

2024

LearnOps[®] Trends & Insights Report



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Introduction

In a world where agility, skills, and adaptability are the currency of success, Learning and Talent Development has become a key strategic function for organizations everywhere.

The 2024 LearnOps Trends & Insights Report delves into the practices, challenges, and innovations shaping L&D today—providing an in-depth look at how teams are striving to align with business goals, optimize resources, and drive measurable impact.

Throughout this report, we'll explore each stage of the LearnOps framework—from aligning L&D strategy with business objectives to optimizing program delivery and measurement. Readers will discover how L&D leaders are tackling top-of-mind issues like ROI measurement, resource planning, and the integration of new technologies, while also addressing critical challenges such as budget constraints and stakeholder alignment.

To bring you these insights, we surveyed over 100 corporate L&D professionals across diverse industries, including healthcare, finance, technology, and manufacturing. Respondents ranged from L&D managers to senior executives and heads of learning, and 50% representing companies with over 1,000 employees. This range of perspectives provides a comprehensive view of the current state of L&D, as well as the priorities and roadblocks that teams are facing.

As we look ahead to 2025, this report uncovers the strategic shifts and innovations defining the future of L&D. Whether you're an L&D professional, a business leader, or simply interested in the evolving role of learning in the workplace, this report offers a wealth of insights to help navigate the path forward.



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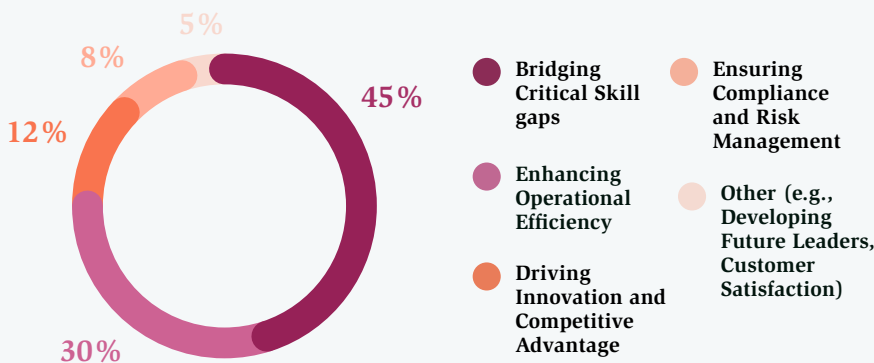
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Striving for Synergy: Aligning L&D with Business Goals

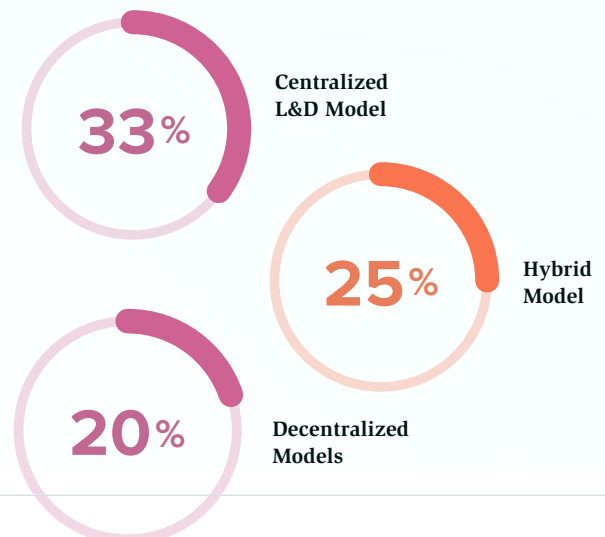
While the drive to align L&D strategy with business goals is evident, responses indicate that a large portion of L&D teams (48%) are influenced by company priorities when determining investment levels for learning initiatives. This reliance on alignment with high-level organizational goals highlights the growing role of L&D as a strategic partner. Nonetheless, 22% of respondents cited historical data and ROI analysis as additional methods for investment decisions, suggesting that some teams look to the past performance of their programs to shape future resource allocation.

What are the key corporate objectives and goals that your L&D strategy supports?



“We stay closely connected both to our business leaders and our employees. We review company reports for aggregate data trends and speak one-on-one with our employees to understand what matters most, assessing which programs will make the greatest impact for our people and bottom line.”

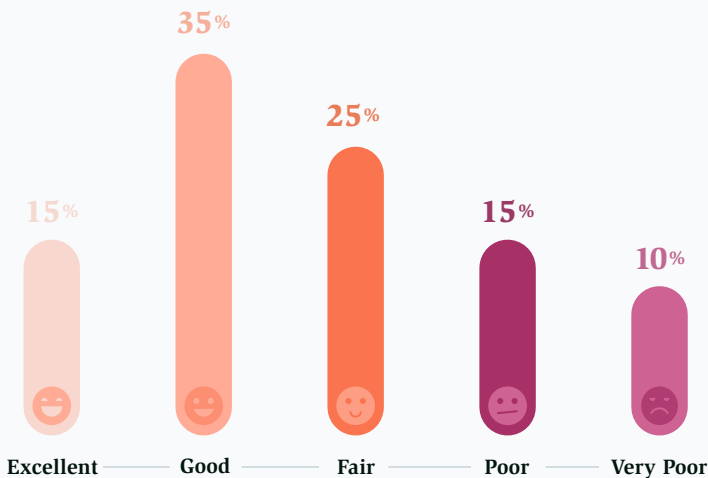
Exploring operating models, nearly one-third of respondents use a centralized L&D model, which they report leads to better resource allocation and improved accountability within the organization. In contrast, 25% operate under a hybrid model, aiming to blend flexibility with control. Interestingly, those working within decentralized models (20%) identified collaboration and communication as both a benefit and a challenge, indicating that while decentralization allows autonomy, it may also complicate cohesive alignment with business strategy.



