TOWARDS MATURITY

The Transformation Journey

Today's learning strategy for tomorrow's business success

February 2019

About this research

Towards Maturity conducts an internationally recognised longitudinal benchmark study on the effective implementation of learning innovation in the workplace.

Established in 2003 and releasing the first report in 2004, the study draws on insights and data from 7,500 learning professionals and 50,000+ workers to identify the characteristics of high-performing learning organisations, defined as those delivering growth, productivity, profit and transformation as an outcome of their learning strategies.

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to uncover evidence that helps organisations make smart learning decisions and deliver real impact.

This annual report directly follows the publication of *The Transformation Curve: The L&D journey to deliver lasting business impact,* released in January 2018. Here we discuss barriers in L&D's transformation journey from the left to the right of the curve.

Additional online insights from our expert analysts are available throughout this report.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Foreword by Sarah Lindsell, Global Chief Learning Strategist, PwC

I was one of the pioneers who took part in the original Towards Maturity benchmark study in 2004. I have recently re-read *Linking Learning to Business,* the original report, and I'm amazed how everything and nothing has changed. As an industry we have come full circle and many of the struggles we have today are the same as we had then.

Fifteen years on, several critical themes from the original report are picked up here. As an industry we can no longer ignore them.

It was clear back then that the wider business had more impact on learning than learning professionals themselves. I think this is more so today. The impact of technology is driving huge change in our businesses and working processes, providing the learning industry with a great opportunity. We are now seeing interventions delivered within the flow of work that are not even recognised as learning.

As a result, in 2019 L&D can genuinely be one of the biggest change agents an executive can use. This is certainly true for me. As learning professionals, we now have a strong voice in the decisions being made and are pivotal partners in transformational change at our business.

This report shows that I am not alone in being part of a dynamic, high-performing learning culture. However, many are still struggling with the traditional perceptions of learning.

This report by Towards Maturity, *The Transformation Journey*, is a wake-up call, not only to L&D but also to their leaders.

It not only provides evidence that business and learning leaders working together deliver results, but also outlines the foundations and roadmap to achieve this.

The ability to demonstrate our value has always been a challenge for our industry. Analytics and data are making a huge impact on the future of learning. Being able to get immediate data on what individuals are consuming, seeing and reading is invaluable.

Analytics is a real buzzword now. As learning professionals, we need to be prepared, we need to learn how to skill up, how to manipulate data and turn it into actionable insights. The key is to start small, pick a few things to report on and build from there.

The future is now, and this report provides not only a clear call for L&D professionals to get ready, it also shows them how.

Fifteen years on from *Linking Learning to Business*, this report provides a trusted evidence-base that will help us all deliver learning innovation with real business impact.

1. Navigating uncertainty

We live and work in an environment that seems more uncertain every day. It is critical that learning and business leaders work together effectively to navigate this deep uncertainty. As we enter 2019, this report explores where the L&D profession is today, identifies the three most prevalent barriers to a successful learning strategy, and shows how to overcome these and continue a successful learning transformation journey.

1.1 Fifteen years of change

This year marks Towards Maturity's 15th anniversary, over which time our research programme has gathered longitudinal evidence from all stakeholders in the learning process; allowing participants to understand how decisions in the past have affected the present, and to make informed recommendations for the future.

In 2004, the biggest business challenges facing L&D practitioners included the speed of change, quality, customer retention, revenue growth and cost reduction. Originally 'marketing hype claimed that e-learning would meet these needs and more'.[1] Yet over a decade later these expectations have not been met.

What began as a unique collaboration of learning experts and academic thinkers with learning leaders at just 16 organisations and 2,000 of their workforce, has grown into a study that is referenced across the globe.

Figure 1 illustrates the diverse evidence source that has contributed to industry thinking. Appendix A provides more detail of the 700 L&D leaders and 10,276 workers that have contributed to this report's insight on the industry today.

**Figure 1: A community approach to 15 years of longitudinal research**

[1]Towards Maturity (2004). *Research Report 2004: Linking learning to business* [Online]. Available at: https://towardsmaturity.org/product/linking-learning-business-original-research-2004/

Shifting expectations

Driven by technology, the rate of change has been exponential and today's business leader not only have to manage risk and deliver results, but also prepare their people to thrive and survive in the face of constant disruption. Learning leaders have been consistently interested in new technologies and models since the study began, but their goals and expectations have now changed to align with what matters to the business.

Figure 2 illustrates how industry focus has moved from improving the traditional learning procedures of efficiency and process to being equally driven by delivering real change in performance, business agility and learning culture.[2]

Figure 2: How L&D expectations have shifted in the last 10 years
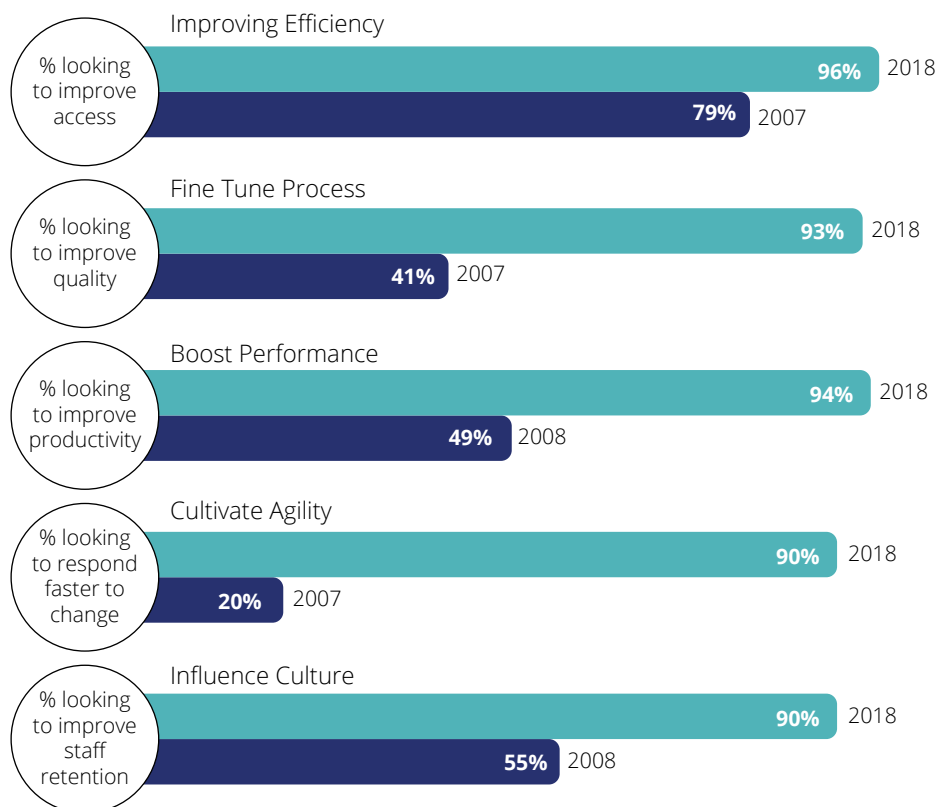
Drivers first tracked from 2007/2008 sample size: 212 in 2007, 535 in 2008, 700 in 2018

Shifting methods and media

There has been a significant increase in the advice, models, tools and technologies available to help learning leaders achieve their goals. The terms by which the industry discusses potential problems and opportunities has shifted; from training to performance, push to pull, courses to resources, content creators to curators, ADDIE to agile. Technology has added a new prefix to learning on a regular basis; e, m, social, micro and so on.

Excellent models for change have surfaced including Action Mapping (Cathy Moore), Performance Consulting (Nigel Harrison), 70:20:10 (Charles Jennings et al) and a variety of evaluation methodologies (Brinkerhoff, Kirkpatrick and Phillips).

Throughout the years, the Towards Maturity study has tracked the changing tools and deconstructed the new models, often working alongside the originators to isolate the tactics that directly impact business outcomes.

[2]See Appendix D for details of what is driving L&D leaders today and the extent to which they have been successful.

1.2 An established evidence base

Key Performance Indicators

Learning innovation has consistently provided a minimum 9% improvement in outcomes leading to business growth, productivity, transformation and profit. This year is no different with participants reporting improvements attributed to new tools, technologies and methods.[3]

In the last seven years, learning innovation consistently delivered

>9%

improvement in outcomes leading to growth, productivity, transformation and profit

Growth

> In 2018, measures of external customer satisfaction have improved by 21% (14% in 2015, 20% in 2012)

Productivity

> Learning interventions have increased productivity by 14% in 2018 (13% in 2015, 22% in 2012)

Transformation

> Ability to change products and processes has improved by 28% (23% in 2015, 29% in 2012)

Profit

> Revenue increased by 11% (9% in 2015, 8% in 2013)

> Costs have decreased by 36% (17% in 2015, 22% in 2012)

These indicators highlight how smart decisions about learning can make a real difference to business. However, whilst many learning leaders aspire to delivering these goals, few achieve them. There is a difference between what an industry talks about, what it knows and what it puts into practice.

Success tactics

Figure 3 highlights some of the transformation tactics influencing success that Towards Maturity has uncovered over the last 15 years. In the early days we referenced some of these evidence-based insights as 'superfoods for the learning industry' due to their strong correlation to business impact.

[3]See Appendix B, Research Methodology to understand how KPIs are derived over a three-year period.

Figure 3: Uncovering evidence of strategies that deliver impact

Business impact improves when we shift:		From:	To:
	Linking Learning to Business 2004 (Annual Benchmark)	Delivering training interventions Technology first	Holistic workplace experiences Outcomes first
	Looking at the impact of e-learning in the workplace 2007 (Annual Benchmark)	Pursuing novelty and innovation as a means to an end	Tactics that correlate to success
	Bridging the Gap 2012 (Annual Benchmark)	Formal learning interventions alone	Continuous learning in the flow of work
	New Learning Agenda 2013 (Annual Benchmark)	Learner engagement	Customer activated learning strategy

Fifteen years of isolating the facts from the hype

Visit our website for more evidence on how the research has also been able to isolate the hype from the facts in areas such as compliance, leadership and 70:20:10 over the last 15 years.

towardsmaturity.org/15years-2019

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ANALYST ANGLE

1.3 A proven roadmap for transformation

Our study originally focused on codifying how organisations applied the success tactics. The result was a single index of learning maturity: the Towards Maturity Index (TMI).

Analysis of the top 10%, or Top Deck, of TMI performers in these areas over the years highlighted several shared characteristics (Figure 4). These were released to the global community under the banner of 'New Learning Organisation', a place where individuals, leaders and L&D professionals are working together to establish a high-performing learning culture[4].

Figure 4: The New Learning Organisation characteristics

However, knowing about the successful tactics has proven to be very different from applying them in a complex business world. The research has shown that learning practitioners are often so consumed with the burden of delivering today that they are unable to prepare themselves and their stakeholders for a different future.

In 2016–17, searching for ways to accelerate progress, we started asking different questions of the data. The focus shifted from finding out what would make L&D more successful to understanding what was holding the profession back. The resulting insights, reported in our 2018 report, *The Transformation Curve,* showed that an organisation's learning approach could be categorised in four stages, each reporting a clear set of benefits and each with its own set of challenges (Figure 5).

To the left of the curve, learning is typically considered in the context of programmes, interventions and campaigns, with L&D's main role to be the producer. To the right of the curve, we see the ownership of learning shifting to individuals and managers, with L&D playing an active role in empowering and enabling change.

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[4]Towards Maturity (2017). *In-Focus: Driving the New Learning Organisation* [Online]. Available at: https://towardsmaturity.org/2017/05/03/in-focus-new-learning-organisation/

Figure 5: Snapshot of the transformation curve
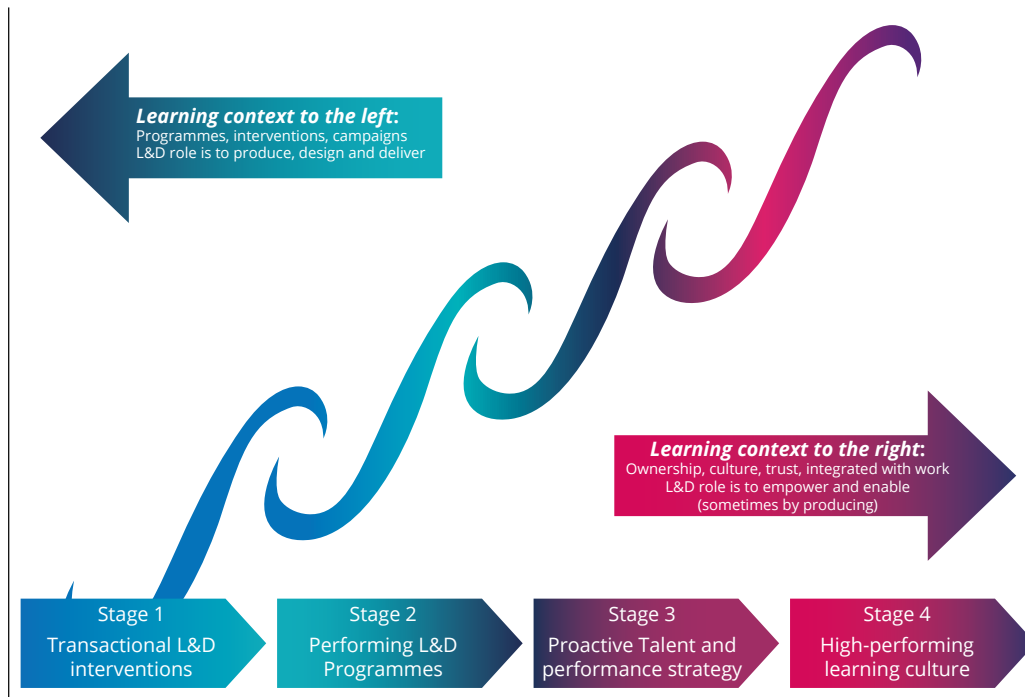
The stages followed a traditional S-curve, reflecting strong adoption and benefit of new learning approaches followed by a tailing off and potential decline.

