Brandon Hall GROUP

Realize it

The Future of Workforce Training & Learning:
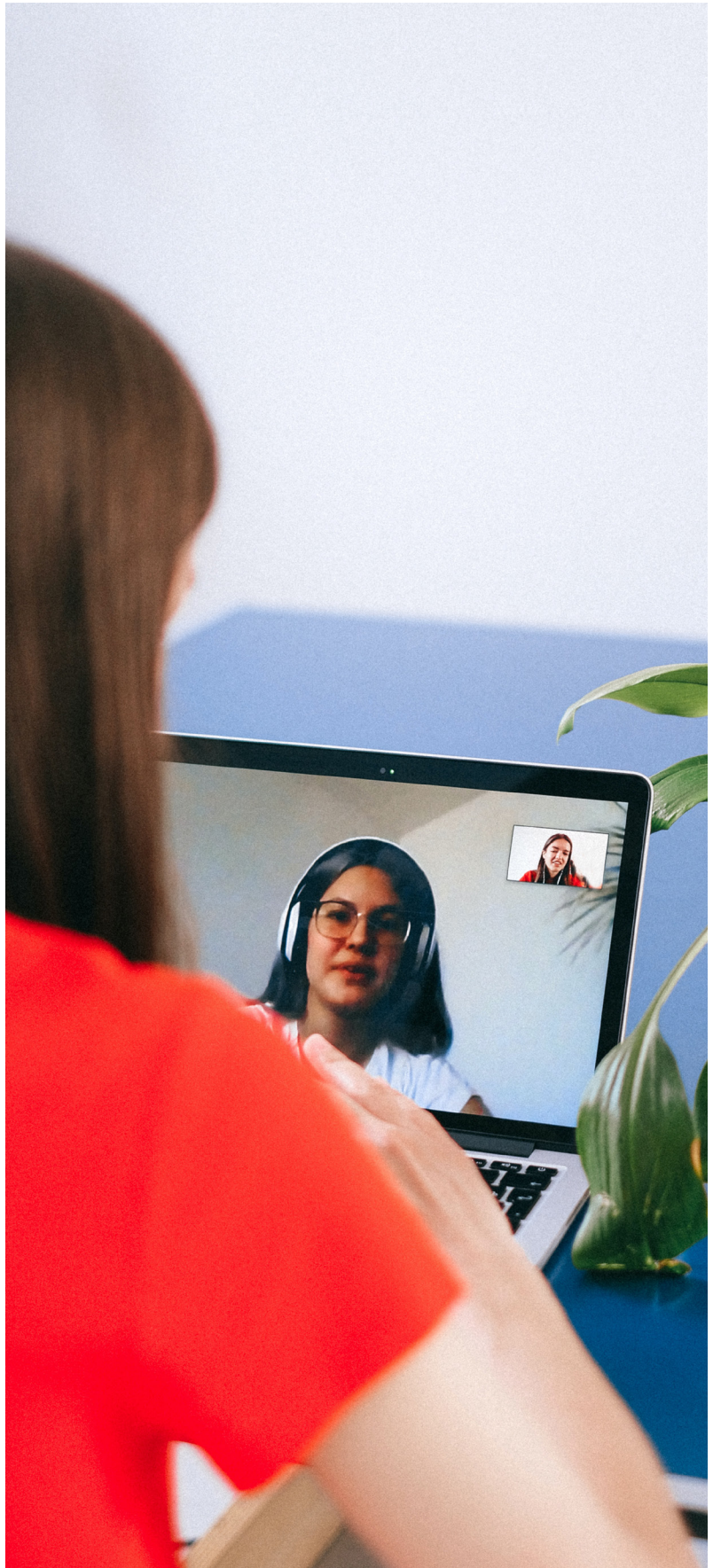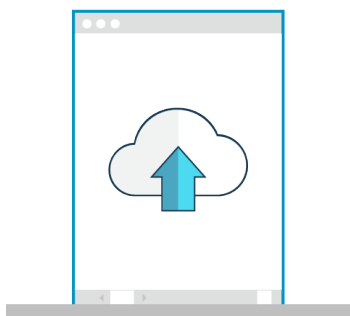
MAKING IT HAPPEN

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Introduction

In an earlier eBook, we asked the question, "What does *good* look like?" when it comes to workforce training. This eBook is designed to show organizations how to get to their desired state sooner rather than later, with insights about the strategies, technologies and analytics needed to drive real impact. We will examine the key elements of an optimized learning environment laid out in the first eBook and talk about steps that can be taken.

Strategy

Learning and Development Strategy Maturity Model

Direct impact on business outcomes

Level 4
12%
Optimized

A well-defined learning strategy strongly aligned with business and learner objectives, including a technology roadmap and a framework to measure success.

Improved knowledge/skills

Level 3
27%
Leading

A defined learning strategy with some alignment to business and learner objectives. Most of the right technology is in place and metrics have been identified.