Striving for Synergy: Aligning L&D with Business Goals

01

How would you rate your L&D team's current level of alignment with business strategy and goals?



“We achieve business alignment through performance-driven learning programs by directly linking training initiatives to organizational goals and business outcomes, leveraging data analytics, performance metrics, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement through Lean practices.”



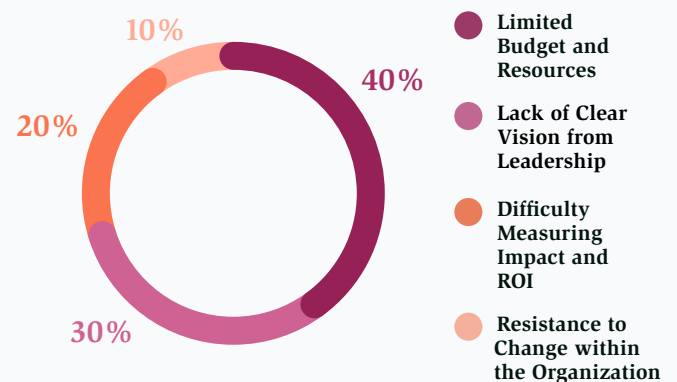
Joe Dunlap

CJK Group, Director of Training and Development

Partnerships are another crucial factor, with 40% of respondents stating they intake and prioritize L&D requests through formal processes, underscoring the importance of structured interactions between L&D and other departments. In terms of L&D's perception within the organization, only 18% feel they have a full 'seat at the table' as strategic partners, while a larger portion (30%) believe they are viewed as advisors.

Ultimately, the survey responses point to a persistent gap between L&D's strategic importance and its perceived role within many organizations. By establishing formalized processes for intake and prioritization and further centralizing certain aspects of their operating models, L&D teams may find it easier to secure alignment with corporate vision, enhancing both visibility and strategic impact.

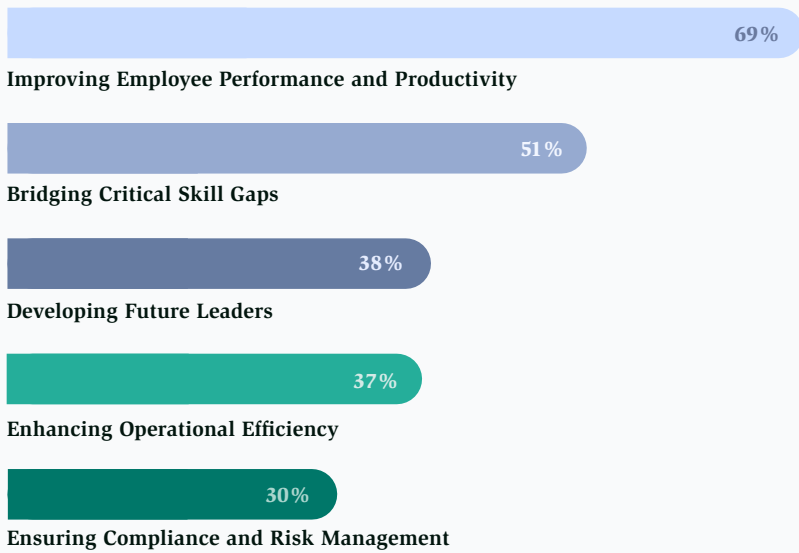
What challenges do you face in aligning L&D objectives with corporate vision and goals?



Optimizing Resources and Strategy: Planning L&D Programs with Precision

Survey responses reveal that L&D leaders are adopting a structured approach to planning, with nearly 60% of respondents relying on both strategic priorities and resource availability to guide their program development. Specifically, many indicated that urgency and time-sensitivity also play a significant role in resource allocation, showing a preference for agile, responsive planning in dynamic business environments.

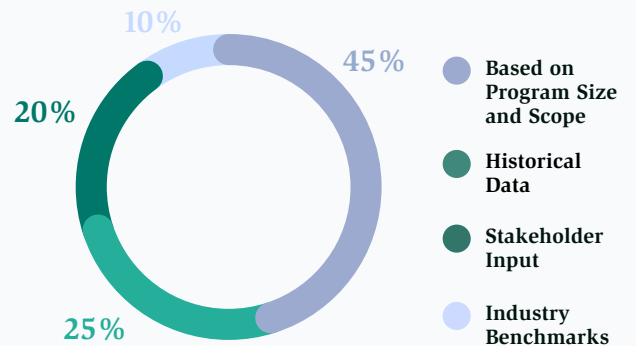
What are the primary objectives for your learning programs?



In terms of evaluation, pre- and post-assessments emerged as a commonly used tool, with 48% of respondents leveraging these assessments to gauge learning impact. Feedback surveys also rank highly at 42%, demonstrating a strong focus on learner engagement and satisfaction as key metrics for program success. Interestingly, only 20% rely on observational assessments, suggesting a gap in qualitative evaluation methods that could provide deeper insights into behavioral change post-training.

“Learning and Development plans have been a great tool in confirming alignment with strategic business priorities.”

How do you determine the resources required to implement learning programs?