Most importantly, we highlighted that moving from one stage to another often involves a pivot point of change where learning leaders needed to make counterintuitive decisions, letting go of the past to embrace the next stage of development.

Appendix C summarises the dimensions underpinning success at each stage of L&D's transformation journey from the left to the right of the curve.

A journey that delivers

This year, we wanted to challenge our own research and ask whether journeying from the left to the right of the curve really delivers impact. The analysis of the data suggests it does. We see that as organisations progress, they are not only more likely to identify the improvements they are making, but also more likely to report increased impact.

Figure 6: Business benefits of the transformation journey
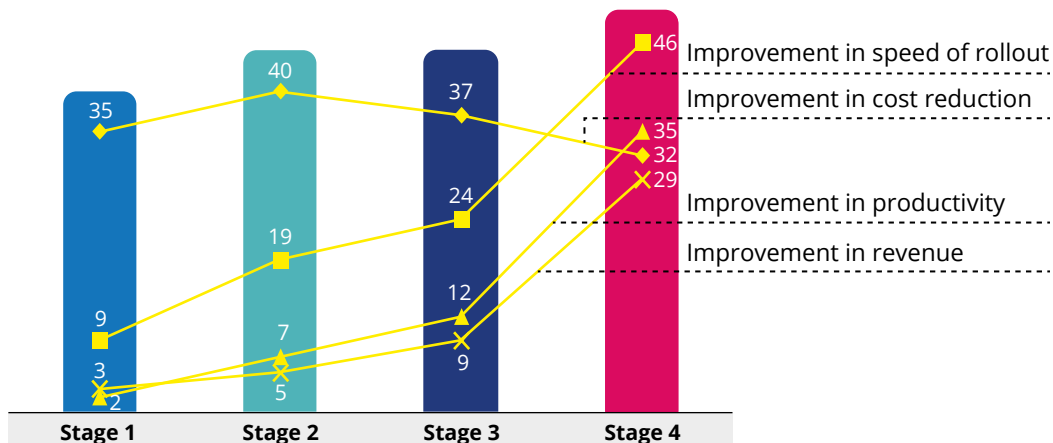
Typically, those organisations at Stage 4 that have embedded a high-performing learning culture are twice as likely to be tracking these KPIs as those at Stage 1.

More importantly, Figure 6 shows that the extent of business impact improves significantly with maturity, except in the area of cost reduction. Clearly, the additional business improvements gained to the right of the curve trump the pursuit of cost efficiencies as organisations increase in maturity.

Fifteen years have been spent deconstructing and exploring the day-to day work of learning and applying in-depth data analytics to explore patterns that lead to success. This community-driven research initiative has provided a unique opportunity to identify the transformation curve as a road map for change and establish new learning benchmarks to accelerate our progress.

Donald H Taylor, Chair of Learning Technologies Conference, quoted, "Towards Maturity have created something which I believe will be invaluable to the learning profession, a model of maturity that relates not only to the use of technology but to everything that L&D departments do supporting an effective organisation".

In a complex world, wherever we start on our journey we need to deliver smarter solutions today that will prepare us for the unexpected tomorrow.

The remainder of this report will explore where L&D is today, the business benefits of progressing along the transformation journey and the next steps to take.

2. Breaking the impasse

The transformation curve provides a roadmap for change. Analysis of current data against this framework provides insights on how L&D has struggled to introduce a high-performing learning culture over the years and identifies the three main challenges responsible for this.

2.1 The L&D profession today

We were keen to understand what progress L&D has made on its transformation journey as we start the new year. To answer this question, we considered the responses gathered from 700 individuals who took part in the Towards Maturity Health Check, a process that considers goals, achievements, challenges and tactics.[5]

Figure 7 outlines progress using some of the more traditional measures that learning professionals consider when benchmarking success.

Figure 7: Traditional benchmarks of L&D progress (L&D where are we now?)

Resources
- 34% training budgets have increased in 2 years
- 47% of budgets have remained the same
- 38% of teams have increased in the last 2 years
- 42% of teams have stayed the same size

Technology
- 18% of L&D budget spent on technology
- 75% expect it to increase in the next 2 years
- 90% of staff have access to digital learning
- 45% of learning content is developed in-house

Programmes
- 53% Face to Face
- 24% Blended
- 24% Online
- 87% have some form of academy

Compliance
- 78% of employees access digital learning for compliance
- Completion rates are the highest in 5 years (76%)

[5]See Appendix A for Health Check participants.

Compared with three years ago we have seen that:

> Compliance training has made progress with higher completion rates – perhaps fueled significantly by GDPR in Europe

> Budget allocated to learning technologies has remained static (18% on average in 2018, 19% in 2015) despite a slight increase in budget allocation 2017. This does not reflect the expectations of seven out of 10 learning leaders over the last five years who have predicted that the proportion of their learning budget allocated to technology will increase year on year

> Face to Face and blended learning as delivery options have slightly decreased, and the proportion of online learning has increased from 19% of overall training delivery in 2015 to 24% in 2018.

Over 50% of formal learning is still delivered Face to Face

2.2 The search for progress

Has L&D been successful in achieving its goals over this period? The analysis shows that the profession has made only limited progress. The focus of today's L&D leaders on tools and technologies has not delivered the impact we are looking for. In fact, none of the traditional learning benchmarks outlined in Figure 7 correlate to success. Whilst there have been slight improvements in the last few years, L&D have not kept up with the accelerated pace of change facing business today.

Figure 8 highlights that whilst the industry has made slight improvements in delivering learning efficiency in the last three years, this has been counterbalanced by a step backwards in process improvement. Nine out of 10 are looking for improvements, but fewer than half have achieved this, with little progression in the last three years.

Figure 8: Summary of progress in last three years
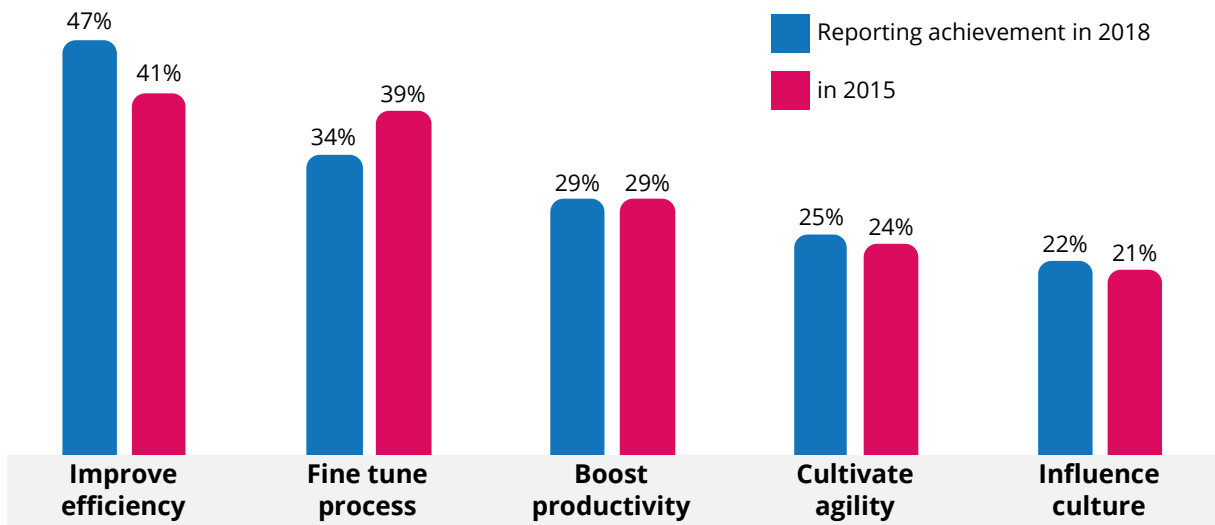
Progress in what matters to business – productivity, agility and culture – has been at best static when we look at the overall sample, with fewer than one in five achieving goals linked to agility and culture.

Fewer than 1 in 5 are achieving goals linked to agility and culture

How can progress be accelerated?

As organisations progress in their journey from the left to the right of the transformation curve, they are not only more likely to report bottom-line impact on business KPIs, but also more likely to report achievements in the core goals of their learning strategy that are essential for delivering these results.

Figure 9 shows that in comparison to those to the left of the curve at Stage 1, those to the right of the curve are:

> 3x more likely to report efficiency
> 5x more likely to report process improvements
> 5x more likely to report productivity
> 8x more likely to report agility improvements
> 6x more likely to be positively influencing culture

What is more, these patterns have been repeated year on year for the past three years, with new audiences participating in the Towards Maturity Learning Health Check process.

Figure 9: How progress improves with maturity

% achieving goals in these areas:
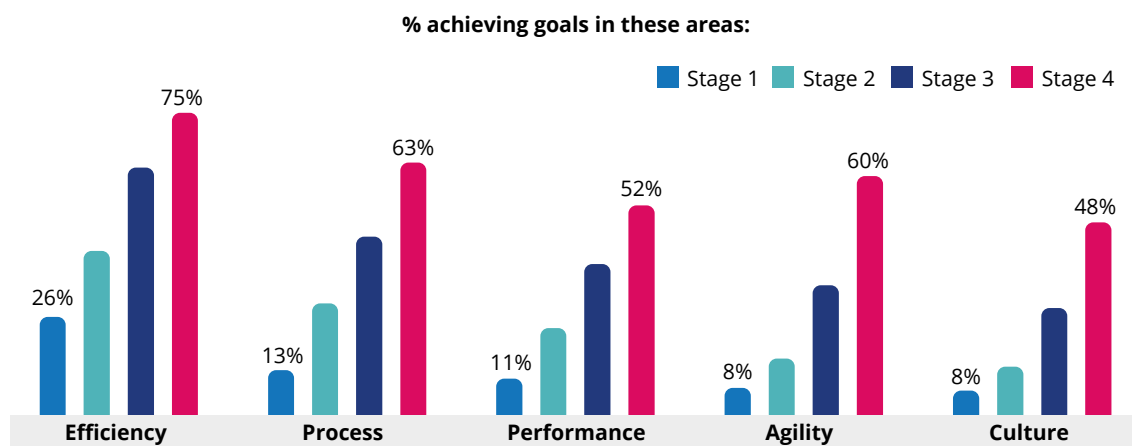
2.3 Three big barriers

Pivot Points of change

Find out more about how to use the transformation curve to uncover pivot points of change.

towardsmaturity.org/Transformation-2019

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The Towards Maturity Model is robust in confirming a roadmap for learning transformation, outlining the tactics that accelerate achievement and the benefits achieved. Why then is the industry still struggling to make progress?

The most significant pivot point of change is at the centre of the curve as organisations move from left to right. This marks the fundamental shift of L&D from producer to enabler, from delivering courses to enabling organisational change.

Figure 10: What is L&D extremely concerned about?

L&D are overwhelmed and under-equipped	29%
Reluctance by managers to make time for learning	29%
Unreliable ICT infrastructure/low bandwidth technical restrictions/firewall	25%
Leaders have traditional expectations of L&D that are difficult to challenge	24%
Lack of attractive, high-quality digital content that supports our business goals	21%
Cost of set-up, development and maintenance of tech solutions	21%
Reluctance by senior managers to encourage new ways of learning and working	20%
Pace of technological change	19%
Lack of analytical skills to use learning data effectively	18%
Reluctance by line management to encourage new ways of learning and working	17%
Lack of skills amongst employees to manage own learning	17%

■ **Digital Disruption** ■ **Cultural Resistance** ■ **L&D Capability**

In 2018, our research team worked to identify the cause of this impasse, considering how to reframe the questions we asked of the data so that we can help L&D professionals unblock the road to successful transformation.

Three significant barriers were identified by the community:

> Digital disruption
> Culture resistance
> L&D capability

In the following chapters we recommend how to navigate these three significant factors that prevent progress in the transformation journey. We consider the data and show how tactical recommendations that act as catalysts of change can be applied at all stages.

3. Building digital success

Specific technologies alone do not correlate to business or learning impact. However, the way they are used can dramatically accelerate the learning transformation journey.

3.1 Creating a shift in digital maturity

The digital danger zone

Technology plays a core role in the learning transformation journey. However, the digital danger zone describes an over-reliance on the latest tools to deliver results. Across the industry, nearly twice as many technologies are being used today compared with 2011 and L&D leaders expect this growth to continue.

However, it has become apparent through our research over 15 years that there is no direct link at any stage of maturity between technologies in use and achieving goals of efficiency, process, performance, agility or culture.

Whilst the tools alone do not correlate to business impact, the tactics used to implement them most certainly do. High-performing learning organisations consistently exhibit digital confidence. L&D teams in such organisations are three times more likely than average to possess the right skills to exploit learning technologies for business advantage. It is this careful and continual effort that is required to increase the value technology brings to learning.

Technologies used today

We know that L&D is investing 18% of budget in technology but which technologies are they using? Figure 11 shows that the learning technologies trusted by the majority today are the same as 15 years ago. For many people professionals, investment in learning technology is targeted primarily at content creation and delivery. The focus remains on tools that bring efficiency to traditional learning delivery: live online learning, eLearning courses and the learning management system.

