

THRIVE

A guide to evolving your L&D strategy

**A practical look at what the most
forward-thinking organisations
are doing to develop their people.**

thrivelearning.com



Time for change

In the UK this year, 68% of us have had to learn new ways of working. With this increased pressure to evolve, people clearly need L&D more than ever. But what's more, people just aren't getting the information they need from their organisation. With the rise in remote working, 74% of employees feel like they're missing out on company news.

At **THRIVE**, we're confident many of our clients are bucking these trends. We took the time to reflect on the responses we've seen in L&D to Covid-19 and there are some really strong takeaways.

What did they do differently?

Most of us will remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Well this year it couldn't be more pertinent. It tells us that before we can begin to influence behaviour we must satisfy primary needs. Needs ranging from the basics like food and good health to slightly more complex ones like fulfilment.

Hello 2020 and mass food shortages, threats to our health, job and financial insecurity and a complete overhaul of our working patterns and habits.

The teams that have got it right this year have recognised that for people to do their jobs well, they really need more than just training materials. In this ebook we'll look at some of the strongest themes from the reaction of L&D to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We made a call at the end of March that now is not the appropriate time to roll out all the big training programmes we had planned.

Now is the time to give people confidence that our business is looking out for them and to focus on what they really need. Good communication, strong leadership and support.

THRIVE gave us the platform to deliver that."

James Stewart
Head of Learning Experience



Communicating effectively

Good communication helps to build organisational culture, keep employees informed and reinforce what's important – all of which give people the context and direction to grow within their role. That's why businesses with effective communication are 50% more likely to have lower employee turnover according to **BIT.AI**.

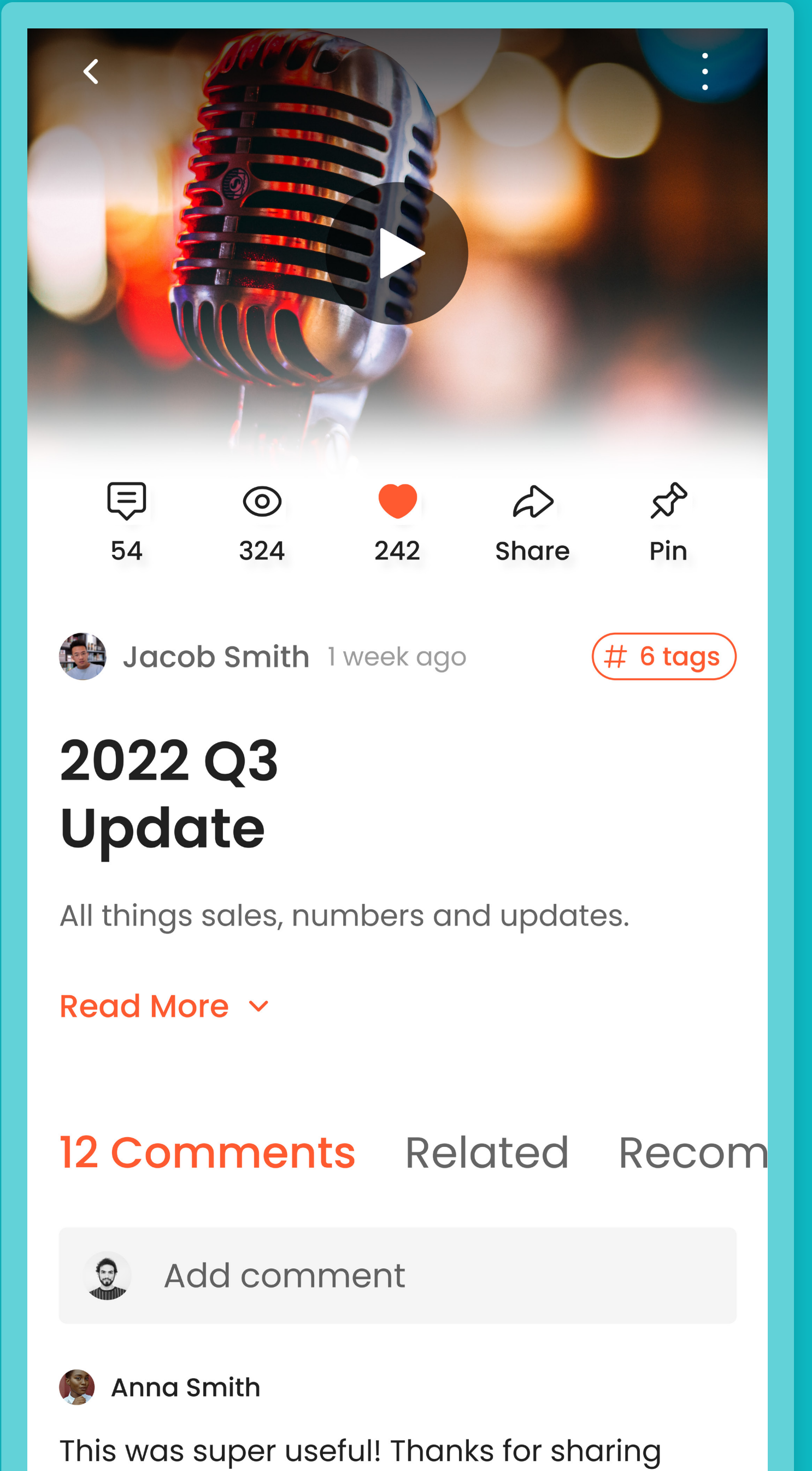
This year has put even more pressure on us to get the right information to the right people at the right time and via the right channel. Not least because of remote working and missing out on the face to face check-ins, informal office conversation and – let's face it – eavesdropping; but also because things are changing at a much faster rate. If we want people to continue to work productively as a team, they need access to information promptly, in a consistent and non-disruptive way.