Optimizing Resources and Strategy: Planning L&D Programs with Precision

02

Despite these efforts, resource constraints pose a notable challenge. This limitation impacts L&D's ability to scale initiatives and often forces teams to prioritize only the most essential projects. Additionally, 23% of respondents expressed concerns about keeping up with rapid technological advancements, which affects both the relevance and delivery of their programs. About 18% reported that managing cross-departmental collaboration is a persistent struggle, reflecting potential silos within organizations that hinder cohesive L&D strategy execution.

What challenges do you face in the planning phase of learning programs?



When it comes to collaboration tools, over half of respondents (55%) regularly use shared digital platforms for joint program development, fostering a more connected approach to planning. However, only a minority (15%) engage in design thinking sessions, hinting at an opportunity for L&D teams to incorporate more innovative, learner-centered methodologies into their planning processes.

This data highlights a consistent theme: balancing strategic alignment with operational agility is essential for L&D teams aiming to maximize their impact. By leveraging a mix of quantitative assessments and proactive stakeholder engagement, organizations can build robust, adaptable learning programs that meet evolving business needs.

"We are a trusted partner and work with the business to develop an annual learning roadmap that focuses on **capability uplift** to achieve strategic goals."



Tristan Goldsmith

Bendigo Bank, Learning Design Lead



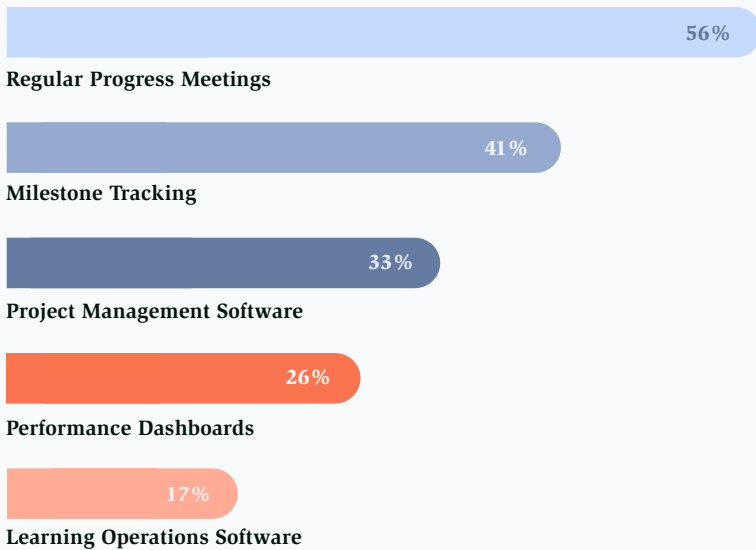
Teams regularly use shared digital platforms for joint program development



Streamlining Operations: Efficient Program Execution in L&D

The data shows that 47% of L&D teams prioritize transparent reporting and stakeholder updates as essential components for maintaining smooth project execution. In addition, 34% of teams conduct regular project reviews and audits, ensuring that any issues are addressed early on, which is particularly valuable for complex or high-stakes programs.

How do you track project progress and time spent to ensure smooth operations?



Another key insight is that 33% of teams use project management software, reflecting a significant reliance on general-purpose tools over learning-specific solutions, given that only 17% have adopted learning operations software. This gap in adoption rates highlights a potential area for growth, where L&D teams could benefit from exploring software tailored specifically to learning projects.

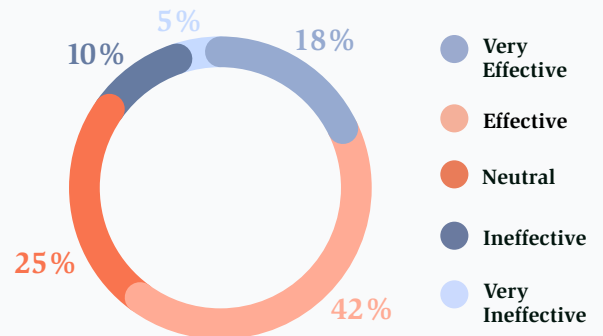
“Participation in division-level leadership meetings and activities, with senior level buy-in on L&D importance, keeps us closely aligned with strategic goals.”



Sandra H. Ugol

Kelly Benefits, Vice President of Learning and Development

How would you rate the effectiveness of your current project tracking tools for L&D?



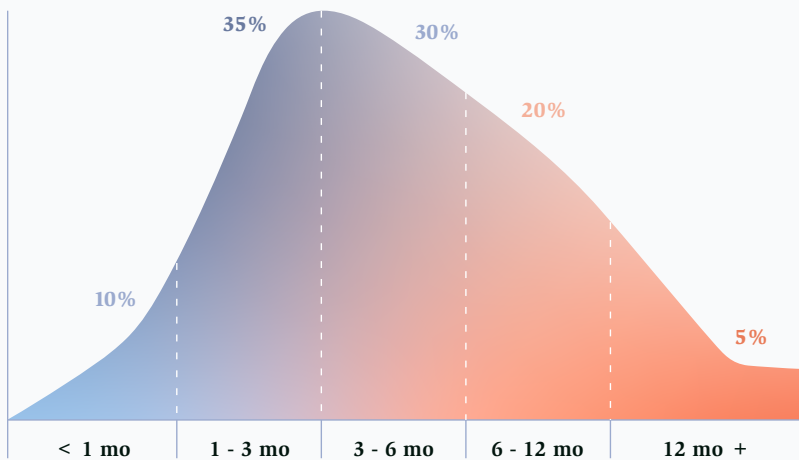
Streamlining Operations: Efficient Program Execution in L&D

03

Execution timelines vary, but 35% of respondents report that their programs typically take between 1-3 months to move from ideation to launch, while 30% indicate timelines of 3-6 months. These figures suggest that nearly two-thirds of L&D projects fall within a six-month window, allowing for agile development cycles in line with evolving business needs. For more extended timelines, 20% of teams take between 6-12 months to execute their programs, likely due to the depth and complexity of these initiatives, such as leadership development.