On average organisations are using

19

different learning technologies

Figure 11: Which technologies are learning leaders investing in today and planning for tomorrow?
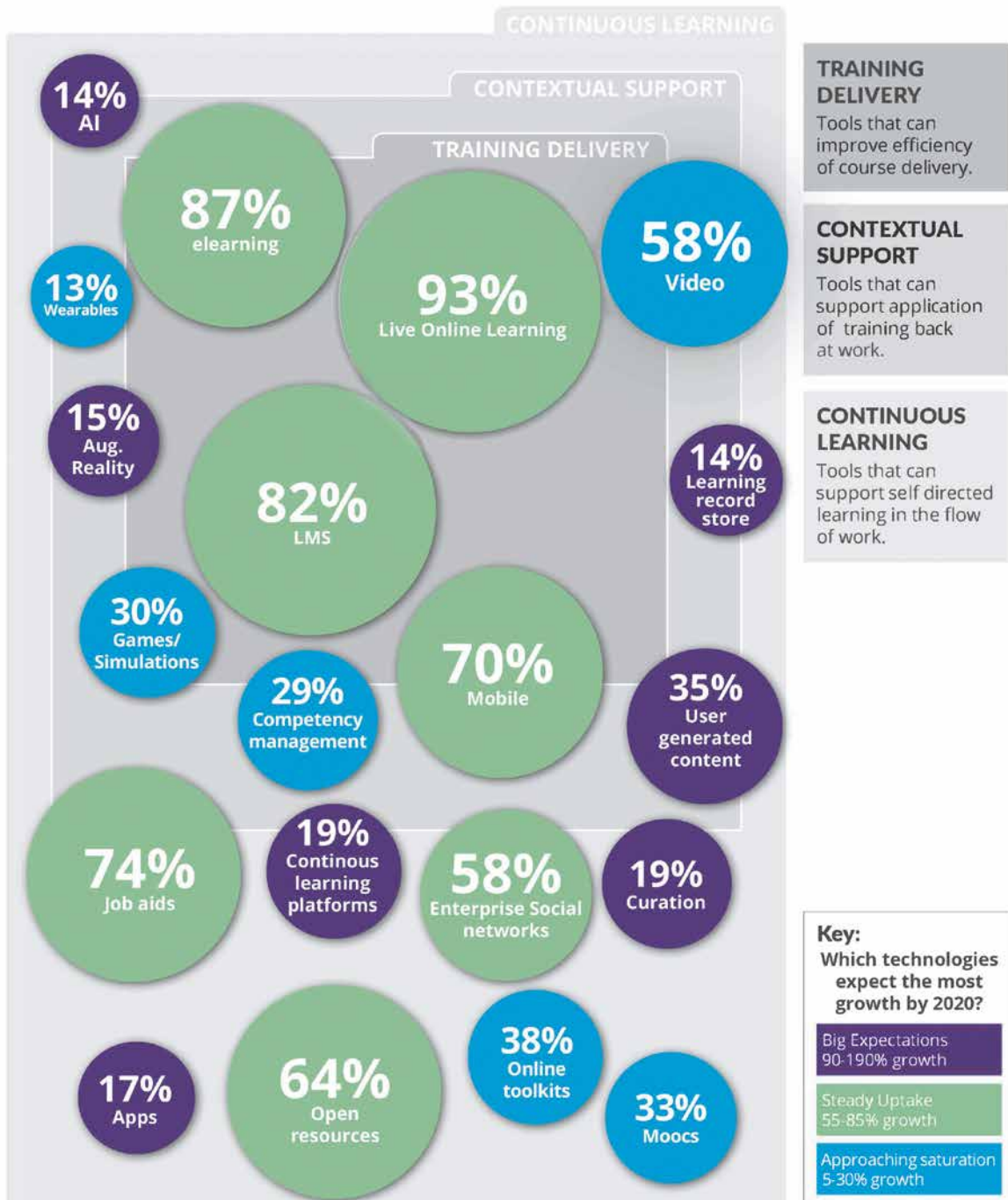
For the majority, investment in learning technology is targeted primarily at content creation and delivery, with mobile access plateauing for the past few years at 70%.

New learning technologies such as AI, wearables and augmented reality are at the top of the list in terms of conversation but fewer than one in five are currently accessing them, and these early adopters are mainly experimenting.

Figure 12 shows that the further an organisation progresses on the transformation journey, the more likely it is to increase its investment in technology. Con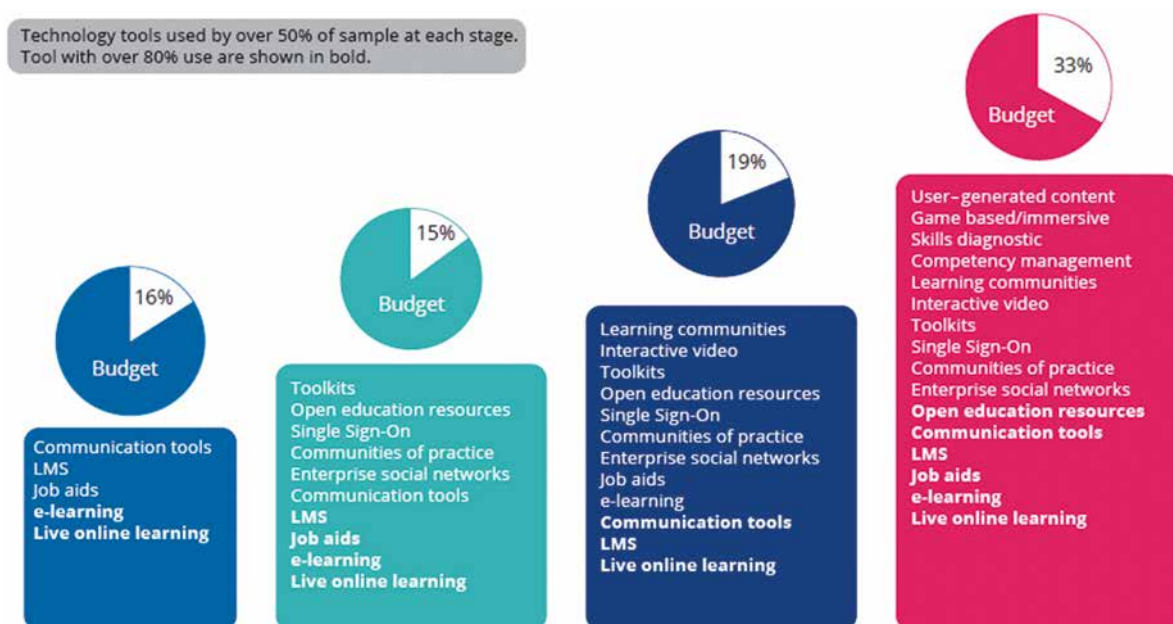tent delivery remains important at each stage but the emphasis shifts to technologies that help form connections between people.

Figure 12: How is budget being invested at each stage?

Compared with those on the left, those to the right of the curve are:

> 3x more likely to enable user-generated content and learning communities

> 4x more likely to be using online toolkits to support learning at the point of need

> 3x more likely to be experimenting with AI and chatbots

> 7x more likely to be experimenting with augmented reality

> They also harness technology to build soft skills: 3x more likely to use technology to support leadership capability, 4x to support team working and 8x to build communication skills.

3.2 Foundations for digital success

To uncover the behaviours that lead to effective implementation of technology for business success, we analysed three specific goals that have been achieved because of digital implementation:

> Increased value for money

> Increased engagement with learning

> Increased ability to personalise learning to need or context.

Digital tools, when used appropriately, are critical for developing a high-performing learning culture. By investigating which behaviours strongly correlate to these three goals, we have isolated three foundational principles for digital success.[6]

3.2a Design to connect

Most instructional design guidelines talk about being user-centric; considering user background, context, preferences and more. However, over the last two years, the number of learning leaders involving users in design has been at an all-time low.

93% of learning leaders want to increase colleagues' engagement with learning but only 25% of learning leaders involve them in the design process.

Figure 13: Tactics for designing learning
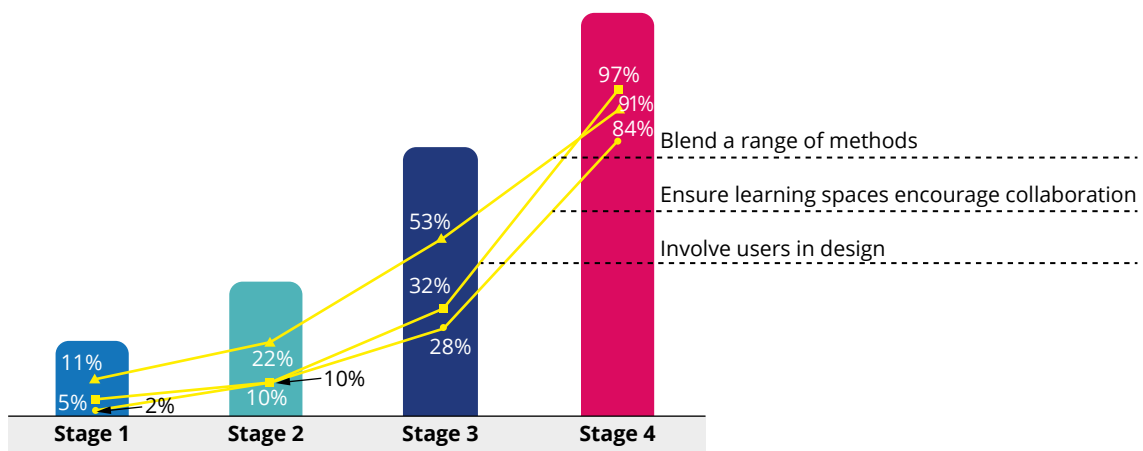
Three design tactics that help build digital success are:

> Working with users in the initial design phase to provide insight into the most appropriate learning approach (on average 25% of organisations do this)

> Blending a wide range of online and offline interventions to create a series of relevant experiences that connect, engage and lead individuals to the right outcomes (37%)

> Create spaces where staff can connect with each other during the learning process (23%)

The Towards Maturity Health Check unpacks a much broader range of learning design tactics that lead to success. However, the above three tactics provide a strong foundation that organisations at any level of maturity can apply as they start building digital confidence.

3.2b Reduce friction

Whilst tension can provide a great opportunity to learn and innovate, when it comes to technology the key to a successful user experience is to remove friction. Organisations to the right of the transformation curve are more likely to have simplified access to their learning technologies. One important way they do this is by integrating Single Sign-On (SSO) and embedding best practice from existing user experience design.

67% **of organisations with high-impact learning culture provide Single Sign-On**

Critically, they also embrace three tactics that address the two biggest friction areas that workers themselves report: irrelevant content and that they just can't find what they need.[7] The tactics in Figure 14 show strong correlation to engagement, personalisation and value for money.

Figure 14: Tactics for removing friction
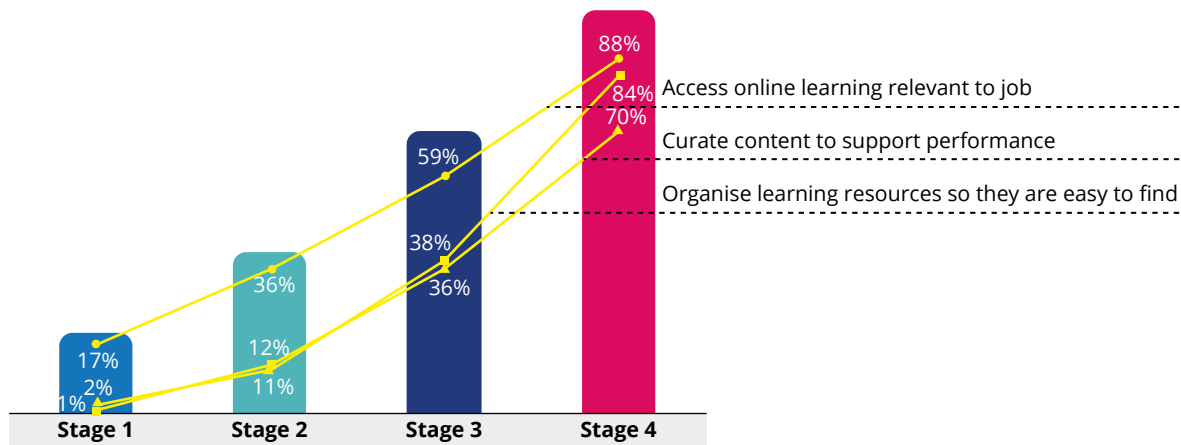
Three basic tactics for removing friction:

> **Prioritise relevance** – Organisations to the right of the curve are 4x more likely to provide relevant learning to their workers. Only 36% of L&D leaders believe their staff can access learning that is directly relevant to their job, implying that 64% of offerings miss the mark

> **Organise your assets so they can be found** – Even the most relevant and useful content is a source of potential friction if individuals can't find what they need. Yet on average only 27% of learning leaders make it easy for their people to find what they need

> **Add relevance through curation** – L&D leaders need to ensure the right content is available at the right time to better support performance and reduce friction at the point of need. Whilst active curation has doubled in the last year, still only 24% of learning leaders on average bring together relevant assets to support performance.

27% on average organise learning resources so they are easy to find

The aforementioned tactics are not correlated to any specific technology but rather serve as guidelines for how technology is embraced and applied in a manner that reduces friction.

3.2c Harness intelligence

The digital confidence needed in the transformation journey is demonstrated not by the fact we have a complex dashboard or use artificial intelligence, but that we are exploring how our data is being used to improve service and experience. Harnessing the intelligence available not only from data but also the wider community, is about knowing the right questions to ask. This is a core foundation for digital success.

[7]See infographic next chapter: Figure 17: How modern workers learn

We have identified three tactics that harness intelligence and lead to success:

> Using diagnostic tools to **tailor to need** (12% agree they do this on average)

> Using analytics to **improve service** (16%)

Whilst many of these new platforms offer features that support diagnostic and analytic tools, the emphasis on these first two tactics is not on the tool being used but on the end goal – WHY are these tools being used, WHAT will be improved? The intelligence involved in the use of analytics and diagnostics lies in the quality of the questions that are asked. How do we tailor learning? How do we improve service, reduce friction and connect with learners?

52% of learning leaders on average know the right questions to ask of their suppliers

The digital confidence needed in the transformation journey is demonstrated not by having a dashboard or a playlist but by exploring how data, however big or small, is being used to improve service and experience. The supply side of the industry is investing heavily in this area. This leads to the third tactic in harnessing intelligence.