Good communication doesn't just come from the top down. Of course leaders should role model it, but everyone needs to understand and perpetuate good communication habits for them to become embedded in an organisation's culture. This

is something that L&D teams have the power to really enable and reinforce, but also to benefit from.

"When they are unclear about your WHY, WHAT you do has no context."

Simon Sinek
Start With Why



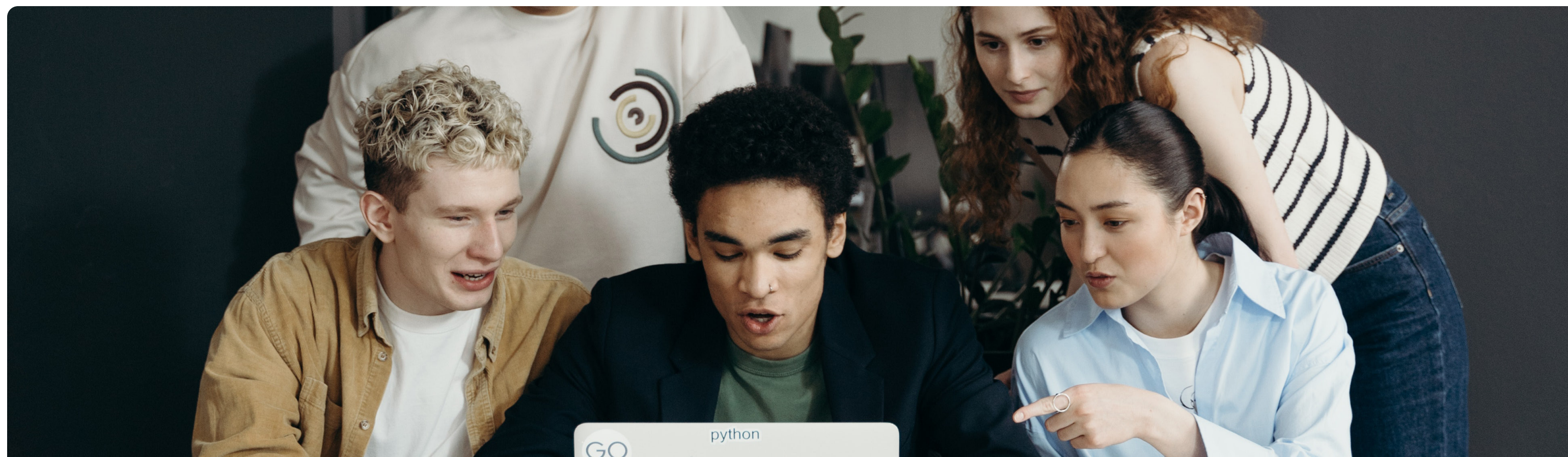
Master communication in L&D & beyond

Know your audience

Who could benefit from the information? Who is impacted? Who needs visibility of any outcomes or discussions? Who else might be interested or take inspiration from what you're sharing?

Consider timing

Is the information urgent? Is there an immediate call to action? Or are you just planting an idea or highlighting that a discussion needs to be had longterm?