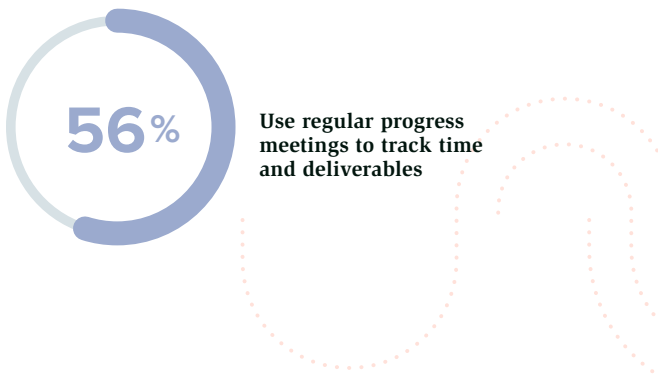
“I annoy the hell out of people with meetings so they understand the importance of my team’s work and bring us in early and often!”

How long, on average, do your learning programs take to execute from ideation to launch?



The survey responses underscore the importance of both traditional project management techniques and the potential for specialized tools to streamline operations. For L&D teams, the balance between efficiency and flexibility is key, with structured reviews, transparent communication, and the adoption of targeted technologies supporting smoother, more effective execution.

Finally, about 56% of L&D teams use regular progress meetings to track time and deliverables, reinforcing the emphasis on frequent communication and accountability. These meetings, combined with 41% utilizing milestone tracking, form a structured approach to project oversight, allowing teams to stay aligned on goals and make real-time adjustments as needed.



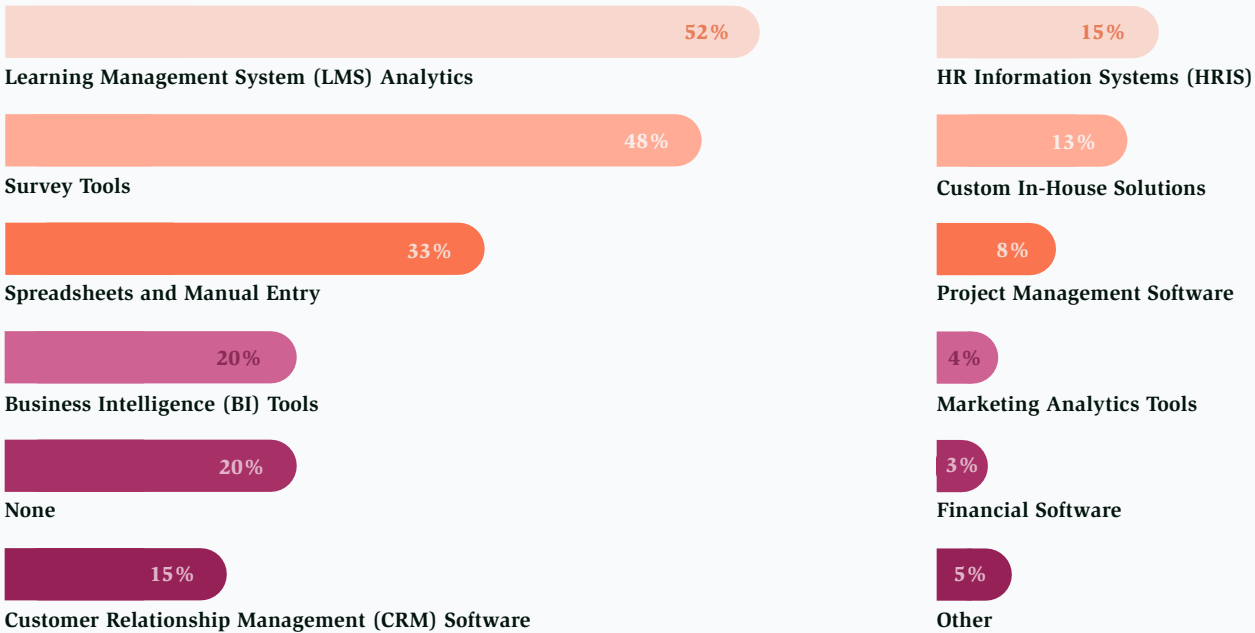
Demonstrating ROI and Impact: Measuring Success in L&D

Tools and Methods for Measuring ROI

The data reveals an emerging trend in how L&D teams approach ROI measurement, with 22% of respondents relying on a mix of historical data and industry benchmarks to validate their metrics. This combination suggests that, while real-time tracking tools like LMS analytics are widely used, many teams are looking to past performance and external standards for context, particularly when advocating for resources or making strategic adjustments. Additionally, 15% of teams report that they depend heavily on stakeholder input to guide their ROI measurements, indicating that alignment with executive priorities is essential.

“Regular cadence of meetings with stakeholders and the C-suite keeps our programs aligned with business needs.”

How do you track project progress and time spent to ensure smooth operations?

