



COGNOTA

#### Characteristics of a Learning Advisory

Cross Functional

Aligned With  
Corporate Objectives

Constructive Conversations

No matter how good the team or how efficient the methodology, if we're not solving the right problem, the project fails."

- Woody Williams

Learn to ask of all actions, 'Why are they doing that?' Starting with your own.

- Marcus Aurelius

eBook

# Learning Advisory Committees

How to Make L&D a Strategic Pillar in Your Organization

# Table of Contents



|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction   | 03 |
| What is a Learning Advisory Committee?                     | 04 |
| The Benefits of Establishing a Learning Advisory Committee | 05 |
| Best Practices for Forming Your Committee                  | 09 |
| Activities, Responsibilities & Output                      | 10 |
| Training Intake as a Diagnostic Business Tool              | 13 |
| Conclusion   | 16 |

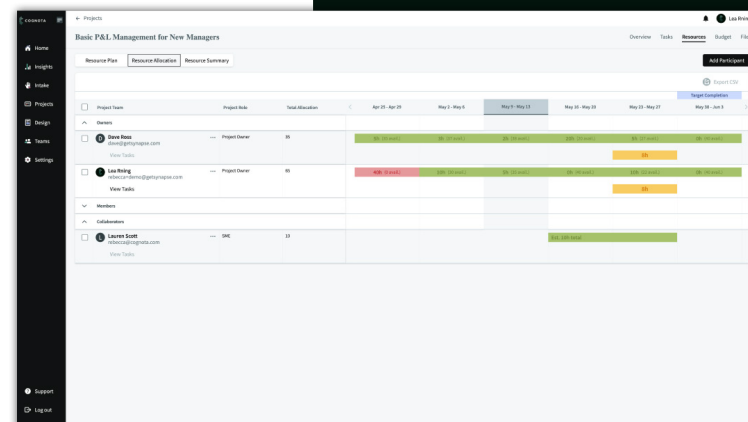


# Introduction

No team is an island, and learning and development is no exception. Aligning with corporate strategy to produce performance-driving results for your organization takes close collaboration and consultation with critical business partners and stakeholders. But that's often easier said than done.

When working with internal customers, it's not all about taking direction and delivering on each and every request that passes through your inbox. L&D needs to move towards partnering with internal stakeholders to deliver training that is needed, not just training that is requested.

Establishing a Learning Advisory Committee means L&D gets a front row seat to what is really ailing different teams, departments, and the organization as a whole. It provides an opportunity to act as learning consultants rather than training producers, which means better training results for your team, stakeholders, and learners.





# What is a Learning Advisory Committee?

The term “Learning Advisory Committee” may vary from one organization to another. Some larger corporations have established “learning universities,” for example, that bring together executive sponsors and other stakeholders to identify training needs. However, the core principles remain the same.

Ultimately, establishing a Learning Advisory Committee means ensuring the right training is produced at the right time by providing a formal channel for training requests, feedback, and consultation with stakeholders. By being unafraid to challenge training requests and get to the root of the issue, you’ll be better placed to provide training solutions that make sense and that achieve the desired business outcomes.



**“Unfortunately, many business leaders don’t know what they need. But they will often come to us as though they do. We’ve got to make sure that we’re treating the right problem. Too often in L&D, we’re trying to be helpful and we give them what they want. But, actually, what they need is often not what they want.”**

**- Nick Howe, CLO, Area9 Lyceum**

## Characteristics of a Learning Advisory Committee:



**Cross functional**



**Aligned with corporate objectives**



**Constructive conversations**

# The Benefits of Establishing a Learning Advisory Committee



Saying “No”  
Without  
Saying “No”



Increased  
Engagement  
With Training



Improved  
Business  
Performance



Increased  
Commitment  
from SMEs





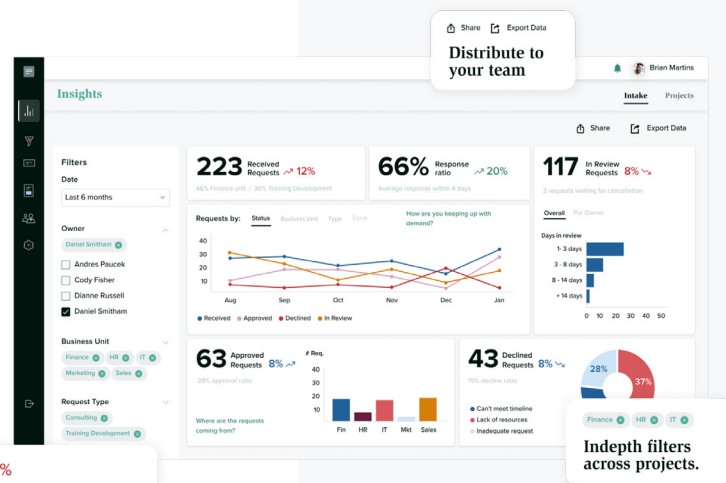
## Saying “No” Without Saying “No”