😊 Having a purpose

Start with why. Why do you need to share this information? Is it because you're requesting something from someone? Or advising them? Informing them? Giving visibility?

⚙️ Be consistent

Tips 1-3 help you to determine what channel is most appropriate for your message. But it's important to be as clear and consistent as possible with what those channels are and how they are best used. This is particularly important where you have multiple tools.

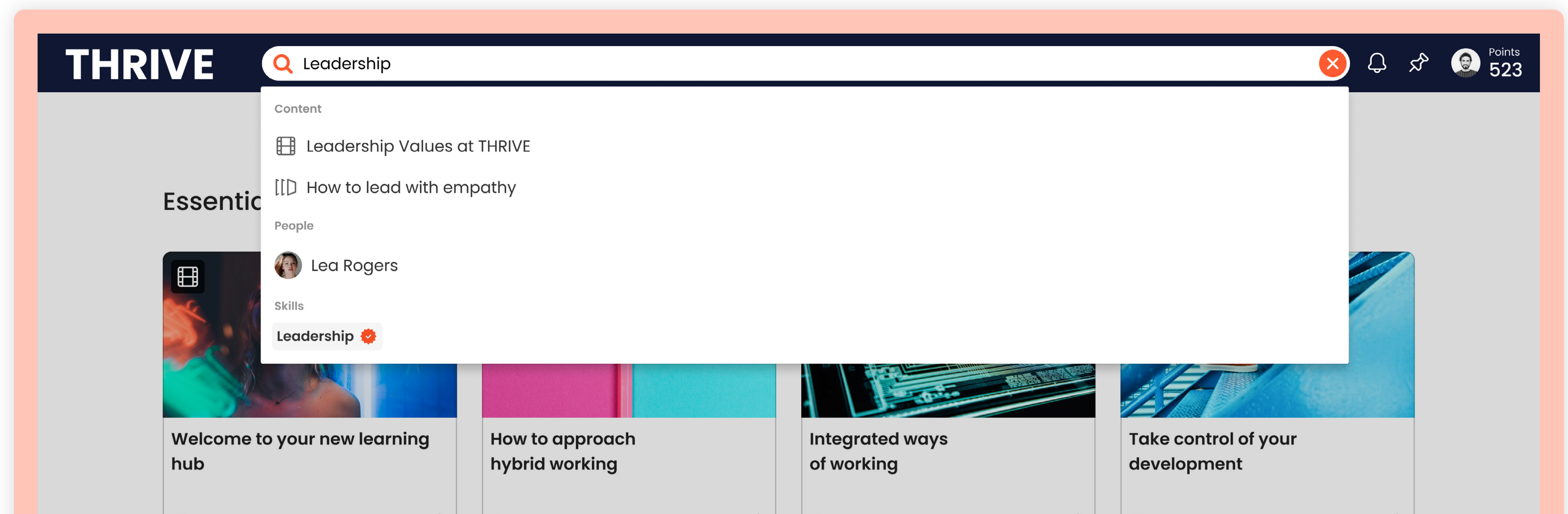
For example, you might say that all formal documentation – like processes that could change – should live on a shared drive.

You might use broadcasts or videos to demo functionality, unveil new concepts or get your teams to buy into something. You might use instant messaging for urgent calls to action.