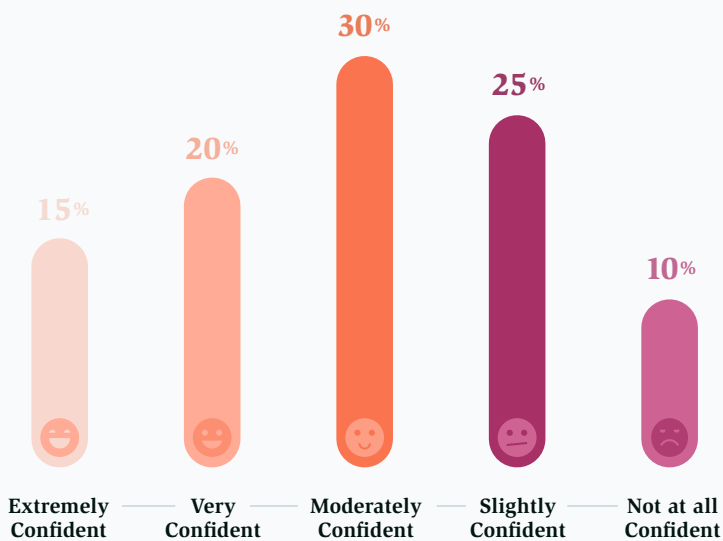


Demonstrating ROI and Impact: Measuring Success in L&D

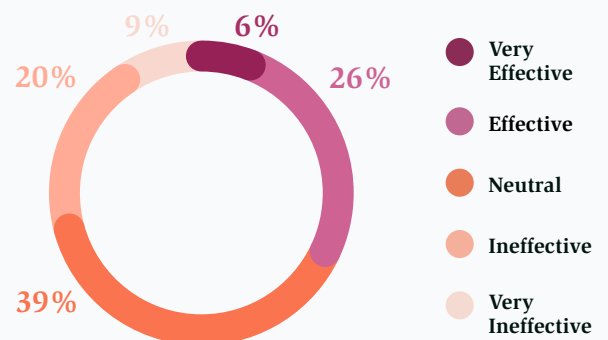
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Beyond the tools themselves, a quarter of respondents report that resource constraints impact their measurement accuracy, revealing a reliance on manual methods or less frequent data collection due to limited budgets. This limitation, often highlighted by L&D leaders, underscores a challenge in balancing the need for impactful reporting with available tools and resources.

How confident are you in the metrics you report on to stakeholders?



How would you rate the effectiveness of your current measurement and reporting tools for L&D?



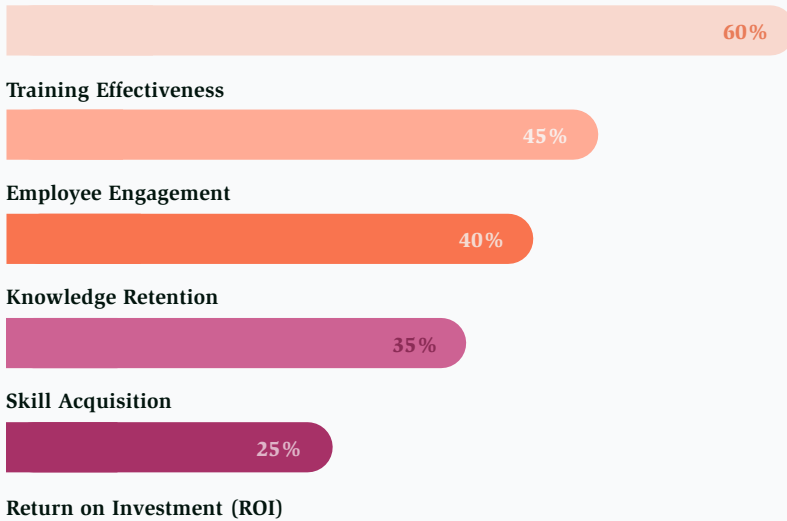
The frequency of reporting, especially the 10% who report on a monthly basis, aligns with organizations that likely have robust L&D infrastructures or are subject to frequent audits and accountability checks. For teams reporting less frequently, it may indicate either limited resources or an organizational culture that views L&D impact as a more periodic measure.

“Mapping learning objectives to both the needs of the role in the organization and the goals of the organization creates alignment and adds value.”

Key Metrics and Stakeholder Reporting

In terms of the metrics L&D teams prioritize, 25% reported that cost per learner remains a critical consideration when measuring program ROI, highlighting the financial scrutiny L&D is under to justify each dollar spent. This cost-focused approach, however, is often balanced with metrics that look beyond financial returns: 18% of respondents include training attendance as a KPI to ensure high engagement levels across the organization. Moreover, certification rates, tracked by 15%, provide additional data points for compliance-based programs where regulatory requirements are stringent.

What are the top-of-mind metrics and KPIs you must deliver on for stakeholders?



Stakeholder reporting trends reveal a range of departmental needs, with 10% of teams reporting performance data directly to compliance officers in highly regulated industries. This emphasis points to the need for L&D programs to satisfy not only developmental but also legal and compliance benchmarks. In contrast, reporting to executive leadership remains key for 30% of respondents, who noted that demonstrating organizational impact and workforce performance are essential when engaging the C-suite.