As corporate learning leaders within the organization, L&D must take every opportunity possible to educate on the difference between training requirements and performance management issues.

When a business partner brings a training request to the Learning Advisory Committee, there are things you can do to ensure your team doesn't waste their time designing training that will not solve the underlying issue:

- Perform a thorough needs analysis
- Identify the root cause of poor performance before diving into a training solution
- Provide some alternatives to training development and explain how they may be more beneficial for improving performance

By identifying the root cause of subpar performance, you can find the most efficient and impactful solution and remedy the problem correctly without wasting time on training projects that will not affect performance.



↗ 12%  
Easily view overall growth and progress

Indepth filters across projects.





## Increased Engagement With Training Solutions

Involving business partners from across the organization in the decision making process when it comes to training format, duration, target audience, and learning goals ensures that you're delivering what they need.

Once the training is designed and delivered, you'll also have buy in at the management level that can help in promoting the new training solution to your learners.



## Increased Commitment from SMEs

One very useful function of the Learning Advisory Committee can be to help identify and recruit valuable subject matter experts (SMEs) once important training projects are identified. With management involved, you're far more likely to end up with co-operative SMEs that are invested in the project's successful and timely completion.





## Improved Business Performance

One of the most important benefits of establishing a Learning Advisory Committee is that working closely with other business functions means training issues are properly identified and correctly addressed.

By delving into what challenges other departments are facing, L&D can position themselves to be of much greater strategic value to the organization and provide training solutions that impact the bottom line.

“No matter **how good the team** or how efficient the methodology, if we’re not solving the right problem, the project fails.”

- **Woody Williams**







# Best Practices for Forming Your Committee

Before kicking off your Learning Advisory Committee, there are a few best practices to keep in mind to ensure its longevity and success.

## Who should be on it?

Depending on your organizational structure, you might want to have at least one representative from each of the core business functions, including HR, Compliance, Sales & Marketing, IT, etc.

While learner representation is useful at the individual training project level, the Learning Advisory Committee usually comprises senior management or executive level members so that high-level organizational objectives can be addressed in a training context.

## Buy-In From Committee Members

It's also essential to make sure the individual members of the Learning Advisory Committee are fully dedicated to the cause. You can achieve this by highlighting the benefits to them and their departments.

The purpose of the committee is not just to improve L&D's outcomes, but to support the achievement of organizational and departmental goals, too.

## What should be discussed?

Your Learning Advisory Committee is an opportunity to:

- **Identify and evaluate proposed learning initiatives,**
- **Align training with the strategic goals of the organization,**
- **And receive feedback on existing learning solutions.**

Findings and recommendations from the committee can then be cascaded down to your learning team and to individual projects and initiatives for further analysis and discovery.

## Executive Sponsorship & Buy-In

Like most initiatives, your Learning Advisory Committee needs executive sponsorship and buy-in. Without it, you run the risk of starting off strong, only for the committee to fall by the wayside over time.

Executive buy-in also increases the level of accountability amongst committee members to remain dedicated to its activities and to produce results. So, when bringing the concept to the table, make sure to highlight the key organization-wide benefits the committee will bring.



# Activities, Responsibilities, and Output

Once your committee is approved, the real work can start.

## Ownership & Responsibilities

Establishing specific deliverables and responsibilities of the Learning Advisory Committee is essential to its ongoing success. Without direction and an agenda, meetings, and activities can easily go off-track.

While learning and development leadership should drive the activity of the committee, ownership should be taken by each individual member. The outcomes will benefit organizational performance, so responsibility lies with all representatives to ensure its success.

Take the time to develop a charter for the committee to establish its goals, objectives, outputs and deliverables.

## Meeting Frequency

Since the committee is based on leveraging training to achieve organizational objectives, your meeting schedule should align with other strategic planning across the business. Quarterly meeting usually works best to keep up momentum, revisit progress on specific objectives, and address any new concerns or performance issues which the learning program can support.