Clarity on what channels should be used for what helps manage the flow of the information. Digging into the why will help you determine factors such as the importance of an audit trail or whether the information needs to be searchable and easy to refer back to, for example.

☆ LXP tip!

THRIVE not only makes all content searchable but its personalisation engine recommends content to the people who need it based on skills, interests and behaviour.



Fostering a community

Andrew Grove, former CEO of Intel, talked a lot about what motivates people. He said that if people in an organisation are acting from a place of self-interest everything becomes transactional. A question of 'what am I getting out of this?'

In the case of L&D, this might look like a lot of self-interested individuals who aren't aligned, sharing knowledge or contributing to each other's growth.

In Grove's experience at Intel, when the pressure and stress rise, this sort of environment becomes chaotic – like every person for themselves on a sinking ship.

This all changes when people start acting in the group interest.

So how do you keep a community alive when people aren't physically together? Even those of us who tout the benefits of remote working will acknowledge that

one of the benefits of being in a shared environment is connectedness to colleagues.

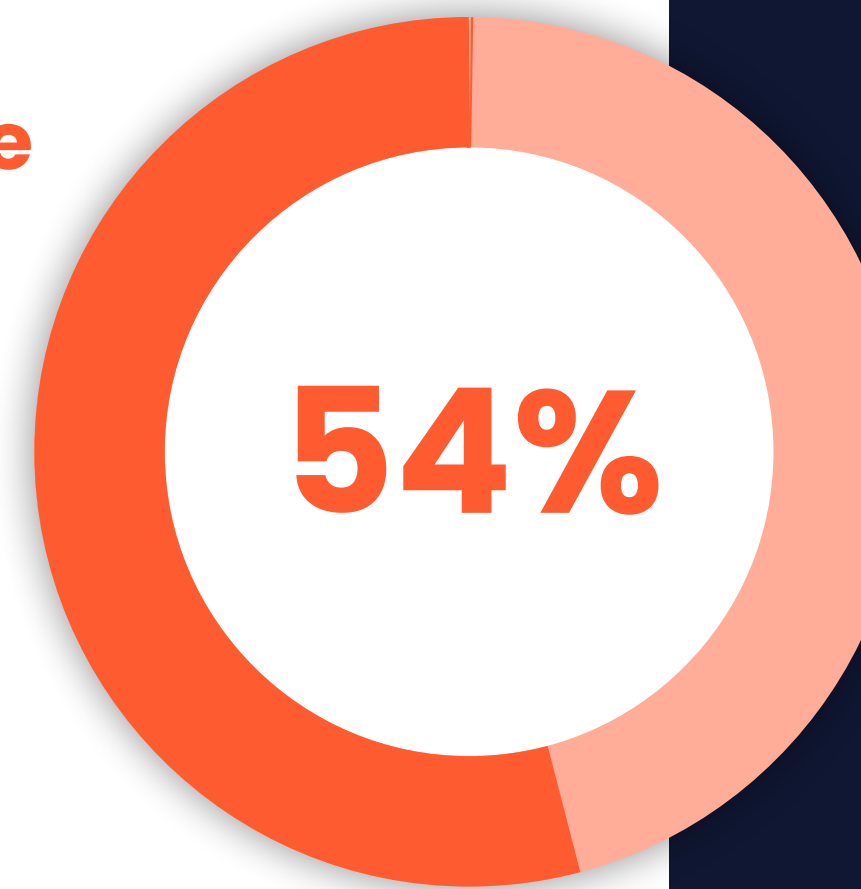
One thing that organisations like **Sumo Digital** have offered their employees this year is a full social calendar. Inclusive, opt-in events that make people feel a part of something bigger than just the products or their day-to-day role. Events like their Big Day In, where they organised virtual events, games and quizzes on their THRIVE LXP and sent out goodie boxes to everyone in the company. It's all about sharing an experience and having fun.

But when it comes to creating a sense of community digitally, there's also a point to be made around user experience and that's something we've really thought about at THRIVE.