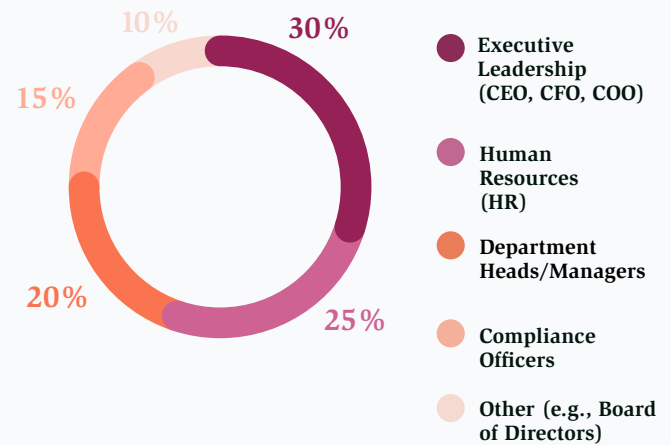
“Considering Learning Operations first to inform a **strategic plan** keeps the L&D organization nimble and forward-thinking.”



Malin LaPlace

Houston Galveston Area Council,
Professional Development Instructional Designer

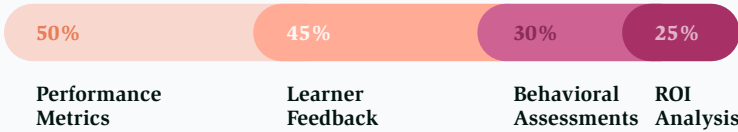
Who are the main stakeholders you report L&D performance to in your organization?



Demonstrating ROI and Impact: Measuring Success in L&D

04

How do you analyze the effectiveness of a learning program?



Lastly, the methods used to analyze program effectiveness reflect a reliance on a blend of quantitative and qualitative data: while behavioral assessments are utilized by 30% of respondents, qualitative narratives, cited by 12%, offer context to support and enrich performance metrics. This dual approach provides a more holistic view, balancing the numbers with individual feedback to create a comprehensive assessment of L&D's impact across the organization.

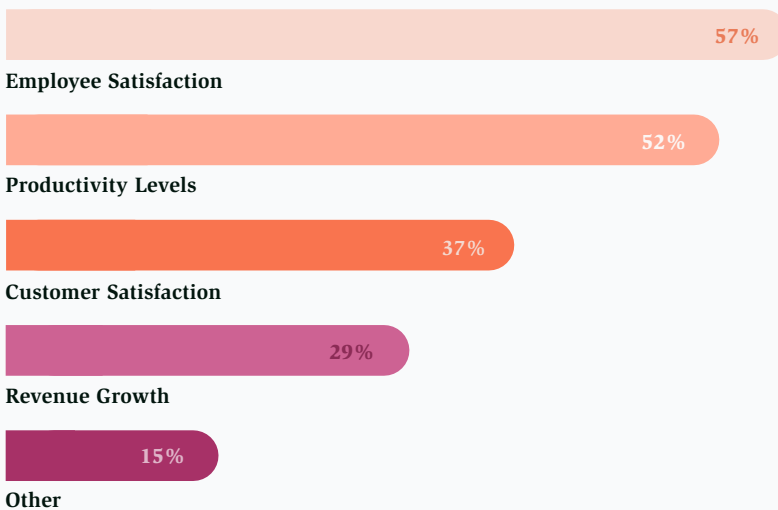
“Focused training for our L&D staff, followed by monthly reports for the business, shows **connections** between L&D work and business metrics.”



Adriene Russell

CVS Health, Executive Director, L&D Operations

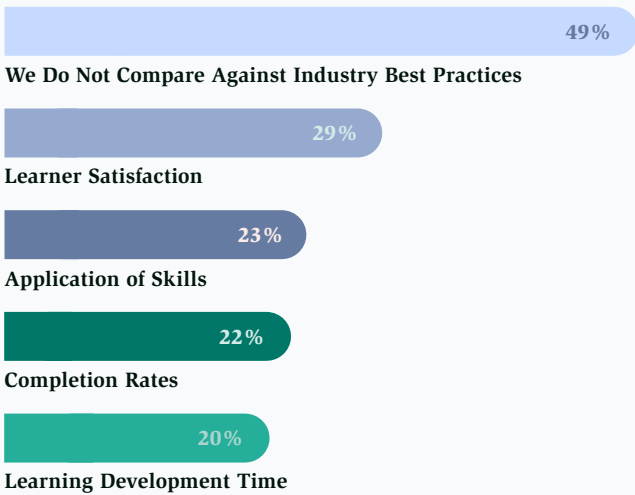
What metrics do you use to assess changes in business variables due to L&D programs?



Driving Continuous Improvement: Benchmarking and Optimization in L&D

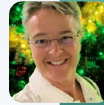
In the pursuit of continuous improvement, 58% of respondents indicated that they review metrics monthly or quarterly to ensure ongoing alignment with business goals. This regular cadence of evaluation allows L&D teams to make timely adjustments based on evolving priorities and emerging insights, with over half (52%) using learner feedback data as a foundational input for these reviews. This reliance on feedback reflects a learner-centric approach, with satisfaction scores and qualitative input providing direction for future program adjustments.

What performance metrics do you compare against industry best practices?



Benchmarking against industry standards is a goal for many, but 49% of respondents reported not actively using external benchmarks, largely due to internal resource constraints or data access issues. For those who do benchmark, gap analysis is preferred by 40% as a practical way to highlight performance areas needing improvement. Trend analysis and peer comparisons, used by 20% and 25%, respectively, show that some teams are keen on understanding shifts in L&D practices, as well as assessing where they stand relative to similar organizations.