Outside of the committee meetings, members can work within their respective departments to:

- **Involve other stakeholders**
- **Review proposed initiatives and business needs**
- **Collect feedback to bring back to the committee**
- **Promote new learning initiatives and solutions**

That way, the Learning Advisory Committee is continuously involved in all aspects of strategic planning and business performance.



## Filtering Training Requests

The Learning Advisory Committee can also reduce the amount of time that your training team spends on evaluating and filtering training requests from across the business. Instead, you can now spend time educating and informing your Learning Advisory Committee on:

- **The types of performance issues most suitably addressed by training**
- **The granularity of information needed in order to properly assess the viability of a training request**
- **How to pre-screen training requests from within their department before they are brought to the attention of L&D**

By establishing committee members as “point men” for L&D within their departments, you’ll save a lot of time on processing, prioritizing, and declining unsuitable training requests.

## Relationship Management

As a learning and development representative, the committee is a vital opportunity to strengthen relationships between your department and the rest of the business.

Not only does this mean better outcomes for your training program, but it can help to establish closer working relationships at the project level when SMEs and other stakeholders work with your team.

For L&D, this means ensuring the committee remains productive and collaborative at all times and keeping a listening ear open to all problems and ideas brought to the table (even if training isn’t the solution).

“The essence of **strategy is choosing**  
what not to do.”  
– **Michael Porter**



## Potential Outputs

Too often, L&D experiences a knee-jerk reaction to training requests, especially when they come from someone of a senior or executive position. The instinct is to support the organization by diving right into creating the requested training.

But in order for the training team to make a positive strategic impact, it's essential to challenge those requests and act as a consultant to business partners to establish the true organizational training need that is triggering these requests.

In this way, the potential output of the committee is not always necessarily a new training solution. Often, you may find yourself assisting in the identification of other performance issues and potential solutions to those problems. By addressing corporate objectives, performance issues, and training ideas from across the business, you'll ensure that your training team always has their eye on the prize to produce training solutions that are truly needed, that will produce results, and that will support organizational performance.



# 35%

of senior HR staff believe that learning and development are a **“mostly strategic priority”** compared to 22% of junior HR staff.



# 49%

of talent developers agree that **getting managers to prioritize learning** is their number one challenge in 2020

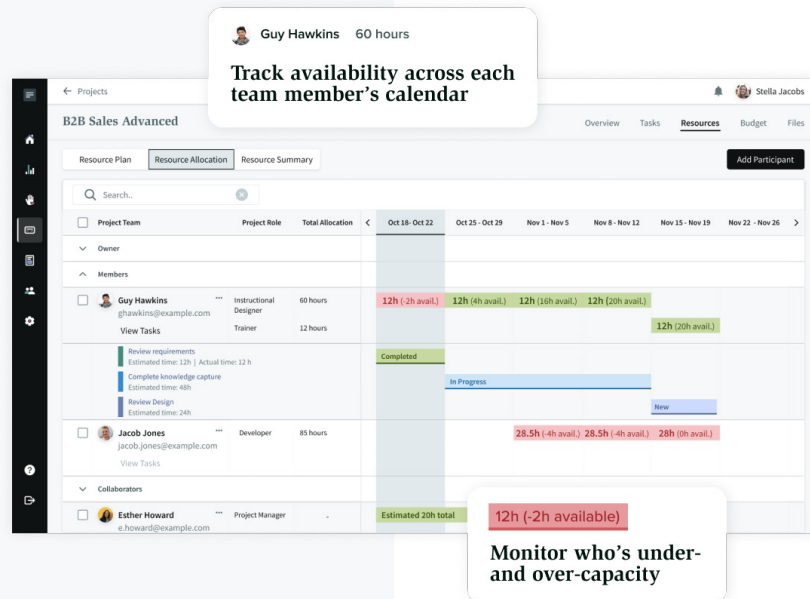
Source: [Guide Research](#)

# Training Intake as a Diagnostic Business Tool

Even if L&D are challenging business partners on the practicality, effectiveness, or logic of a training request, too often it comes too late or is not handled in the most efficient way.

The discussion around requests of this nature is time consuming, but it doesn't need to be.

“Learn to ask of all actions, ‘Why are they doing that?’ **Starting with your own.**”





# Your Training Request Form

Your training request forms are the lifeblood of your training intake process. When properly designed, with the right questions put to the requester, they can do most of the heavy lifting for you when it comes to uncovering the real pain point that has led to a request for training.