> Confidence in **asking our suppliers the right questions** (52%)

Figure 15: Tactics for harnessing intelligence
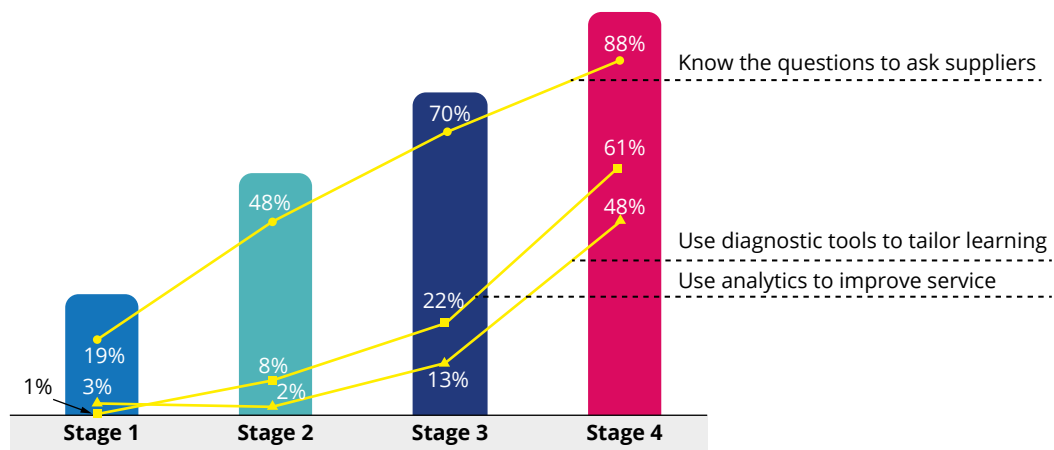
Technology provides us with the resources to collect data, but it is our ability to ask the right questions and interpret the results that leads to insights.

3.3 Applying practical examples

These foundations of digital success can be applied to learning decisions at any point in the transformation journey, establishing a pattern of working and thinking that will not only deliver today but also prepare organisations more fully for the next stage in their journey.

Figure 16 shows some examples of how to apply these three foundations to the left and the right of the curve by letting go of existing beliefs.

Figure 16: Examples of practical actions L&D can take

Applying digital diligence to the left of the curve	Let go:	Applying digital diligence to the right of the curve
Involve users in the design of core programmes: • Compliance • Onboarding • Induction Curate assets to support users once they leave your core programmes Work with suppliers to build confidence and experiment with new approaches	**• Old style design templates that hamper agility** **• Fear of data** **• Belief that technology cannot support soft skills**	Accelerate the machine learning - involve users to develop playlists that are useful Curate user-generated content to add value and increase usefulness Work with suppliers to identify the problems that you want data to solve

Building foundations for digital success

Visit our website to explore our Analyst Angle on how to build foundations for digital success to accelerate your transformation journey.

towardsmaturity.org/technology-2019

In the next chapter we look at evidence-based strategies for overcoming cultural resistance.

4. Overcoming cultural resistance

An organisation's learning culture doesn't just happen. Business leaders, individuals and learning professionals all play a critical role in its development over time.

4.1 Building culture in the modern workforce

The culture danger zone

Whilst nine out of 10 L&D practitioners want to shift away from traditional training and develop a culture of learning that encourages continuous, self-directed practices, less than a quarter are successful.

Over half of L&D practitioners suggest that this is because line managers are reluctant to change, and that business leaders have traditional expectations of organisational learning that are difficult to challenge.

59% of L&D believe business leaders traditional expectations are difficult to challenge

The cultural danger zone lies with internal resistance from stakeholders to adapt organisational learning. To develop a learning culture, individuals at all levels of the company need to provide support and embrace the shift away from traditional expectations and conventions of workplace learning.

Reality check - how modern workers learn

The culture issue is a tough nut to crack. When reviewing the data, we were keen to break down this mammoth challenge to identify the small steps L&D can take within their sphere of influence. It is essential to start with the individual. By considering learning from the modern worker's perspective, we uncover evidence that may challenge the traditional perspectives of both L&D and business leaders.

Figure 17 provides a summary of insights from over 10,000 workers who took part in Towards Maturity's Learner Intelligence programme in the past 18 months.[8] This figure highlights the willingness of today's modern workers to learn in new ways, challenging the traditional perspective of both L&D and the business.

[8]See Appendix A for profile of participants.

Figure 17: How modern workers learn
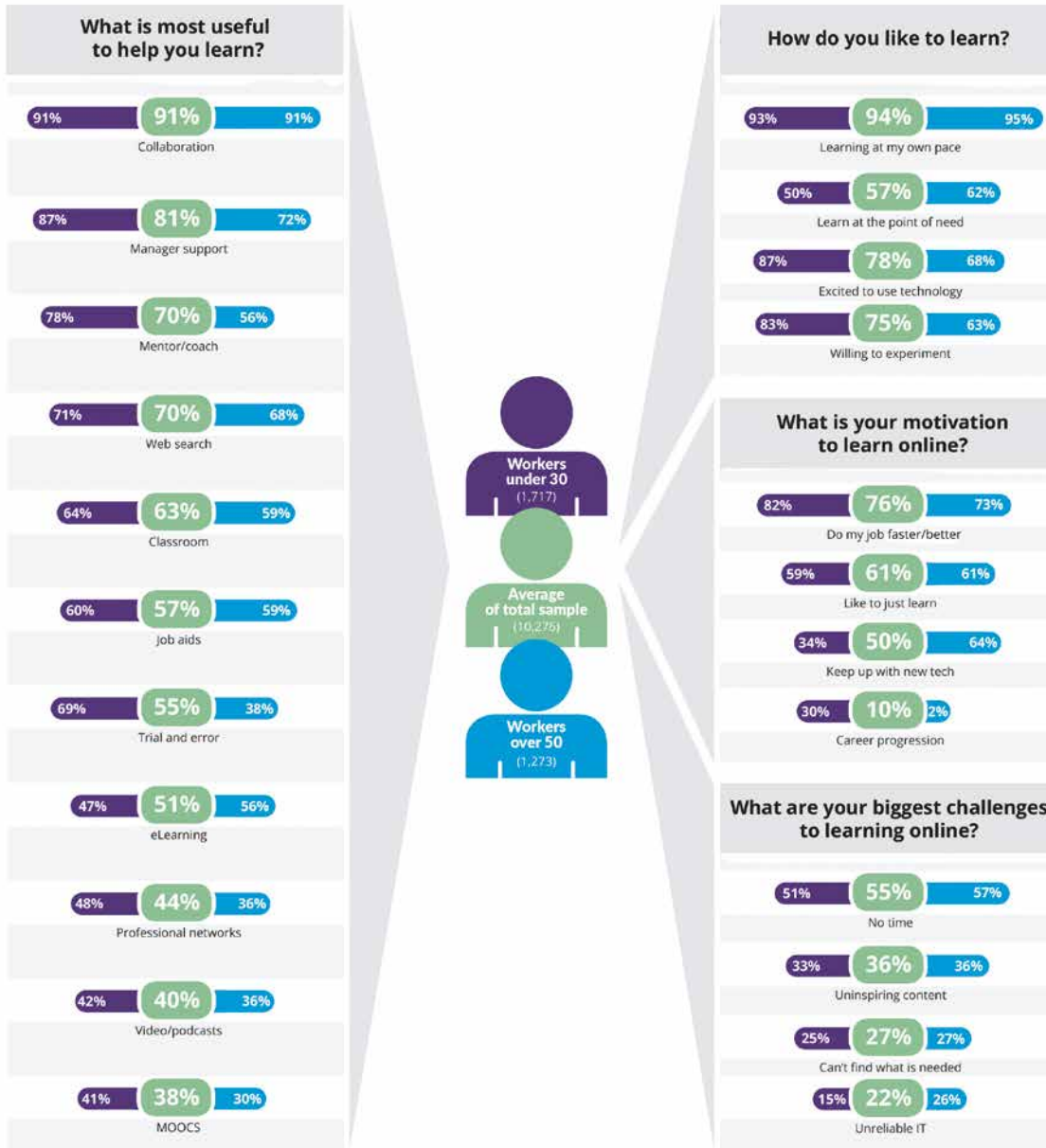
Sample size 10,276

The modern worker is more engaged with learning than their L&D colleagues think. It is clear from the data that they are embracing developments in organisational learning; they are connecting, collaborating and often enthused by technology regardless of age and job role.

Workers express less resistance to the development of a learning culture than the L&D teams that support them. They are happy to learn in the workplace and do it, among other things, for enjoyment and to improve their capabilities.

Nevertheless, there are differences between groups. Specifically, those that have been in their role for longer are harder to please. 50% of this group report that learning in their organisations is irrelevant, uninspiring and/or lacks clarity.

Negative perceptions in certain demographics can affect the ability to develop a fluid culture across the organisation. It is essential to actively understand the perspectives and perceptions of all workers as they provide a reflection of L&D's influence on an organisation's learning culture.

Figure 18: Resistance to learning increases with length of time in role
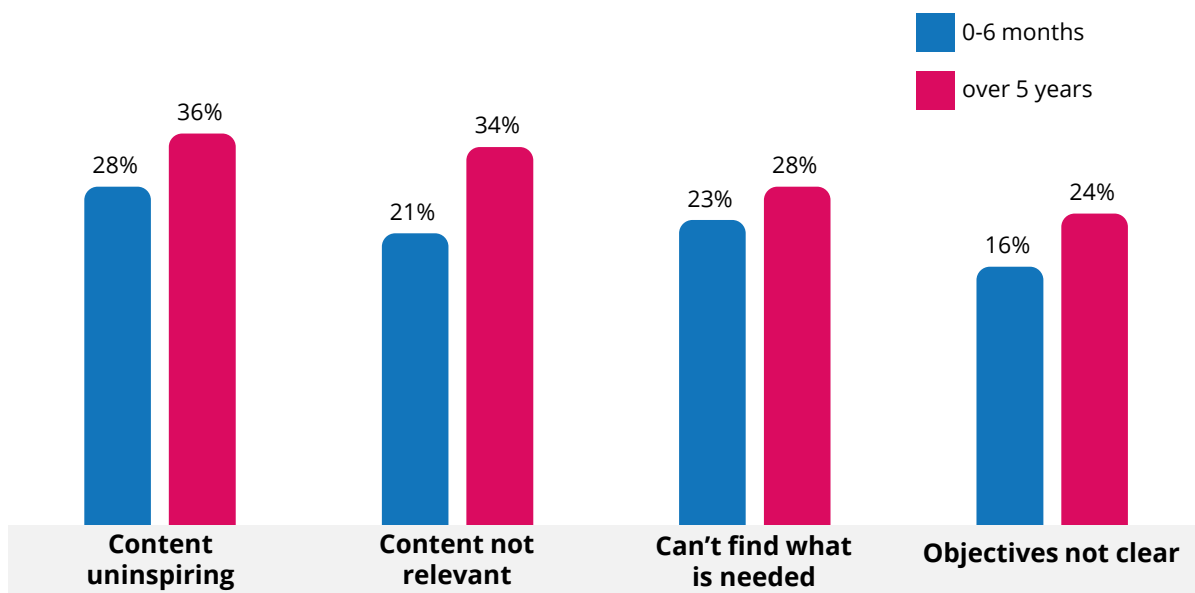
Influence of learning practitioners

Learning practitioners play a crucial role in the development of a learning culture but, as with business leaders and workers, they experience their own resistance. Currently, the data indicates that learning professionals are potentially frustrated and might be establishing a blame culture rather than a learning culture:

> Three in five L&D leaders say that managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning

> 54% believe that learning is not a management priority

> Three in five believe that individuals lack skills to manage own learning

> 48% believe that users are reluctant to learn with technology

> 48% believe their organisational culture doesn't support social learning

Peter Drucker famously noted that 'culture eats strategy for breakfast'.[9] Those practitioners fostering a blame culture are making their own job harder by reiterating the negativity that has prevented success in the first place. Thus, people professionals have a choice: to continue the cycle of negativity or to focus on doing their part for positively influencing culture.

[9]To find out more about Peter Drucker's concept, you can reader Torben Rick's (2014) article, titled 'Organizational culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch and dinner' [Online]. Available at: https://www.torbenrick.eu/blog/culture/organisational-culture-eats-strategy-for-breakfast-lunch-and-dinner/

Figure 19 highlights differences in culture that L&D practitioners report as they progress along their transformation journey. High-performing learning organisations experience significantly less resistance from business leaders, learners and L&D practitioners and obtain substantially more benefits.

Figure 19: The culture shift

Those to the left of the curve are

Those to the right of the curve are

9x more likely to be extremely concerned that learning is not a management priority

10x more likely to be extremely concerned that staff lack skills to manage their own learning

11x more likely to be extremely concerned that senior management are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning

10x more likely to agree they are developing a learning culture

21x more likely to be decreasing business risk through knowledge sharing

20x more likely to be increasing ongoing sharing of good practice

4.2 Foundations for influencing learning culture

We have evaluated the current cultural landscape of organisations and established where tensions lie when developing a high-performing learning culture. To uncover the most effective tactics L&D leaders can embrace and implement, we have investigated which behaviours correlate most closely with organisations that are successfully:

> Developing a culture of learning

> Improving self-directed learning

> Facilitating continuous learning

With fewer than one in four learning professionals achieving these goals, it is clear there needs to be a shift in how the challenge is approached. From the data, we have identified three critical pillars that L&D practitioners must embrace.

4.2a Tune in

We have seen that workers are more open to being responsible for their own learning and development than L&D expected. Clearly there is a disconnect that needs to be addressed. The first essential pillar therefore is for L&D to tune in to how staff are already learning, whether with or without L&D's intervention, and understand what really matters to them.