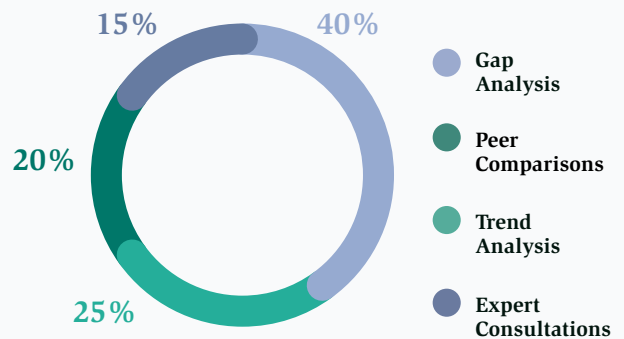
“We consistently tie learning outcomes to behavior changes that positively impact KPIs, which directly tie to business goals.”



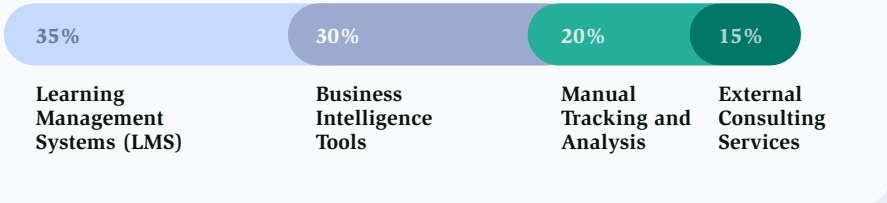
Carol Monk

SAP Concur, Sr Services Enablement Manager

How do you identify areas for improvement from these benchmarks?

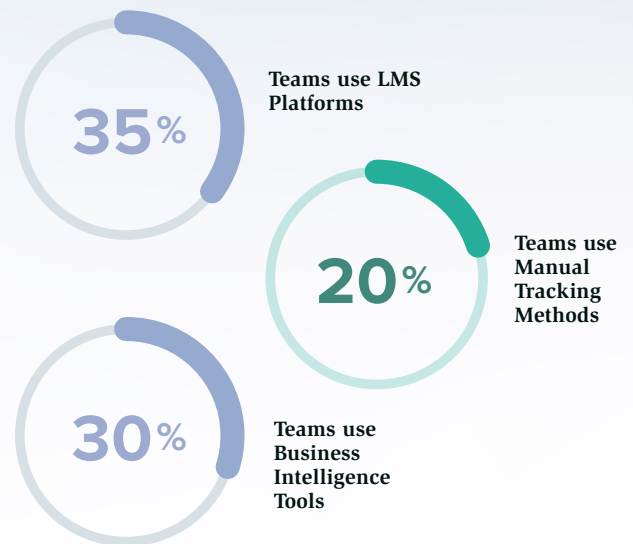


How do you capture and analyze key metrics to improve operations?



To capture and analyze these metrics, 35% rely on LMS platforms to centralize data collection, although 20% still use manual tracking methods, indicating that data integration challenges persist. Notably, 30% of teams have adopted business intelligence tools, suggesting an upward trend in using more advanced analytics capabilities to link learning outcomes with broader business KPIs. For specialized insights, 15% of respondents leverage external consulting services, adding a layer of objectivity and expert perspective to their optimization efforts.

In addition to these core approaches, time-to-competency and skill application rates are tracked by 18% and 23% of respondents, respectively, as measures of program impact. These metrics, combined with learner satisfaction and feedback data, help paint a comprehensive picture of learning effectiveness.



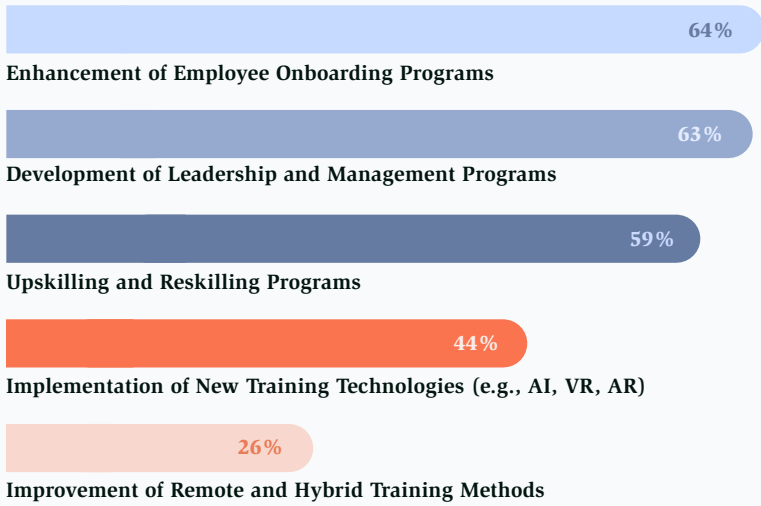
Charting the Future of L&D: Priorities and Projections for 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, sentiment about the future of L&D is largely optimistic, with 60% of respondents indicating a positive outlook (30% very positive, 30% somewhat positive).