Community isn't a single place where people 'go' – like a forum or a group – it's smaller pockets of collective interests or shared causes that together make up the personality of an organisation. Traditional LMSs have tried really hard to create community, when the focus should be on trying to nurture what's already there. Community is an output of individual expression, so give people somewhere to express themselves.

54% of employees state a strong sense of community kept them at a company for longer.

Research by **BIT.AI**



"The interest of the larger group takes precedence over the interest of the individual... for this to happen, you must believe that you all share a common set of values, objectives and methods."

Andrew S. Grove
High Output Management

Giving people a voice

One of the most common barriers to learning is that knowledge is buried away in people's heads. This is one of the biggest risks when we create single points of failure or information silos – both of which are common in most organisations.

Trust the people in your organisation to share their knowledge and give them a platform to express themselves and you can reduce these risks and streamline learning in your organisation.



How learners can become teachers

Push more user generated content

Let go of perfectionism and encourage your teams to share knowledge and ideas in a way that works for them. It could be sharing a selfie video, posting a link or simply asking a question in an open environment where everyone can benefit.

These modern ways of sharing information are much less intensive to create and deliver, reflect the real-world experiences of employees (who you might not be as connected to as you think) and give you great insights into what people actually want to learn. Simply provide the tools and let your teams do the rest.

Connect people to people

Make sure your experts, those who have the experience to solve specific problems or answer questions, are accessible at the point of need. Creating a wider support network outside of direct teams can boost learning and bring your company together.

Encourage interaction

Create a transparent environment where there are no stupid questions and everyone can benefit from everything. That way people feel like it's a safe space to engage, comment and discuss resources, learning and more.



Driving engagement

Employee engagement is important. But it's also subjective. One of the things we ask ourselves a lot at THRIVE is how we want to define it. If we're asking our clients to measure and improve it, we need some idea of what engagement looks like to us. To THRIVE good engagement is...

Good engagement is an expectation amongst learners that when they enter our LXP they will learn something. It's the consistency and reliability of an environment that turns learning into a habit and keeps them coming back everyday for more.