We have already explored one way of doing this: **to involve staff in the design of learning**. Such a tactic is not only linked to improved value for money and engaged learners, but also to a positive impact on developing a learning culture.

Other tactics that contribute to the successful development of a continuous, self-directed learning culture include:

> **Listening** – Despite an increased interest in learner-centric strategies, only 24% of learning leaders proactively do this, which is down from 30% in 2016. The insight gained from these conversations can be used to challenge traditional expectations of organisational learning and development and provide guidance in how to further develop a learning culture that works for all.

> **Providing recognition** – By tuning into learner motivations, and recognising individual achievements, people professionals can reiterate the value and success of learning in a way that provides a catalyst for continuation. Only 28% of learning practitioners are currently active in recognising individual achievements.

59% of workers want their online learning to be recognised

It is interesting to see in Figure 20 that those on the right of the transformation curve are substantially more likely to be listening and providing individual recognition than those to the left.

Figure 20: Tactics for tuning in

Proactive in understanding how staff learn

Recognise achievements
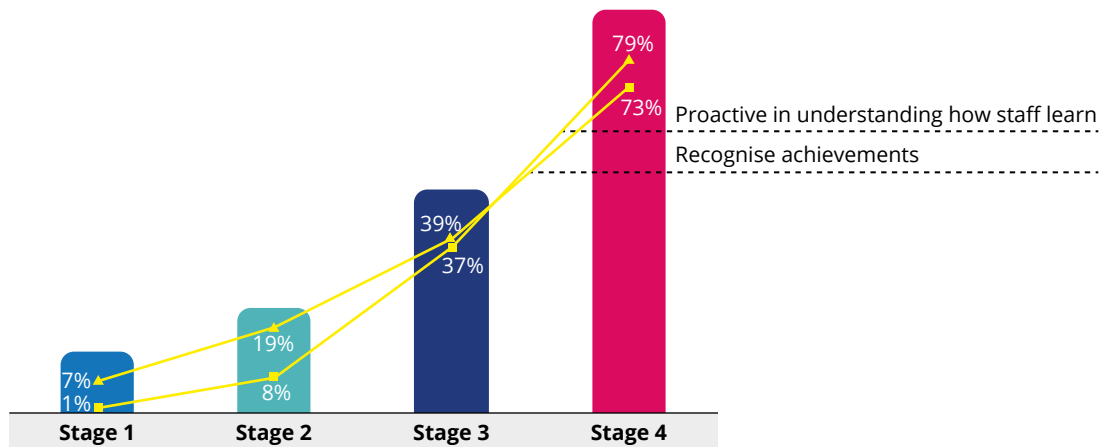
4.2b Transfer ownership

High-performing learning organisations are developing culture as they transfer the ownership and responsibility of learning from L&D to the individual; they shift from being producers to enablers.

Figure 21: Tactics for transferring ownership

Encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own personal development plan

Support career development

Use available support systems to promote self-reliance
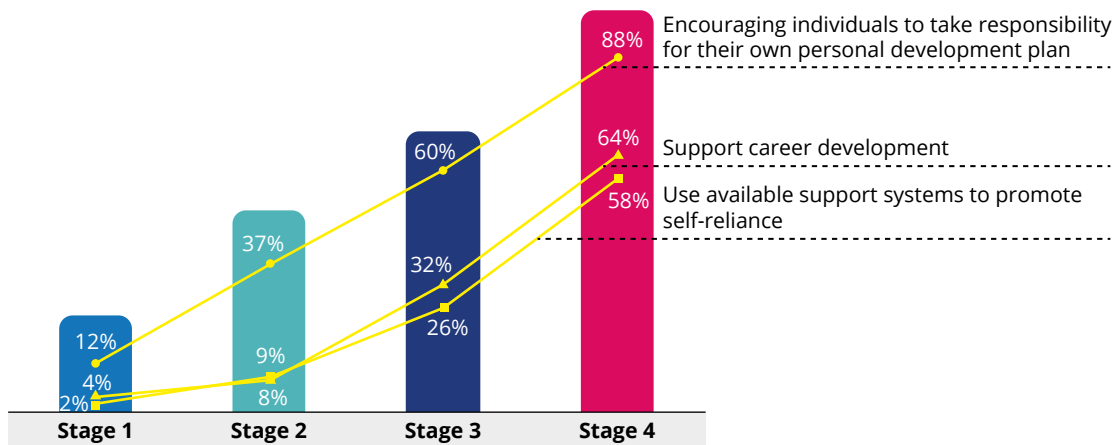
Three tactics that correlate to success include:

> **Actively encouraging responsibility** – It is expected that individuals need to take more responsibility for their own personal development plans but only 44% of learning leaders are proactively encouraging them to do this. This is up by 13% from the previous year but it is clearly not a focus for those to the left of the curve.

> **Supporting career development** – Whilst 76% of workers are motivated by learning that can help them do their job faster and better, 33% are also motivated by learning that improves their eligibility for promotion. Yet only 21% of learning leaders on average tap into this intrinsic motivation by supporting career development through technology.

> **Encouraging self-reliance** – In order to build a culture of continuous, self-directed learning, L&D must encourage learners to be more self-reliant. However, only 18% of learning leaders are using available support systems within the organisation to do this. This rises to 58% for organisations with a high-performing learning culture.

21% of learning leaders on average support the career development of their staff through technology

By handing some of the responsibility for learning to the individual and building a more self-directed learning culture, the role of the L&D practitioner shifts from direction to enablement.

4.2c Integrate learning and work

Finally, the third essential pillar for delivering a high-performing learning culture is the manager. The manager is the key to successfully integrating learning into the workflow, ensuring that each experience is an opportunity to build capability and enhance performance. So what role can the L&D leader play in influencing the manager?

Figure 22: Tactics for integrating learning and work
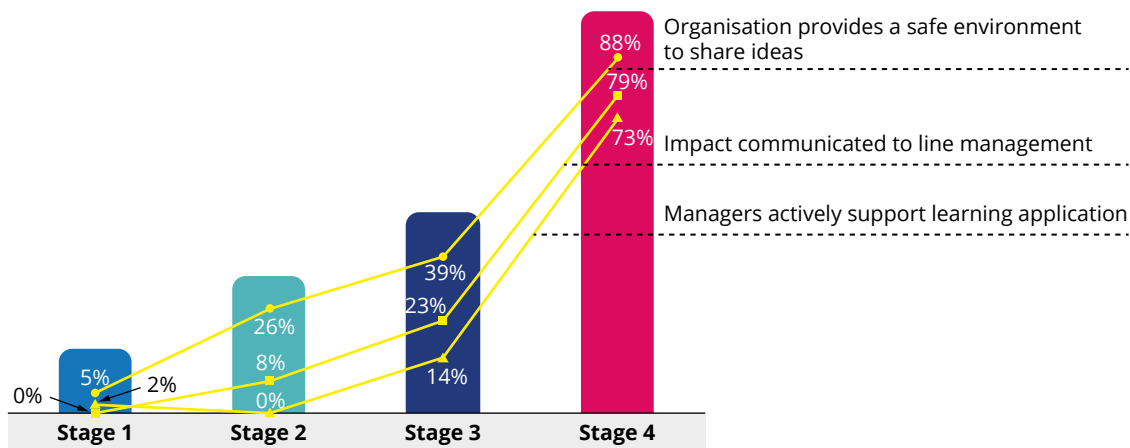
We identified three tactics to help learning professionals think differently about how they can support workplace integration; each tactic has a strong correlation with learning culture and establishing self-directed learning.

> **Managers actively support learning application** – On average only 13% of L&D practitioners believe that managers help their teams apply learning in practice. This is significantly fewer than workers themselves, with 61% agreeing that their managers help them in consolidating their workplace learning. This action is almost standard in high-performing learning cultures. Whilst one might consider this outside a learning professional's sphere of influence, 76% of L&D leaders (18% average) at organisations with high-performing learning cultures are also proactive in equipping their line managers with resources to help their teams maximise learning.

> **Communicate business benefits to managers** – If L&D want line managers to connect and become actively involved with establishing a culture of learning, it is vital we share with them the results and value of organisational learning. Only 19% of L&D on average do this, which explains the disconnect.

> **Provide a safe environment to share ideas** – With only 33% of learning practitioners on average believing that their organisation is a safe place to share ideas, it is not surprising that they struggle to develop their learning culture. This behaviour is clearly important to high-performing learning organisations, which are 55% more likely to provide a safe environment to share ideas.

Although we have highlighted the role that managers play in developing a learning culture, this should not negate the value L&D professionals can have on influencing their behaviour.

33% of learning leaders on average believe their organisation is a safe place to share ideas and work out loud

4.3 Applying practical examples

These three foundational pillars can be applied right now to help overcome cultural resistance and prepare the organisation for future change and success.

Figure 23 highlights some examples of how to apply the foundations to the left and the right of the curve by letting go of the blame culture.

Figure 23: Examples of practical actions L&D can take

Influencing culture to the left of the curve	Let go of:	Influencing culture to the right of the curve
Get curious and recognise your current stereotypes of how your workers learn may not reflect the truth.	**Blame culture – your workers and managers are probably more open than you think**	Consider programmes such as 30-day challenge to continually build awareness.
Actively encourage responsibility for personal development by exploring simple reward and recognition programmes.		Create environments for managers and workers to share successful and not so successful stories.
For each programme you develop, create a simple support aid for your learner's line managers to encourage application.		Find ways of continually celebrating and strengthening your learning culture.

Building foundations that influence culture

Visit our website to explore our Analyst Angle on how to build foundations that influence culture and accelerate your transformation journey.

towardsmaturity.org/culture-2019

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In the next chapter we look at evidence-based strategies for creating foundations for L&D readiness.

5. Establishing L&D readiness

The learning profession is hungry for change, but is it ready? With skills and capabilities either static or retracting, L&D readiness is as much about developing a mindset and networks as it is about skills and competency.

5.1 Establishing the right mindset

The L&D danger zone

Learning practitioners are aware they need to develop new skills to overcome contemporary challenges. However, they seem stuck with old behaviour patterns established decades ago.

Potentially one of the biggest danger zones is that of trained incapacity, a term introduced by economist Thorstein Veblen 80 years ago to describe *"that state of affairs in which one's abilities function as inadequacies or blind spots"*.[10]

Being a specialist in one area can lead to blind spots that result in poor decisions when the circumstances change. For people professionals to establish future-facing learning functions, it is necessary to address what L&D can do to remain relevant.

L&D capability today

L&D leaders have long been aware of the skills required within their teams to move forward. However, these skills are yet to be developed.

When we introduced the skills spider diagram in the *Towards Maturity Embracing Change* report (2015):[11]

> 84% identified performance consulting as a priority for understanding business requirements in the future. However, in 2018 only 34% have that skill in-house

> 93% identified facilitating collaboration as a priority, yet only 23% have that in place today

> 92% identified digital content creation as a required skill, but today only a third have the skill despite 45% delivering content created in-house!

31% of teams on average have digital content creation skills despite 45% creating content in-house

Figure 24 helps show the gap between the skills L&D already have in place and those recognised as important to the future.

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[10]See Robert King Merton (1968). *Social Theory and Social Structure.* New York: The Free Press, pp.252

[11]Towards Maturity (2015). *Embracing Change: Improving Performance for Business, Individuals and the L&D Team* [Online] Available at: www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark

Figure 24: Snapshot of L&D skills going into 2019
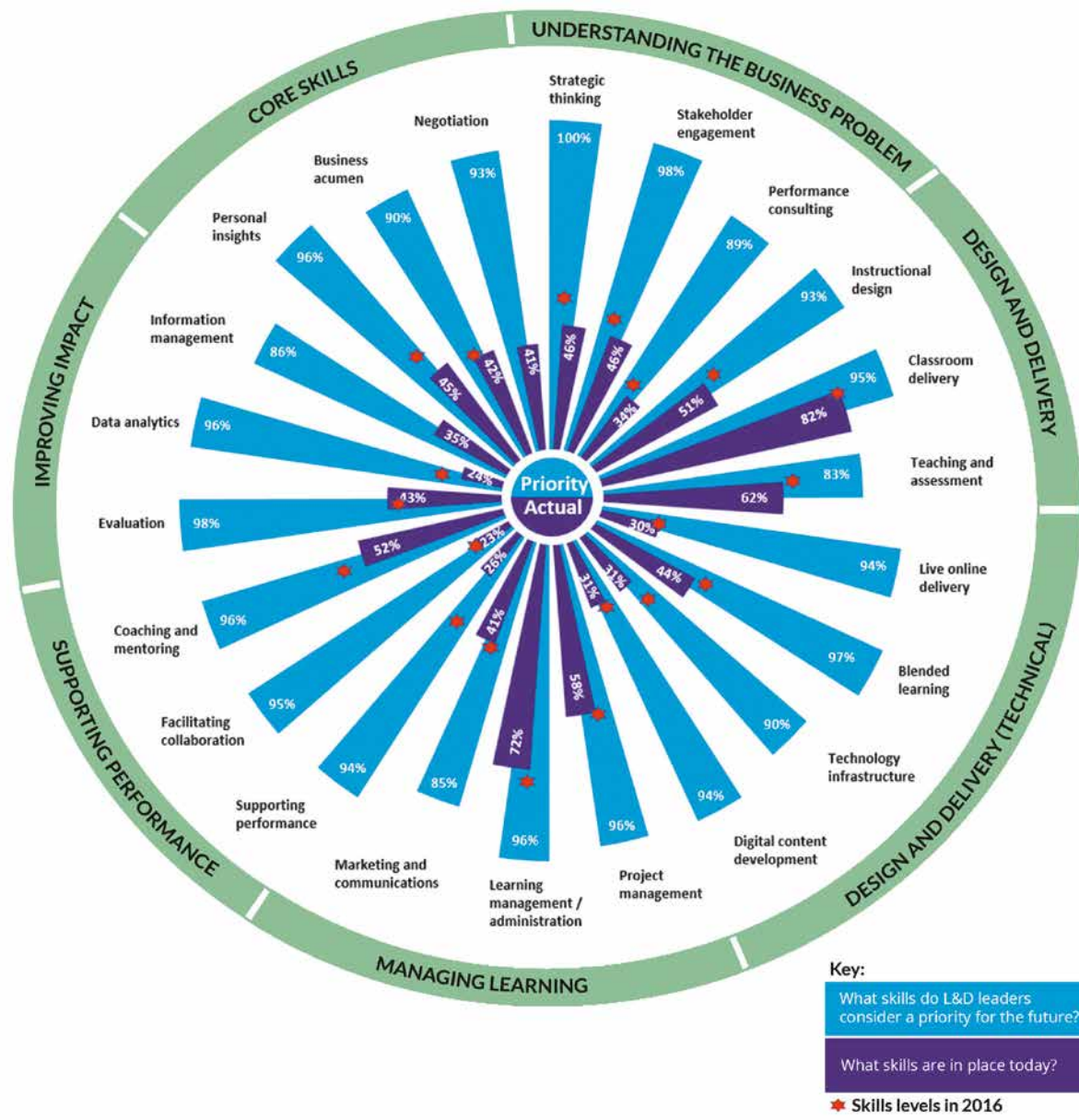
The core skills that learning professionals possess have not shifted over time. But the pace of change in work and industry has increased, which is a real concern. Learning professionals today are both overwhelmed and under-equipped in the face of continual change.