Level 2
31%
Developing

A loosely defined strategy with a tangential connection to the business. Technology is hit or miss and metrics are not well defined.

No impact on the business

Level 1
29%
Lagging

Essentially no real strategy and therefore no connection to the business. Flying blind on technology with little to no measurement.

Organizational Impact/ROI Curve

Source: 2021 Brandon Hall Group

Few companies believe their learning strategy is very effective at helping the organization achieve its business goals. By examining those with strong and mature L&D strategies that impact business outcomes, we can begin to see patterns that lead to their success. For example, 88% of companies with effective strategies say it strongly includes and aligns with their business objectives. For those companies with less effective strategies, that it is 31%.

Learning Strategy Characteristics ● Less effective strategy ● Highly effective strategy

It includes and aligns with business objectives
88%
31%

It includes and aligns with learner objectives
88%
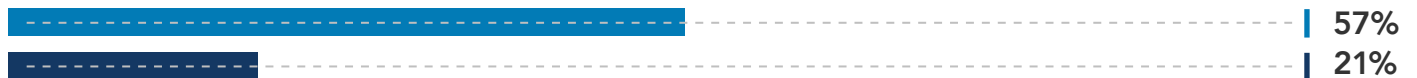31%

It includes input from various business stakeholders
80%
38%

It includes input/feedback from learners
80%
34%

It includes a framework to measure success.
68%
13%

It includes a technology roadmap
57%
21%

Source: Brandon Hall Group, Creating a Learning Strategy that Drives Performance

From this data, the path forward is clear: For workforce training to be effective and impactful, it must be driven by a mature strategy directly linked to outcomes. This can only be achieved by working with key stakeholders across the business to determine what those outcomes are, and how training can deliver them. Then, it needs the appropriate technology to execute and a framework for measuring its effectiveness.

Technology

Technology is the key to making the training strategy come to life.
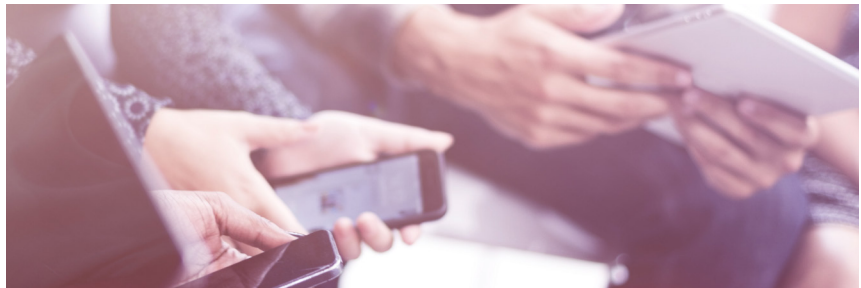
Training technology solutions must meet the needs of the workforce when and where they are, ensuring they are always supported with the information, knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

Two-thirds of companies say that individuals need at least weekly access to training materials. With that in mind, it becomes clear that a traditional event-based training model alone cannot work — especially when in-person training sessions are essentially non-existent.

The future of workforce training solutions requires technology that provides four key elements:

✔ **Precison** ✔ **Speed**

✔ **Scale** ✔ **Ease**

Precision

Business leaders need a workforce-training solution where employee training and job performance are directly linked and measurable. This requires a set of metrics from which to work. Unfortunately, few organizations build their training programs based on specific, defined metrics. Additionally, organizations have a hard time determining what skills are available to them at any given moment, so they lack insights into gaps that could be filled with training programs. Training becomes something that's pushed blindly, with hopes that at least some of it lands in the right place.

What is required is a system that can provide organizational leaders with comprehensive macro and micro views of their workforce and its current knowledge state. They must be able to identify both knowledge gaps and areas of strength. A system that can collect and synthesize an array of real-time data gives leaders the precision to act quickly and decisively to address needs. To be done accurately, machine learning is integral to the solution, allowing the software to precisely measure and confirm employees' knowledge and role-based competencies in every operational context. In addition, training should be targeted, just-in-time and personalized to have real impact. And that is true regardless of modality, whether it is in the field, online or in a classroom. Contextualization is just another facet of the precision that training requires.

Scale

For all the challenges precision solves, it also presents some of its own. As training becomes more contextual, focused and personalized, it can be difficult to deliver at scale. Companies with a large frontline workforce distributed across multiple locations (domestically or globally) are challenged every day to provide effective and uniform employee training throughout the entire organization. Again, this is where technology is critical. Managing and validating a constant flow of new and updated training is difficult and gets harder as the organization becomes larger and more diverse. Throw in the rapid pace of change and disruption businesses face, and you have a challenge that requires the best tools for the job.

The right solution uses machine learning technology to deliver personalized, adaptive training at enterprise scale. It has to handle all the elements of precision regardless of the roles, languages or time zones of the training audience. Business leaders should know they can upskill and reskill people as the business requires, no matter when or where.