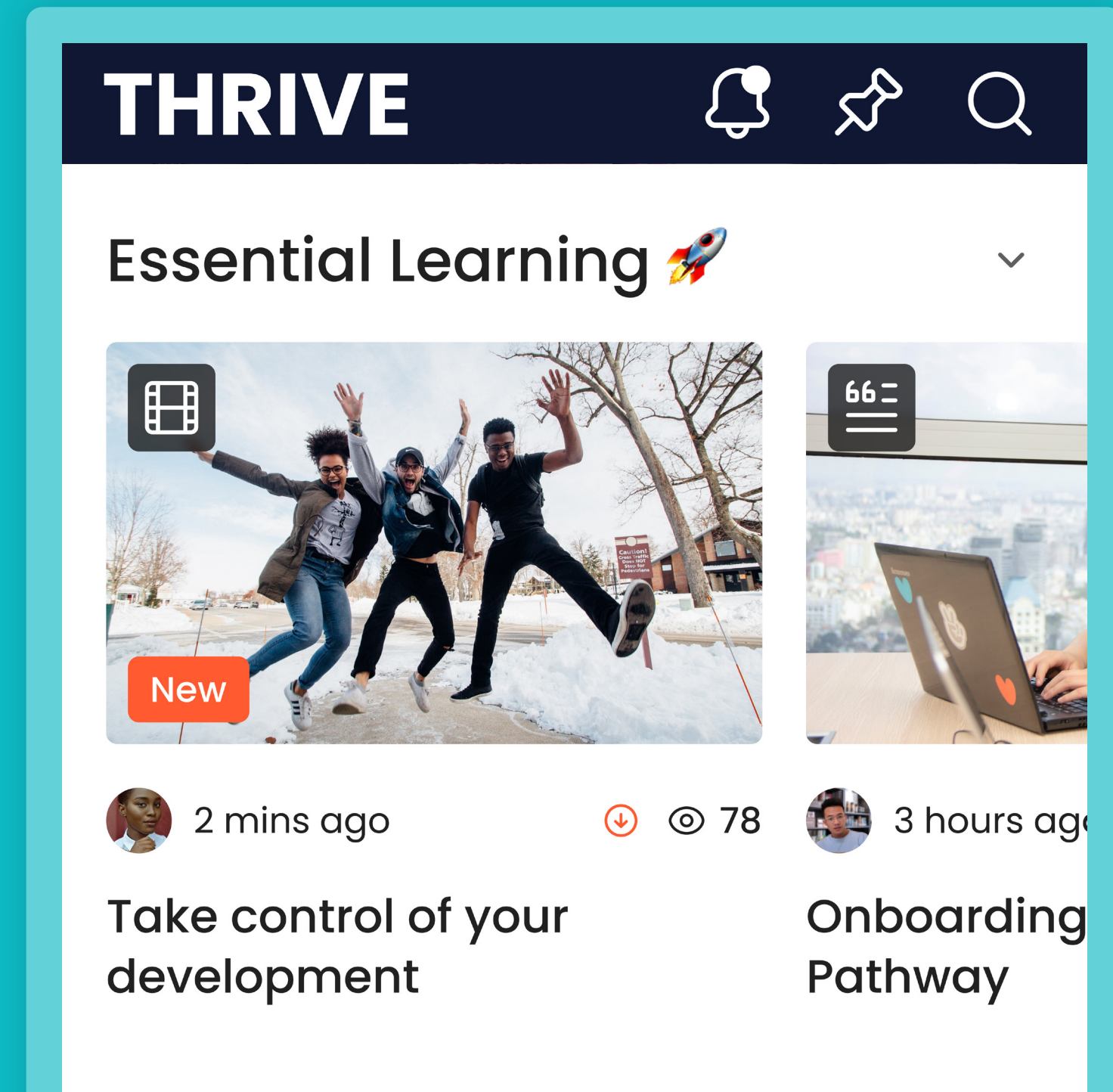
Content that people want

What keeps people coming back to Netflix or Amazon Prime Video? Good content plays a major part.

You can depend on platforms like these to find and host good content – and also, depending on who you ask, recommend it. It shouldn't be any different with your learning platform. To increase engagement, you need that hook.

Part of this is about relevance. Timing and applicability are both important here, so you need your system to support what you're trying to deliver.

Making intelligent recommendations, personalising the way content is displayed to a learner and automated content delivery mechanisms – like campaigns – will help. So will creating content that learners need.



Sky's digital transformation

In March of this year, when Sky decided to scrap their planned rollouts and switch their focus to the pandemic, mental health and wellbeing content was top of the agenda. As was content to help their leaders adapt to looking after their teams remotely and guiding them through a time of great uncertainty.

They also rolled out targeted training for their retail employees to give them a sense of accomplishment and make the most of the unique opportunity to invest time in personal development whilst stores were closed, instead of using the furlough scheme.



GVC adapting to the new normal

Our microlearning catalogue clients, like GVC, collaborated with us to build a pathway of content to help employees transition back to work after the first lockdown in the UK was lifted back in June.

Anticipating that many employees would be facing different challenges (PPE, social distancing, stricter hygiene), more pressure (to learn and adapt quickly, to lead through change, to deal with difficult customers, juggle childcare) and a range of emotions (uncertainty, grief, mental health, illness) as they adapted to the 'new normal' was a huge factor in creating content that really responded to their needs at that time.

But it's also about understanding what your learners care about

In the past, big organisations might have steered clear of something like the Black Lives Matter movement, but increasingly employees and customers want to know where brands stand on these important issues.

Learning doesn't always have to be about teaching a new skill, but generating a conversation that brings people together. Now more than ever, people want to feel connected to something bigger than a company. They want the collectivism of sharing a purpose or cause with colleagues.

Delivering topical, vital content on subjects like racism, the gender pay gap and LGBT+ issues should be a part of every L&D strategy. To a learner and automated content delivery mechanisms - like campaigns - will help. So will creating content that learners need.

Set the narrative by giving people a topic to engage with and showing them what's important to your organisation. Whether it's a social event, a resource or celebrating an awareness day together, your learners want

to engage with something topical and they will keep coming back if they can expect something new every time.