L&D readiness and maturity

The essential role and purpose of the learning professional is a key dimension of the roadmap to developing a high-performing learning organisation. As they shift from the role of producer to enabler, their competency, capability and mindset also changes as they let go of some traditional skills and embrace the new.

29% of learning leaders are extremely concerned about being overwhelmed and under-equipped

Compared with those at the start of their transformation journey, high-performing learning teams are substantially more likely to be:

> **Connecting with the business to ensure interventions drive performance** – They are 4x more likely to have performance consulting skills that help them question learning requests and focus on the results of an intervention.

> **Creating online content that they would use themselves** – They are 4x more likely to have skills in digital content and 28% more likely than the average to personally recommend online learning based on their own experience.

> **Data-savvy** – They are 5x more likely to have data analytic skills in their L&D teams to help them harness intelligence effectively.

> **Enabling learning in the flow of work** – They are 9x more likely to have skills to support workplace performance and 4x more likely to curate and share resources of interest for their own development.

> **Actively seeking ways to improve their own performance** – They are 5x as likely to provide their L&D teams with access to performance coaches.

87% of L&D teams offer eLearning to their colleagues, but only 61% on average, would recommend it themselves

5.2 Foundations for building L&D readiness

Learning professionals are hungry to make a difference in the workplace which is why over nine out of 10 of them want to see:

> Faster response to change

> Increased performance and productivity

> Reduction in time to competency

To understand how this is achieved, we analysed the tactics that correlate most to the benefits above and have identified three foundational principles that learning professionals at all levels and stages can adopt in order to develop their capabilities, mindset and networks.

5.2a Learn continually

If L&D is to be ready for the future, it must establish an attitude and willingness to continually learn and adapt. Change is constant, and the profession must be agile enough to keep up if it is to continue having an impact. Our research highlights three main ways L&D can practise what they preach, and continuously learn by:

> **Taking on stretch assignments** – Only 49% of learning professionals themselves spend time in operations to build their own skills and competency. This more than doubles as you move from the left to the right of the transformation curve.

> **Providing time to reflect** – Reflection is essential for embedding and retaining new skills, yet only 18% encourage their own L&D teams to keep a CPD log for reflection. Note that high-performing learning teams are nearly 8x more likely to do this than those just starting out.

> **Tracking and applying the latest research in areas such as cognitive science and neuroscience** – This clearly supports continual learning. This increases exponentially as L&D progress along the transformation curve.

It is clear the profession is currently focused on developing others more than itself, and yet L&D practitioners must build their own habits of continuous learning if they wish to assist their learners and play a role in the future of learning.

34% **of L&D staff keep up to date with the latest research, on average**

Figure 25: Tactics for learning continually
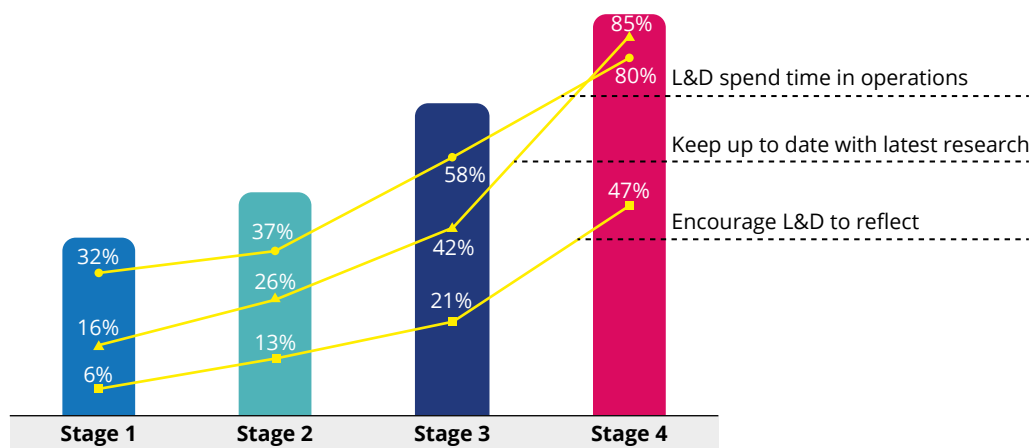
5.2b Orchestrate success

Within organisational development, the theory of dynamic capability was developed for leaders of successful traditional companies who needed to both deliver today and adapt for radical discontinuous change. The process involves not only orchestrating internal assets such as knowledge, infrastructure and competencies, but also assets external to the organisation.

As we delve deeper into the data we see this also applies to learning professionals. Those that are responding faster and improving performance and productivity are not just reliant on the internal talent within their L&D team. The evidence suggests that there are three ways learning professionals can orchestrate success by harnessing the talent, perspectives and competencies of those around them:

Figure 26: Tactics for orchestrating success
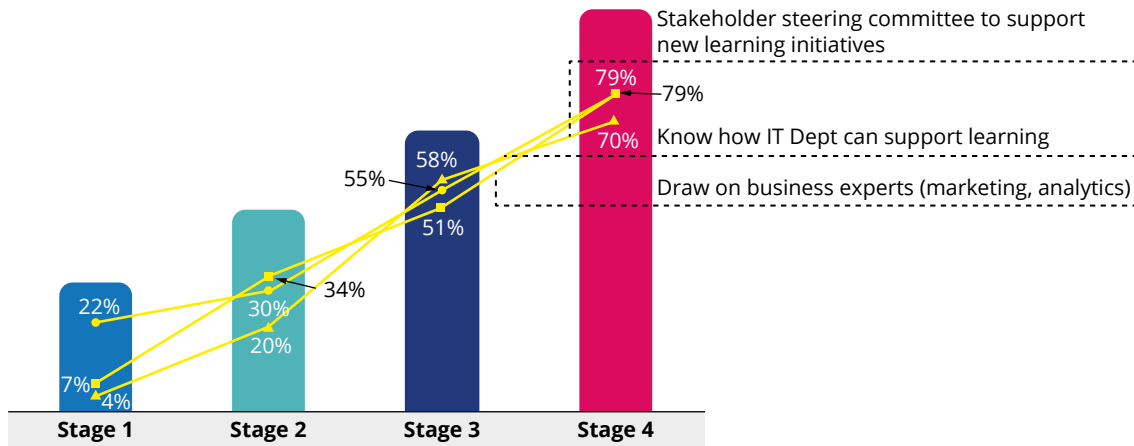
- > **Work with the stakeholder steering committee** – On average only 35% bring together key stakeholders (managers, users, partners) in an organised way to support new learning initiatives that deliver change (down from 42% in 2016).

- > **Draw on business expertise within the organisation** – Those moving from the left to the right of the transformation curve are 11x more likely to be leveraging the business expertise in marketing and data analytics to improve the learning service they deliver.

- > **Work with the IT department** – Today less than half (41%) of L&D professionals on average know how their IT department can support learning through core systems being introduced (down from 50% in 2016). This quadruples as organisations mature in their learning journey.

38% On average draw on business expertise to improve learning

L&D professionals are aware of the skills they lack. As they progress along the transformation curve, they embrace the competencies around them to ensure they are doing the most effective job. It is a skill to recognise your own 'blind spots' and address them by networking with others in a manner that orchestrates success.

5.2c Bring the outside in

Learning professionals, like everybody else, have heuristically developed mental patterns that help them to make decisions quickly. However, sometimes these cognitive biases contribute to industry blind spots and can also hinder the ability to think differently.

One of the key ways to challenge blind spots, and develop L&D's capacity to handle change, is to bring the outside in. Developing an understanding of what peers and colleagues are doing is one of the behaviours most strongly correlated with creating business impact.

Evidence from peers and from other sectors can help to challenge existing thinking. Only 11% of learning professionals agree they are proactive in using benchmarking to explore new ways of improving performance. The correlation is high between benchmarking and improving employee engagement, increasing staff retention, reducing time to competence and delivering greater value for money.

Figure 27 shows that high-performing learning organisations not only learn continually and orchestrate success but are also 9x more likely to actively benchmark against their competitors and improve performance.

Figure 27: Tactics challenging bias
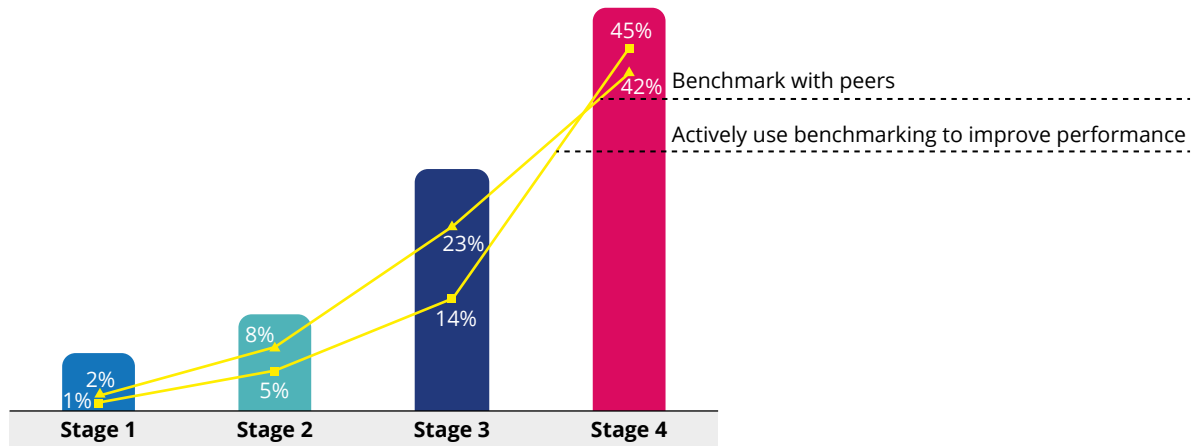
The power of persistence

The Towards Maturity Health Check has been dynamically designed over the last 15 years to monitor and improve performance in the learning and development profession. It is a benchmark that supports a process of continual improvement.

This year, over 500 of the participants were new to the process whilst a sample of over 100 have been using the opportunity to reflect on their learning progress year-on-year. Figure 28 shows the difference in reported performance. Persistence clearly pays, as those taking part each year are nearly 2x more likely to report benefits of agility, productivity and process.

Figure 28: Benefits of benchmarking
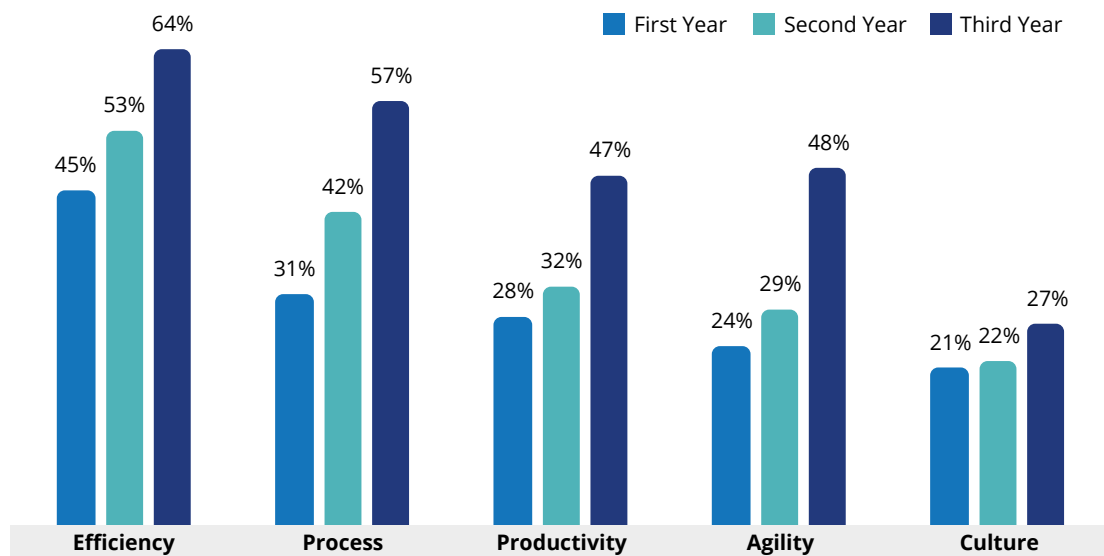
The power of persistence

Visit our website to explore what difference the Towards Maturity Health check can make.

towardsmaturity.org/persistence-2019

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5.3 Applying practical examples

These three foundations are essential for establishing a new mindset within L&D, where the profession is willing to challenge bias, work with new stakeholders and continually be willing to refresh its thoughts and practices in the light of new evidence.