Speed

Organizations faced with the challenges of scale are typically hesitant to make any significant technology changes. Large-scale transformation is a daunting proposition that often paralyzes companies into doing nothing. The dread of disruption and change is difficult to overcome. There is also the fear that the organization doesn't have the skillset internally to fully leverage a modern adaptive training platform with machine learning capabilities. Additionally, there are often vast libraries of legacy content that deter companies from making a change. It's akin to someone not wanting to sign up for a media streaming service because they have too much invested in cassettes and VHS tapes.

The key is finding technology that addresses these issues — so you don't have to. Seek technology that is fast and easy to implement from a vendor-partner that has experience with organizations of your size and scope. Another key requirement is content transition. Identify a solution that can rapidly absorb legacy content and turn it into formats that fit the modern training environment: digital, shorter, mobile-first. These features can shave significant amounts of time off of even the largest scale technology change.

Ease

Implementation is only the first place where the right technology makes things easier. Beyond that, the solution must also be easy to maintain and operate for administrators and end-users. It should also easily integrate with other tools used by the organization.

A cloud-based solution is typically easier to use all around. It doesn't require internal IT resources for maintenance, upkeep and upgrades. Cloud-based also means you will always be running the most recent version of the software, without breaking existing integrations.

Seamless integration is critical. It is the No. 1 reason companies seek out a new training solution. The solution must be able to operate within your organization's unique technology

ecosystem and integrate with the requisite systems. The right web services and APIs should be available to meet your organization's needs. Find a technology partner with deep integration experience.

Seamless integration is critical. It is the No. 1 reason companies seek out a new training solution.

Another key reason why companies switch providers is ease of use. They need technology that admins and learners can use with little or no training, which requires an intuitive interface for both groups. Beware of solutions that focus too much on one group or another because, in the long run, the bad will outweigh the good. The modern workforce training environment can be quite complex. The proper technology will manage the complexity of personalization, adaptability and scale required for users and administrators.

Measurement

The right strategy and technologies may never reach their true potential if the organization has no way to measure if it is truly effective. Organizations need a training and learning system that does more than just deliver content and track completions. It is critical that the system can measure and validate competencies. To prove value, companies require a persuasive way to demonstrate how training effectiveness drives employee performance on the job.

Seek a solution with real-time analytic dashboards that provide trainers with actionable insights into workforce readiness at a glance. Having this information at their fingertips allows them to easily track progress, set tasks and assess training outcomes. This real-time data can also inform decisions from leadership as to what the company's operational priorities should be. None of this is possible with static completion reports or conventional technologies.

By leveraging the power of real-time data and analytics, businesses can continuously optimize their training operations to improve the ROI associated with their workforce training. Operational and training managers can positively impact both quantitative and qualitative ROI measures.

ROI Measures that Training Optimization can Positively Impact are:

- ✔ Reducing the number of hours required for training
- ✔ Lowering operational risks
- ✔ Decreasing the number of errors in content materials
- ✔ Improving the performance and engagement of frontline workers

Conclusion

A move to a learner experience that includes more just-in-time, just-for-me, just-where-I-am training will be worth the effort to redevelop your strategy and implement new technology. And, it is possible to start transforming your organization's workforce training environment today. Brandon Hall Group research shows that these approaches have a positive effect on a wide variety of outcomes, including:

- ✔ Increased productivity
- ✔ Reduced training hours
- ✔ Improved time to productivity
- ✔ Higher employee engagement

Making it happen requires organizations to take concrete steps in the right direction:

- ✔ Include business stakeholders in strategy development
- ✔ Identify real, measurable metrics before creating/launching programs
- ✔ Leverage adaptive technology that can do the following:
  - ⇨ Transform legacy content
  - ⇨ Track skills and knowledge in real-time
  - ⇨ Direct training at specific skill gaps on-demand
  - ⇨ Deliver unique experiences to a wide variety of audiences
  - ⇨ Execute changes and updates rapidly and globally
  - ⇨ Provide insights into training effectiveness
- ✔ Measure learning outcomes based on a wide variety of available data, not just completions and smile sheets

Authors and Contributors

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About Realizeit

Realizeit is on a mission to transform workforce training and drive learning innovation for large-scale organizations by maximizing the value of training operations with our first-of-its-kind intelligent technology.

The Realizeit adaptive learning platform is powered by a self-learning engine fueled by machine learning. Realizeit delivers unprecedented levels of precision in corporate training and learning by leveraging the power of adaptivity and personalization at scale. This allows companies to transform from a conventional one-size-fits-all, content-centric learning model to one that is personalized, knowledge-based and performance-linked for every employee.

To learn more about Realizeit's adaptive learning platform for workforce training, please visit our site:

Realizeit ®

www.realizeitlearning.com

Or reach out to our team:

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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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