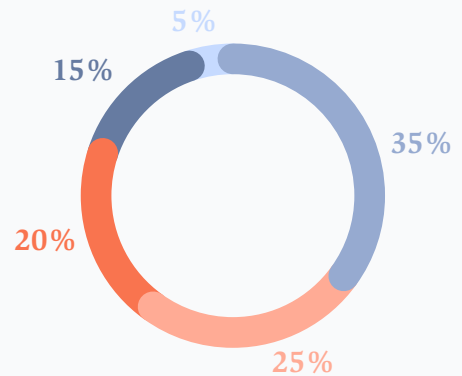
Upskilling and reskilling continue to be priorities for 59% of L&D leaders, indicating that addressing skill gaps remains central as organizations prepare for a rapidly changing business landscape. In line with these efforts, leadership development also ranks highly, with 63% focusing on developing leadership and management programs to ensure that organizations are well-prepared to meet future challenges.

“The key to any successful L&D department is executive buy-in and engagement. Having an executive team trusting in our L&D department as the experts in our field makes progress forward much easier and more successful.”

Which projects will be top of mind for your teams in the next fiscal year?



Which of the following will be top of mind for your L&D team in the year ahead?



- Enhancing Operational Efficiency within the L&D Team
- Improving ROI Measurement and Impact Reporting
- Building Better Partnerships with Business Functions
- Increasing Department Resources (Headcount, Budget, etc.)
- Moving to a New Operating Model

Charting the Future of L&D: Priorities and Projections for 2025

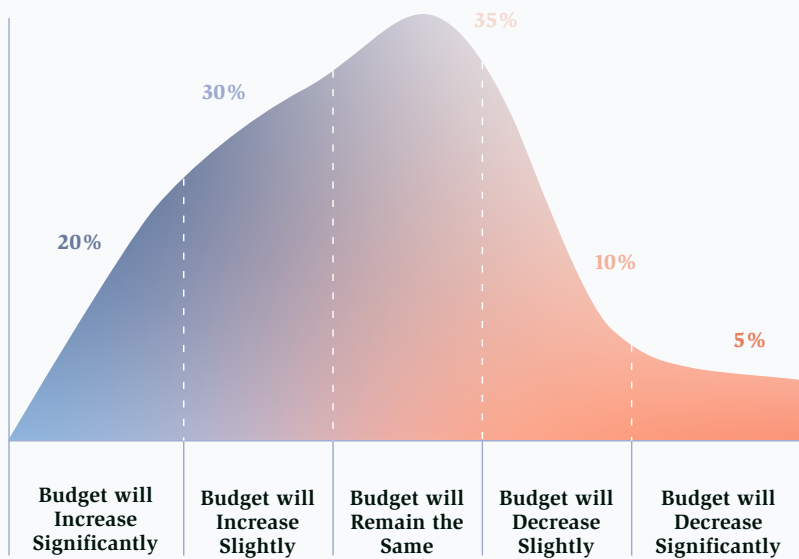
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Among L&D teams, there is a clear drive toward enhancing operational efficiency, with 35% listing it as a top priority for the coming year. This focus reflects a broader industry need to streamline internal processes and leverage resources more effectively. 25% of respondents emphasized improving ROI measurement and impact reporting, highlighting a continuing trend toward demonstrating clear, measurable value for L&D investments.

In terms of resources, budget expectations are mixed. This variance suggests that while some organizations are doubling down on L&D investment, others are adopting a more conservative stance, likely influenced by economic conditions or shifts in business priorities. For those with stable or increased budgets, 15% cited intentions to increase department resources, aiming to expand capabilities through added headcount or enhanced technology solutions.

“L&D can have one of the biggest impacts on how our employees perform and their overall job satisfaction. We need to find ways to **work hand in hand** with all parts of the business.”

What are your budget expectations for the L&D department in the next fiscal year?



New technologies also feature prominently in the 2025 outlook, with 44% planning to implement advancements like AI, VR, and AR in their learning environments. This reflects a proactive approach to enhancing learning experiences and accommodating a range of learning preferences. Additionally, remote and hybrid training improvements are planned by 26%, underscoring the lasting impact of flexible work models and the need for adaptable learning solutions.

The 2025 outlook reflects a dual focus on capability-building and efficiency, with many L&D teams seeking to optimize their impact while embracing technology and addressing critical skill needs. As organizations invest in their workforce’s future, L&D will play a pivotal role in aligning skills, leadership, and innovation with broader business goals.

Conclusion: Learning and Talent's Evolving Role in Organizational Success

This year's survey findings reveal a clear shift toward a strategic, data-driven approach to L&D, where aligning with corporate goals, demonstrating measurable impact, and fostering a culture of continuous learning are top priorities. While challenges like budget constraints, technological adoption, and cross-functional collaboration remain, L&D teams are finding innovative ways to drive meaningful change and are extremely focused on how this can be translated into measurable business value.

Looking ahead, the emphasis on proving ROI and harnessing technology to scale and enhance learning and talent will likely shape the future of the function. With a positive outlook for the year ahead, many L&D leaders are prepared to advocate for the resources needed to meet their strategic goals, ensuring that learning remains a pivotal force for growth and resilience. As the industry evolves, L&D professionals have the opportunity to solidify their role as true business partners, driving forward not only individual development but also organizational success.



Drive and Demonstrate the Business Impact of Learning with a Learning Operations Platform

The 2024 LearnOps Trends & Insights Report highlights the strategic shifts and challenges facing L&D teams today—from aligning with business goals to measuring ROI. Cognota's LearnOps platform is purpose-built to address these needs, helping L&D teams optimize resources, enhance strategic alignment, and demonstrate measurable impact. Book a demo to see how Cognota can help your team lead the future of L&D.

See LearnOps in Action