Figure 29 highlights some examples of how to apply the foundations regardless of position on the curve by letting go of existing thinking.

Figure 29: Practical examples of establishing readiness

Establishing L&D readiness to the left of the curve	Let go of:	Establishing L&D readiness to the right of the curve
Attend a free webinar on a new topic in the field, actively reflect on what you have learned and make a commitment to apply something new. Start benchmarking your strategy today. Work with those that have marketing experience outside of your team to build skills and confidence in engagement.	**The need for ownership of the learning agenda** **Blindly accepting all requests for training** **Past successes and, if necessary, past skills**	Experiment, actively reflect and curate your insights. Do not become complacent. Continue to benchmark against those that are one step ahead. Give back: offer to support IT, analytics or marketing teams with new projects.

Building foundations for L&D readiness

Visit our website to explore our Analyst Angle on how to build foundations for L&D readiness to accelerate your transformation journey.

towardsmaturity.org/readiness-2019

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In the concluding comments we consider the power of evidence-based decision making.

6. Small change, big difference

Learning professionals have a crucial role to play in preparing today's talent for tomorrow's future. They are also grappling today with the same issues as 15 years ago. As this report has identified, the issues of digital disruption, cultural resistance and L&D readiness remain particularly stubborn.

This combination of challenge and change is in danger of leaving a critical profession confused and overwhelmed at a time when smart decisions are required to drive business impact. In response, learning professionals must rely on more than gut instinct and the latest trend.

6.1 Evidence-based decisions are essential

Now more than ever, it is essential for L&D to combine their own expertise and internal organisational knowledge with the best available evidence from external research.

This longitudinal study has highlighted two things:

1. Evidence-based practice does not work when we try to apply traditional benchmark evidence to tackle the complex organisational changes that will prepare us for tomorrow. Old roadmaps cannot be used to navigate new territories.

2. The evidence points consistently to how certain timeless tactics, when applied continually, can influence culture, agility, growth, profitability, transformation and performance.

Figure 30: Evidence-based decision making

The Towards Maturity Transformation Model provides a roadmap for how these tactics can be applied as organisations seek to develop the high-performing learning culture essential for success.

Moving from the left to the right of the curve can seem daunting in the uncertain world of today's workplace. This report has outlined evidence-based foundations to address three of the most pressing concerns of the learning industry:

Building digital success	Overcoming cultural resistance	Ensuring L&D readiness
> **Design to connect** > **Reduce friction** > **Harness intelligence**	> **Tune in** > **Transfer ownership** > **Integrate learning and work**	> **Learn continually** > **Orchestrate success** > **Bring outside in**

These can be adapted and applied at any level to establish a foundation for future success. The evidence has shown that these are small changes that make a big difference and yet the evidence also shows that their simplicity does not guarantee their adoption.

A call to action

What all these foundations have in common is that they are outcome-focussed, people-led, and data-driven. They also work in an iterative way, with success leading to further success.

What they require is the agile mindset of individual practitioners to realise their power in analysing, activating and accelerating change.

Figure 31: Agile L&D Model

Agile Mindset
- Outcome focused
- People led
- Data driven
- Iterative

Analyse
Activate
Accelerate
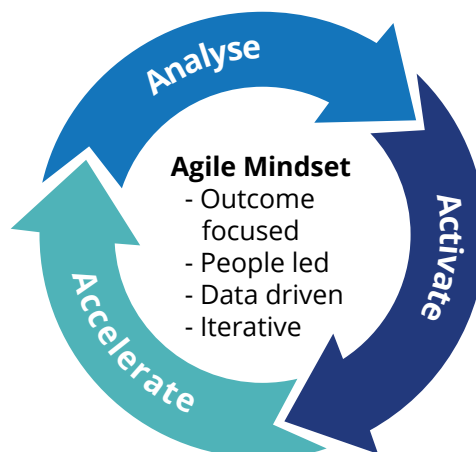
Appendix A: Demographics

Health Check participants:

Over 700 learning leaders from 53 countries participated in the Towards Maturity Health Check between June and July 2018.

About the businesses

23 Industries represented:

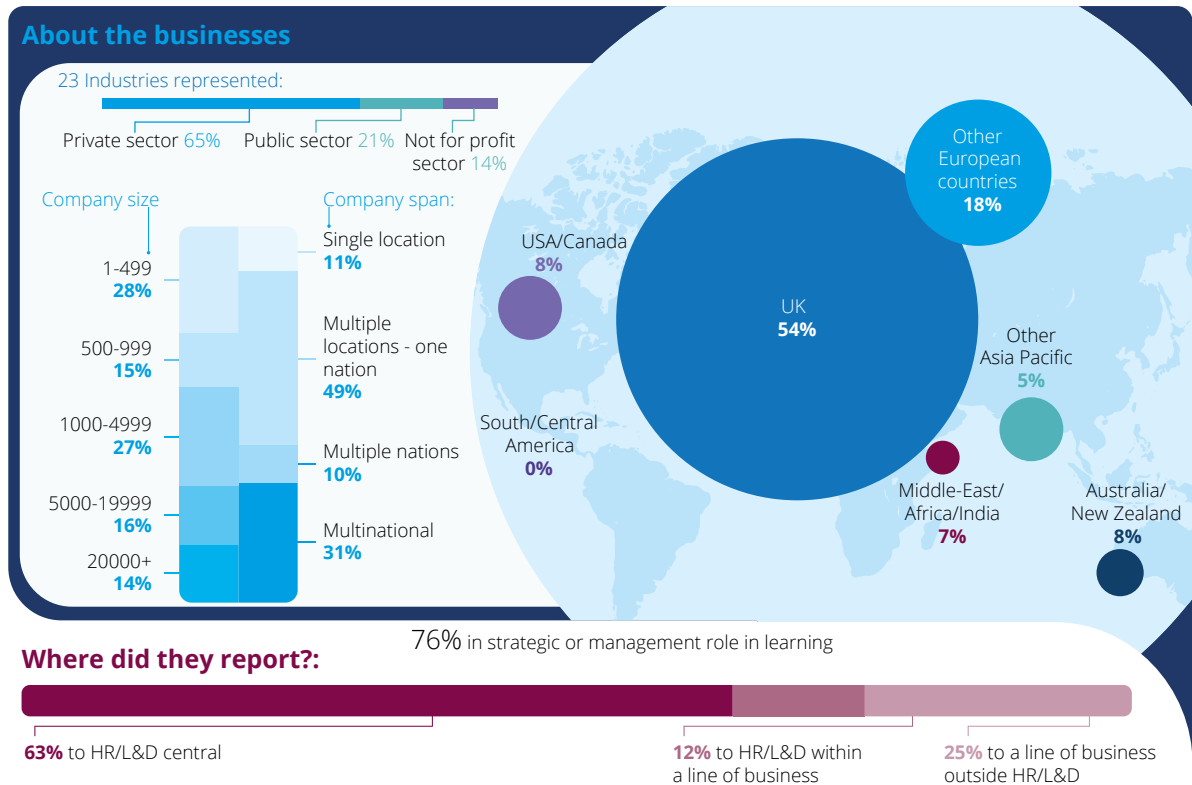Private sector 65%   Public sector 21%   Not for profit sector 14%

Company size

1-499 **28%**
500-999 **15%**
1000-4999 **27%**
5000-19999 **16%**
20000+ **14%**

Company span:

Single location **11%**
Multiple locations - one nation **49%**
Multiple nations **10%**
Multinational **31%**

Other European countries **18%**

USA/Canada **8%**

UK **54%**

Other Asia Pacific **5%**

South/Central America **0%**

Middle-East/Africa/India **7%**

Australia/New Zealand **8%**

76% in strategic or management role in learning

Where did they report?:

63% to HR/L&D central   **12%** to HR/L&D within a line of business   **25%** to a line of business outside HR/L&D

Workers providing learner intelligence:

A total of 10,276 workers took part in the Towards Maturity Learner Intelligence programme between
September 2016 and September 2018.

Respondent profile

82% Are full time staff

Under 30	31 - 40	41- 50	over 50
25%	31%	27%	18%

47% Female 53% Male

34% ■ Manager

66% ■ Non-Manager

48% established in role **23%** Have been in the same role for more than 5 years

17% are with the company for 10 years or over

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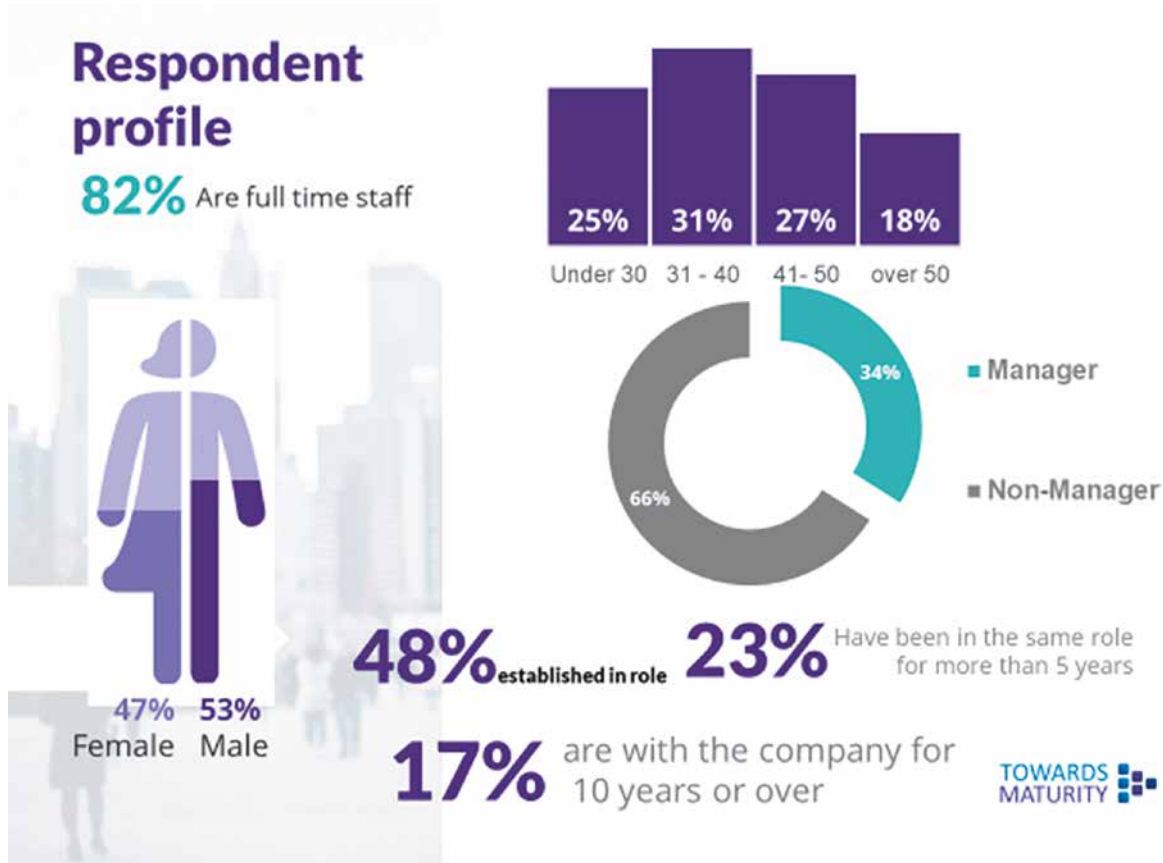
Organisations participating in the 2018 Health Check research:

The following organisations are examples and have given permission to have their name on this report.

ASOS
Baillie Gifford & Co
Barclays
Barrow Training
BIA
BMI Healthcare
Brambles Ltd
British Council (East Asia)
British Safety Council
Bruntwood
The City of Edinburgh Council
The Clancy Group
CLIC Sargent
Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling
Company
Community Integrated Care
D'Ieteren Auto
DAA
Diebold Nixdorf
DOS Ltd
E.ON UK
Ericsson

The Exeter
EY
Fantastic Furniture
GrandVision
Great Places Housing Group
Guild Care
Hitachi Capital
Hood Group
IBA
IBM Global Cloud
iQ Student Accommodation
John Lewis
Kibble Education and Care Centre
KPMG
Link Group Ltd
LV=
Metalsa
Metropolitan Police
The Orders of St John Care Trust
PRO-MED
Raytheon
RCI Financial Services

Ricoh UK
Royal Mail Group
Sense
SICA-FICA
SGN
Sky Ireland
SQT Training
Staffordshire Police
TalkTalk
Terrence Higgins Trust
Toyota Ireland
Transport Accident Commission
UK Power Networks
University of Southampton
Students' Union
ViiV Healthcare
Vivergo Fuels LTD
WAPCo
Warburtons
World Bank's Independent
Evaluation Group

Appendix B: Research methodology and the Towards Maturity Framework

Data collection:

This study considers workplace learning from the perspectives of both learning professionals and workers themselves to understand the factors that influence successful transformation of learning and organisational development. To date, over 7,500 learning leaders and 50,000+ workers have contributed data to the study.

Date sources:

1. Data from learning professionals is gathered online via secure, GDPR-compliant online Benchmark Centre and/or Health Check survey tool. Respondents are taken through an in-depth review that explores the 'health' of their L&D strategy and their readiness for future transformation and change.

2. Data from workers is gathered online via our secure GDPR compliant Learner Intelligence tool. Representative samples are taken from data which has been gathered from organisations participating in the Towards Maturity Learner intelligence programme between September 2016 and September 2018.

> In this study, we define '**learning professionals**' as: "*Leaders in learning and organisational development with responsibility for setting or advising on learning strategy and managing the implementation of learning initiatives and associated technology solutions. We include those with specific business-wide, HR or OD responsibility.*"

In most cases the analysis and data representation are a summary of the data expressed in percentage terms. Since respondents could opt out of any section as they progressed through the study, the actual number of the sample varies from question to question. Differences between groups are given only when there are over 30 data sets in the group and the difference is statistically significant at $p>0.05$.

