies such as a [learning experience platform](#) (LXP) focus on the user experience, providing a central location where learners can interact with various types of learning content. With social learning capabilities, assessments, badging and AI, an LXP can deliver a more effective and interactive learning experience. This platform can also tackle the cohort flow and collaboration challenges with hybrid learning in very effective ways.

With a dispersed workforce, learning leaders must be mindful to adapt experiences across

learner locations. For example, what does coaching look like in a virtual environment versus in person? What does on-the-job learning look like in a hybrid workplace? Learning leaders must consider various learning scenarios to ensure effectiveness across all modalities and locations.

Many L&D professionals have dabbled with the [hybrid classroom](#), using technologies that allow the instructor to teach an in-person class with remote attendees. Based on feedback from many industry professionals, the skills and resources required to facilitate this type of training are significantly different than those needed to support standalone classroom or virtual training. We expect that many organizations will be looking to perfect these experiences – as hybrid learning is here to stay for at least the short-term.



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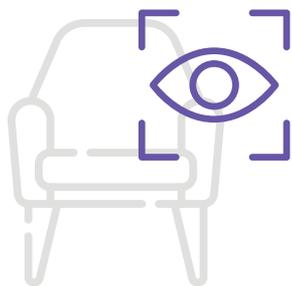
Reexamining Your Learning Tech Stack

After the rush to adopt virtual delivery tools and revamp programs to accommodate a remote workforce, training organizations need to take time to reexamine their [learning tech “stack”](#) (i.e., the sum total of technologies an organization uses to support employee learning) to enhance effectiveness. This requires learning leaders to evaluate the purpose of each tool and determine whether it is working as intended.

While technology integrations are becoming more possible, they're still not meeting learner expectations. All too often, technology falls short of expectations after implementation. We have been encouraged by the willingness of

learning leaders to look to the market for support in measuring the effectiveness of their current strategy and seeking advice on how they can source and find partners to drive improvements.

Developing and managing a robust technology strategy is not a core skill for many learning leaders. While complicated learning technology stacks are here to stay, learning leaders do not need to navigate these challenges alone. We feel getting help in this area could be the best move training organizations can make to deliver the organizational impact we all strive for. Ensuring employees are receiving the right information at the right time and in the right modality is the new barometer for success.





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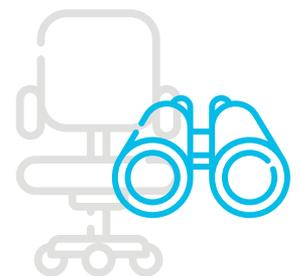
L&D Market Outlook

While the training industry experienced a decrease in overall external training spend on the tails of 2020, there were some segments of the market that saw an increase in spending and have sustained momentum. For example, the online learning library, LMS, LXP, IT training, and health and safety segments all increased in spending over the past year. We expect to see spending in these segments to increase again by the end of 2021 and once again by the end of 2022. Some segments, such as learning services, leadership, and sales, will be on the rebound going into 2022, as these segments tended to see the most impact from the broader decrease in training spend that carried over from 2020. Accordingly, we expect most segments of the market to see growth throughout 2022. In short, those companies and market niches that have been doing well are likely to continue to do so, and those who have weathered some difficult financial quarters should begin to see some stability return.

The market has seen a high volume of mergers, acquisitions and funding over the past year. The merger between [GP Strategies and Learning Technologies Group](#) is set to create one of the largest workforce transformation companies.

Additionally, the merger between [Skillsoft and Global Knowledge](#) is one of the latest in a trend we've seen for a few years now: content and tech companies partnering or merging to combine their solutions, creating a more efficient buying process for customers. Accordingly, the learning services provider market is one of the strongest segments in the market – however, it may not necessarily see large-scale market growth. One of the stronger segments over the past year has been the IT training market – likely driven by the need for tech-savvy workers to support virtual business operations and a tech-learning surge in reskilling and upskilling efforts by organizations.

Again, we've seen partnerships fueling growth across the broader market and expect that the companies that are poised for the largest growth are those who are finding ways to innovate in flexible ways, solving multiple and sometimes disparate challenges for their clients through the agility of their product and service offerings. When we look at actual and projected segment performance across 2019 through 2022, we see average revenues up in nearly every area of the corporate learning market. [👉](#)



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