

CIPD



Executive summary
June 2023

Learning at work 2023

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals – experts in people, work and change. With almost 160,000 members globally – and a growing community using its research, insights and learning – it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It's a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.

Executive summary

Global challenges have created an uncertain and changing environment for workplaces. The focus for organisations is back once again on growth, cost reduction and productivity. With the shelf life of skill expected to continually decline,¹ retaining the right people with the right skills is a top priority for all.

Our *Learning at work 2023* survey report explores how learning practitioners are contributing to continually changing workforce priorities and highlights potential changes in practice to help them thrive through disruption.

Priorities and challenges

Our 2023 report shows that organisations have increased their headcount and budget for workforce learning. However, despite access to more resources, 53% of those working in L&D functions reported that their workload has increased. Addressing the skills gap is the top priority, but learning practitioners report a lack of priority from business leaders, a lack of capacity, and a lack of insight about what is needed and what is working. In 2023, learning practitioners are less likely to agree that their learning strategy supports business priorities than in 2021.

Evolving learning methods

As the workplace shifts to become more hybrid, the methods used to support learning in these environments have also changed. Although face-to-face learning has rallied, there is still a net decrease. While the adoption of specific technology tools has declined since the pandemic, the use of digital learning solutions continues to grow overall, with 48% of learning practitioners reporting an increase in use in the last year. Specific L&D functions are more likely to embrace methods that support the application of new knowledge, including apprenticeships and job rotation, as well as funding coaching and mentoring programmes.

Embedding technology in learning delivery

The majority of L&D professionals harness technology to support administration, content design and delivery. Those using a broad range of technologies are more likely to report strategic alignment with organisational outcomes, a more holistic learning process, opportunities to continuously improve and openness to experiment.

Working smarter

Learning practitioners have a wider range of methods and media at their disposal than ever before. But to work smarter, we need to understand what practices are effective. It is important to:

- use evidence-informed principles
- establish clear business goals
- design for diverse learners
- minimise cognitive load, and
- support learning transfer.

¹ [The Future of Jobs Report 2023](#), World Economic Forum

However, fewer than a quarter of L&D teams believe they are skilled at designing and delivering digital learning, and almost half lack a systematic evaluation and measurement approach. On the other hand, leaders who recognise the value of L&D are more likely to have teams that apply evidence-informed principles, identify performance issues before recommending solutions, have processes for supporting learning transfer, and assess learning impact to ensure continuous improvement.

The vital role of line managers

Line managers play a critical role in supporting individuals and creating opportunities for learning transfer, but perceptions of line manager support to help do this, and to assess the impact of L&D, are generally low. Learning professionals need to work with the business to create an environment for learning, capturing and sharing ideas, and enabling knowledge transfer and management. This is a two-way process – organisations where leaders recognise the value of learning practitioners are more likely to create a climate of trust, have systems in place for knowledge transfer and management, and support informal and continuous learning.

L&D leader influence

Our report shows that leaders of L&D teams have a more positive perception of the profession than practitioners. It also highlights opportunities for L&D leaders to better connect with their teams, to provide clearer career pathways and opportunities for learning within teams, and to become more intentional in applying principles of effective practice. Additionally, those learning practitioners whose leaders value their contribution to the organisation's goals are more likely to report that their L&D team is skilled in a range of areas.

Below, we highlight eight recommendations for learning professionals to help them thrive through disrupted times.

Thriving through disruption:

Eight lessons from the CIPD Learning at work 2023 survey report

Work smarter, not harder

2023 saw a net increase in L&D headcount and budget but it came with a much higher increase in workload

53%
report an increase in team workload

Shift from input to outcome

L&D practitioners are working harder, but not necessarily on the right things

57%
are proactive in identifying the performance issue before recommending a solution

Operate beyond the course

Our current focus is on input; less than one in 10 strongly agree they make evidence-informed decisions to improve performance

46%
have a process for supporting learning transfer

Embrace digital curiosity

How we have applied our digital tools in the past will not necessarily prepare L&D for success in the future

11%
are using or planning to use generative AI (Feb 2023)

Co-create value with others

Connect and collaborate with organisation stakeholders to build skill across the employee experience

37%
agree that systems are in place to help individuals share what they have learned

Explore and experiment

Carve out spaces to explore and experiment with new ways of learning

13%
have embraced test and learn as an opportunity to build new L&D skill

Realise your own potential

Only one in five learning practitioners strongly agree they are prioritising the skills they need to help their organisation in the future

21%
strongly agree they cultivate their own attitude of continual improvement

L&D leaders – rise up!

Learning leaders are more optimistic than practitioners about career prospects and earning potential: it's time to use our influence to retain talent in the profession

52%
believe that L&D offers good career prospects

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Issued: June 2023 Reference: 8378 © CIPD 2023