Health Check methodology

Questions:

The Towards Maturity Health Check questions have been developed following extensive industry collaboration to reflect current trends and thinking. We are particularly grateful to the members of the Towards Maturity Learning Innovation Group, Industry ambassadors and expert supporters, who continually work together to shape the question within the study. Many questions have remained consistent with earlier studies to enable a longitudinal analysis over time.[12]

Learning professionals use the structured analysis to take them through a full health check of their current learning strategy:

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[12]See https://towardsmaturity.org/community-driven-research/

Figure 32: The flow of the Towards Maturity Learning Health Check
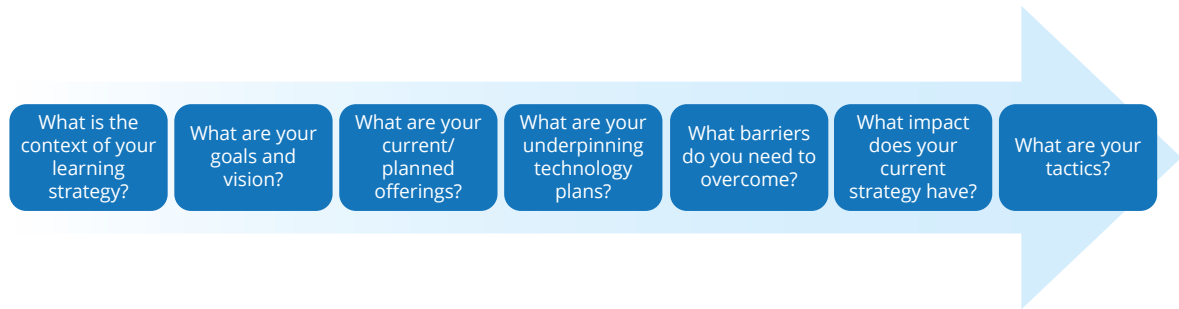
There are four types of questions we ask:

> **Factual questions** – Details of drivers, barriers, tools, technologies to continue a longitudinal study first reported in 2004.

> **Forecasts** – E.g. forecasting changes in resourcing.

> **Quantitative questions** – E.g. changes in costs, study time, reduction in time to competency, revenue improvement which are used to derive key performance indicators in each of these areas.

> **Likert Statements** – Consisting of action statements that participants agree with on a 9-point scale. Questions gauge perceptions on learning and are used to drive the Towards Maturity Index first introduced in 2010.
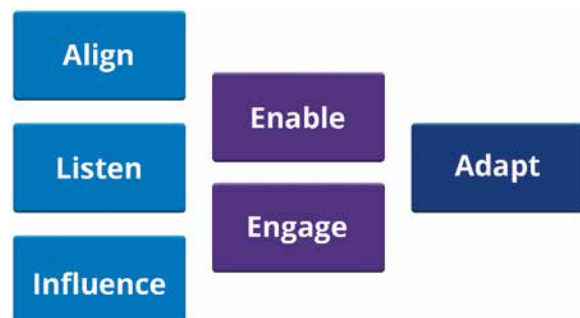
The Towards Maturity Index

Factor analysis is regularly used to identify clusters of variables that measure latent constructs (i.e. business alignment). The results consistently link back to the six characteristics summarised by the Towards Maturity Framework, which underpins our analysis, predictions and models. The framework has been rigorously tested over time and shows that learning maturity continues to play a prominent role in success.

The framework considers:

> **Align**

– How well do you understand business needs and prioritise business strategy?

– How do you establish governance for learning in your organisation?

> **Listen**

– Do your learners have a proactive voice in your learning strategy?

– Does your learning strategy offer them choice and motivation?

> **Influence**

– Are you aware of the external factors affecting success?

– Are you taking active steps to influence them?

> **Enable**

– Have you got the skills and capability to enable learning?

> **Engage**

– Who do you work with to deliver your strategy? How do you connect with them?

Figure 33: The Towards Maturity Framework

> **Improve**
>> – Do you develop a culture of continuous improvement?
>> – How are you using evidence and experience to demonstrate success?

The Towards Maturity Framework serves to codify an organisation's L&D approach, revealing a unique Index (TMI) which is derived from responses to 96 self-assessed questions. The TMI is a score on the 100-point Towards Maturity Index that provides an independent and reliable measure for comparison. The baseline for the TMI was set from the 2017 sample average and indicates the level of variation within a single organisation from year to year and between organisations in the same year.[13]

High values for the TMI are independently correlated with high values for the number of benefits achieved and quantitative Key Performance Indicators. High values for the TMI are also independently correlated with low numbers of reported barriers.

Calculating the Key Performance Indicators

The Key Performance Indicators are a measure of how learning innovation has had an impact on the bottom line of the business.

They are grouped into:

> Efficiency indicators (% improvement in cost reduction, delivery time, study time and volume)
> Staff indicators (% improvement in time to competency, satisfaction and turnover)
> Business impact indicators (% improvement in speed of rollout of change, productivity, revenue and customer satisfaction).

The following methods are used to establish each of the indicators on a consistent basis over time:

1. Use of conservative values

Responses for efficiency benefits were scaled from 0-9%, 10-19%, 20-29% etc. The lowest boundary value was used to determine average and benchmark improvement values. A maximum of 50% improvement was set. Responses for business and staff indicators were provided as absolute percentage values.

2. Benchmarks include both measured and estimated values

Those simply estimating their answer invariably erred on the cautious side, with those estimating values always lower than those who measured the values. As a result, estimates are included in our overall calculations figure.
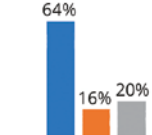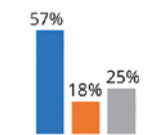
3. Large data sets
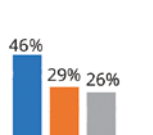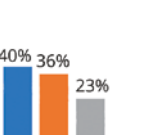
Towards Maturity efficiency benchmark figures are derived from a minimum of 500 organisations that provided quantitative data. Business impact benchmarks are averaged from a minimum of 250 organisations. Staff impact benchmarks are averaged from a minimum of 250 responses.

4. Validated each year

Year-on-year variation is removed by using 3-year rolling averages for benchmark Key Performance Indicators.

[13]Note: Where four or more entries were made by a single organisation, their scores were averaged for the purposes of calculating the Baseline.

Appendix C: The transformation journey at a glance

4 Stages of Learning Maturity	Stage 1 Transactional L&D Interventions	Stage 2 Performing L&D Programmes	Stage 3 Proactive Talent & Performance Strategy	Stage 4 High Performing Learning Culture
Overall description	Not aligned to organisational priorities	Partly aligned to organisational priorities	Proactive but defined organisational impact Push from HR/L&D	High defined impact on: Growth, Transformation, Productivity, Profitability Push & Pull Leaders & HR/L&D
Biggest strengths	Most likely to report compliance training effciency and onboarding improvement	Improve on previous stage and improved quality, volume of learning and reduced costs	Improve on previous stages and improved productivity, staff retention, reduced to compliance	Improve on previous stages and organisational improvement, employee engagement, company attractiveness as a great place to work, integrating learning and work

Dimensions

Dimension	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
L&D	Course design and delivery	Experience design and delivery	Supporting workplace performance	Underpin not interfere
Learning	Face to Face	Shifting to blends	Integrated learning and work	Holistic user experience
	Face to Face 64% Blended 16% Online 20%	Face to Face 57% Blended 18% Online 25%	Face to Face 46% Blended 29% Online 26%	Face to Face 40% Blended 36% Online 23%
Digital	Libraries and LMS, compliance focus	Wide range of tools to campaign and connect	Enabling sharing, curation	Experimenting
People	Recipients of learning	Increased input on design	Have a voice	Connected contributors
Leaders	Recipients of learning	Increased input on design	Commitment to supporting on the job learning	Create a culture of permission
Decision Making	Traditional training needs analysis, responding to requests	Increased business awareness and L&D challenge	Using data to inform change	Clarity of purpose, shared focus on outcomes
Biggest barriers	Most likely to report lack of skills in L&D, staff lack skills to manage learning, senior management reluctance and traditional expectations	Pace of change unreliable, IT L&D overwhelmed and under equipped, manager reluctance	Unreliable IT, manager reluctance to make time	Online learning too general, lack of analytic skill to use data, pace of technological change

Appendix D: Business drivers behind learning transformation

The following table lists five categories of outcome sought by today's L&D leaders and the extent to which they are achieved:

L&D Global Goals	Note – need to reduce word in descriptions below	% wanting to achieve Outcome	% actually achieving Outcome	Achievement up or down since 2016	% overall reporting goals achieved today
Improving efficiency	Prove compliance with new regulations and legal requirements	88%	76%	↑	47%
	Increase learning access and flexibility	96%	46%	↑	
	Improve management and administration of learning at work	91%	34%	↑	
	Improve the quality of learning delivered	93%	43%	↑	
	Achieve greater consistency of the learning experience	91%	32%	↔	
	Increase the volume of learning - reaching more people	89%	40%	↓	
	Reduce operational costs	84%	36%	↔	
	Extend learning to other locations/remote workers	82%	36%	↑	
Fine Tune processes	Speed up the implementation of changes to systems and processes	89%	32%	↓	34%
	Inform our customers and suppliers of new products and services	54%	39%	↓	
	Manage risk successfully	83%	41%	↑	
	Improve induction/onboarding process	91%	48%	↑	
	Increase ability to personalise programme to individual need/context	93%	26%	↑	
	Develop a better qualified workforce	90%	34%	↔	
	Increase engagement with learning	93%	27%	↑	
	Increase appeal to digital learners of all ages	87%	18%	–	
	Support contextualised learning	92%	19%	–	
	Improve the way we gather and analyse data on learning impact	92%	15%	↓	
	Deliver greater value for money	89%	32%	↑	
	Improve effectiveness of face-to-face learning	90%	37%	↓	
Boosting Performance	Increase on the job productivity	94%	33%	↑	29%
	Improve external customer loyalty	74%	32%	↓	
	Improve organisational performance	96%	25%	↓	
	Improve compliant behaviours within organisation	88%	51%	↑	

L&D Global Goals	Note – need to reduce word in descriptions below	% wanting to achieve Outcome	% actually achieving Outcome	Achievement up or down since 2016	% overall reporting goals achieved today
	Facilitate new ways of working	91%	22%	–	29%
	Support company mergers and acquisitions	24%	39%	–	
	Support business growth in new markets	40%	25%	–	
	Reduce time to competence	91%	24%	↔	
	Increase self-directed learning	94%	24%	↑	
	Reduce time away from the job	81%	33%	↑	
	Improve application of learning back in the workplace	27%	12%	↓	
Cultivating Agility	Provide a faster response to changing business conditions	90%	22%	↓	25%
	Drive innovation for business growth	86%	18%	↓	
	Build capability of organisation to solve problems	91%	20%	–	
	Utilise business intelligence to future-proof our organisation	56%	11%	–	
	Improve communication and teamwork	92%	30%	–	
	Speed up and improve the application of learning back in the workplace	94%	20%	↑	
	Push updated information to employees at the point of need	89%	25%	↑	
	Improve access to support at the point of need	90%	23%	↑	
	Leverage networks to drive transformation	57%	14%	–	
Influencing Culture	Improve staff retention	90%	28%	–	22%
	Improve talent management	92%	20%	↔	
	Increase attractiveness of company as a great place to work	88%	30%	↑	
	Develop the learning culture within our organisation	93%	23%	–	
	Improve employee engagement	70%	31%	↑	
	Decrease business continuity risk through knowledge sharing	60%	19%	–	
	Enhance responsibility to the wider community	50%	29%	–	
	Increase the ongoing sharing of good practice	92%	21%	↓	
	Integrate learning within the workflow	90%	17%	↑	
	Facilitate continuous learning	93%	25%	↑	
	Enhance employee well-being	64%	31%	–	

Appendix E: Towards Maturity Ambassadors

This report is free to download thanks to the support of the Towards Maturity's Ambassadors who share our belief that independent research should be freely available to all.

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The benchmark is a fantastic way for our members to evolve their digital strategy. Year on year, they can benchmark against others and where it really makes a difference, benchmark against themselves.
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Docebo is a cloud-based, LMS designed to increase performance and learning engagement. Offered in over 32 languages, Docebo offers an enterprise solution for training employees, partners and customers worldwide.
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Speexx helps large organisations drive productivity by empowering employee communication skills across borders. The award-winning cloud-based solution features blended language learning for more than 8 million users worldwide.
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Growth Engineering are learning technology specialists, founded in 2004 and headquartered in Windsor (UK). We're laser-focused (to the point of obsession) on making learning more fun and engaging, thereby helping learners to unleash their inner superheroes. Our learning solutions have helped companies like L'Oréal, EE, Flight Centre and Hard Rock to get a better return on their training investment.
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Mind Tools is a UK-based company that serves more than 27 million learners from 160 countries offering on-demand management, leadership and career skills training to individual and corporate clients worldwide. Their mission is to become the world's favourite place to learn leadership, management and personal effectiveness skills. They help people be great bosses, have happy successful careers, and contribute positively to the success of their organisations.
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About Towards Maturity

We help L&D professionals deliver successful learning strategies.

Since 2003, we have generated data and insights from more than 7,500 learning professionals and 50,000 learners across 55 countries. We know what works and we know how learning innovation can directly improve key business measures:

Growth – Transformation – Productivity – Profitability

We provide L&D with the support they need to bring together all key stakeholders in the learning journey, ensuring that the learning function works effectively to embed a high-performing learning culture across the business.

By applying the breadth and depth of our industry analytics and our robust, evidence-based approach, we can help connect learning decisions and outcomes to real business impact.

Contact us today

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