Your training request form should ask requesters to outline:

- **Who is the intended audience of the training**
- **What is the organizational training need prompting the request**
- **How will the success of the training be measured**
- **What are the anticipated business outcomes of the training**

The point here is not that the requester should know all of this information and get it completely right. Instead, the goal should be to receive a training request form with enough information to make your consultation with the business partner more productive.

The L&D team will quickly be able to assess what is driving the need for training. Or, more importantly, whether training is really the answer.

The topic, audience size, and intended outcomes (as provided by the requester) will also help you to understand what type of training is most suitable. Your business partner may be requesting a 3-day training marathon, but with enough insight provided on the training request form, you'll be able to propose a more strategic and effective approach. The learning advisory committee can enable you to:

- **Educate business partners on the importance and purpose of your training request form**
- **Receive requests from the organization through the filter of your fellow advisory committee members**
- **Discuss training requests in an open and collaborative environment to find the best solution**







# Alternatives to Training

One of the first questions L&D should be asking themselves during the diagnostic stage is: are we sure this is a training issue?

It's imperative to dive deeper into the performance problems behind the request. Too often, business partners jump straight to training to resolve issues that learning professionals know are not training related.

So, instead of agreeing to new learning experiences that will potentially be fruitless, leverage your training intake system to understand whether this is a training, motivation, or management issue.

That means collecting fairly in-depth information on the intended target audience. Are these tenured employees or new starters who are not catching up quickly enough? Has similar training been conducted previously? If so, was there any performance improvement?

It may be that job aids, on-the-job learning, or new tools would be far more beneficial to learners (and to the business) than a new training course.



“Be prepared to cut your losses  
– Canceling bad projects early is success because you save time, money and **resources that can** be applied to better opportunities.”

- Ian Spence and Kurt Bittner



## Conclusion

Establishing a Learning Advisory Committee is about providing win-win scenarios for your training team, your business partners, and your learners.

Not only does the committee position L&D as a strategic partner within the organization, but it can improve the way your team works and the outcomes they produce.

## The First and Only Learning Operations Platform for L&D Teams

Increase effectiveness by bringing the entire workflow, from intake to design, into the Cognota LearnOps platform. You'll save time, improve collaboration, and get data about team performance and learning needs across the organization, which disparate or stitched-together tools can't provide.

Try It Free

Speak With Sales

The screenshot shows the Cognota LearnOps platform interface. On the left is a dark sidebar with navigation links: Home, Insights, Intake (selected), Projects, Design, Teams, Settings, Support, and Log out. The main content area is titled 'Intake' and has tabs for 'Team Requests' and 'My Requests'. Below the tabs is a search bar and a table of requests. The table has columns for Request Number, Request Owner, Requester Name, Request Title, Business Unit, Submission Date, Status, and an actions column. The first request is highlighted in blue.

| Request Number | Request Owner | Requester Name   | Request Title                       | Business Unit  | Submission Date | Status    |     |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----|
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Cody Fisher      | B2B Sales Advanced                  | B2B Solutions  | May 24, 2021    | Approved  | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Ralph Edwards    | Revision on New Hire Training       | Contact Center | Sep 8, 2021     | In Review | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Dianne Russell   | Introduction to New Sales Proces... | Retail         | May 12, 2021    | Approved  | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Savannah Nguyen  | Consultative Selling                | B2B Solutions  | May 20, 2021    | Declined  | ... |
| #0982774635    | SD, A, SB     | Esther Howard    | Unconscious Bias Workshop           | IT             | Feb 28, 2021    | In Review | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Kristin Watson   | Account Manager Certification       | B2B Solutions  | Aug 30, 2021    | In Review | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Leslie Alexander | Salesforce Training - Deals         | B2B Solutions  | Apr 24, 2021    | Approved  | ... |
| #0982774635    | HP, A, BA     | Devon Lane       | Coaching Training for Managers      | Corporate      | Apr 14, 2021    | In Review | ... |
| #0982774635    | SD, A, SB     | Leslie Alexander | Introduction to New Sales Proces... | Retail         | Jul 30, 2021    | Approved  | ... |

At the bottom of the table, it says '25 Results' and 'Show 15' with a dropdown arrow. There are also navigation arrows and a 'Jump to Page 12' dropdown.



**COGNOTA**