It takes an army of influencers

Don't feel like the burden is on you, in L&D, to deliver all of this great content. Your people are your best weapon.

Try getting a team of influencers on your side who can encourage usage, get the discussion going and set the trend when it comes to user generated content. They'll also be able to help you evolve your engagement strategy by collecting honest feedback from your most loyal learners.

"True influence is about leveraging authenticity."

Solving real challenges

There's a sentiment that L&D is too focused on solving problems they're told they have, instead of the ones actually experienced by their learners.

This is one of the benefits of suppliers taking a more consultative approach to technology implementations and it's something we strongly believe in at THRIVE.

A system alone doesn't solve all of your problems, especially when you don't even know what those problems are. The set-up and training required for a system like THRIVE is actually pretty minimal - we've designed it to be intuitive and seamless. The main focus of the implementation is aligning your L&D team with our modern learning philosophy, defining what success looks like for your organisation, figuring out how that success can be measured and creating a learning strategy to help you meet your goals.

Diagnosing L&D problems: a case study

If a manager is pointing fingers because they're frustrated that they keep investing their time in new starters who leave within a year, don't then assume you have a recruitment problem. What everyone desires (the goal) is most likely the same- that the organisation retains good hires.

This demands behavioural change from everyone involved: recruiters, managers, the

new starters and every single person that impacts the experience of anyone entering the business in a new role.

Speaking to all of these people, capturing their current processes and thoughts and mapping those onto the behaviours that will help to reach your goal should allow you to pinpoint what needs to change and what the blockers are.

"A problem well stated is a problem half solved."



Fundamental values that underpin any L&D transformation

Value proposition	Assume you're getting it wrong	Don't be daunted by data	Focus on measurable outcomes instead of problems	Be more iterative
Why it matters	The phrase 'disruptive' is having its moment in the learning technologies industry. People are fedup with L&D just not living up to modern learner expectations.	The only way to know if you're doing things right is to measure results and sentiments in relation to what you're delivering.	Problem statements are way too dependent on individual perception. They can also be wrought with emotion.	L&D is in danger of responding to learner needs far too slowly. We often spend too much time planning and perfecting. That's wasted learning time in which something would be more beneficial than nothing (even if just a lesson learned on how not to do it next time).
What to do	Disruption is about questioning why we do things the way we do and being bold enough to challenge that.	<p>It's hard to find any practical guidance on how to capture and measure data. Perhaps that's because there's no perfect way to do it. Often, quantitative data analysis is just about identifying trends and behaviours that can simply direct your attention to where the real problems are.</p> <p>In a user-centred L&D strategy, qualitative is also super powerful. Surveys, discovery sessions, forums and feedback mechanisms are at the heart of any strong learning culture.</p>	If you're presented with 'problems' try to refocus your attention on what a preferred outcome to the current situation would be for everyone affected. Behaviours are just one (our favourite!) example of an outcome that is measurable, specific and brings about real change.	Adopt a sprint mentality: creating something in a short space of time, seeking feedback from real learners and then working to improve it is going to deliver results much faster than 'perfecting' something in isolation only to find out at the end it wasn't quite right.

Top tips for data

Quantitative

By monitoring where content traffic is coming from you can get some useful insights to dig into with further analysis. If learners are searching for and clicking on related content more than being pushed to it, you can infer that they need the content and start to investigate. We call this discretionary access and systems that support it are great for self-led learning cultures.



Qualitative

A measure such as 'are sales people still experiencing the challenges we identified in the session in July?' can be way more insightful than looking at compliance tracking data on the training you delivered for them.



Agile working in a pandemic

In 2020 it was ok to get it wrong. We were all scrambling about in the face of extremely unusual circumstances, and that meant that we inadvertently created something we've been talking about for years. A failsafe culture. We took risks, we tried things out and guess what? In some cases they worked!

Who hasn't come away from this year—either in a work or personal context—without a lesson learnt that they'll carry through into 2021 and beyond? Agility and a growth mindset are going to be huge themes in the future of L&D.

**"Don't be afraid to fail.
Be afraid of not trying."**

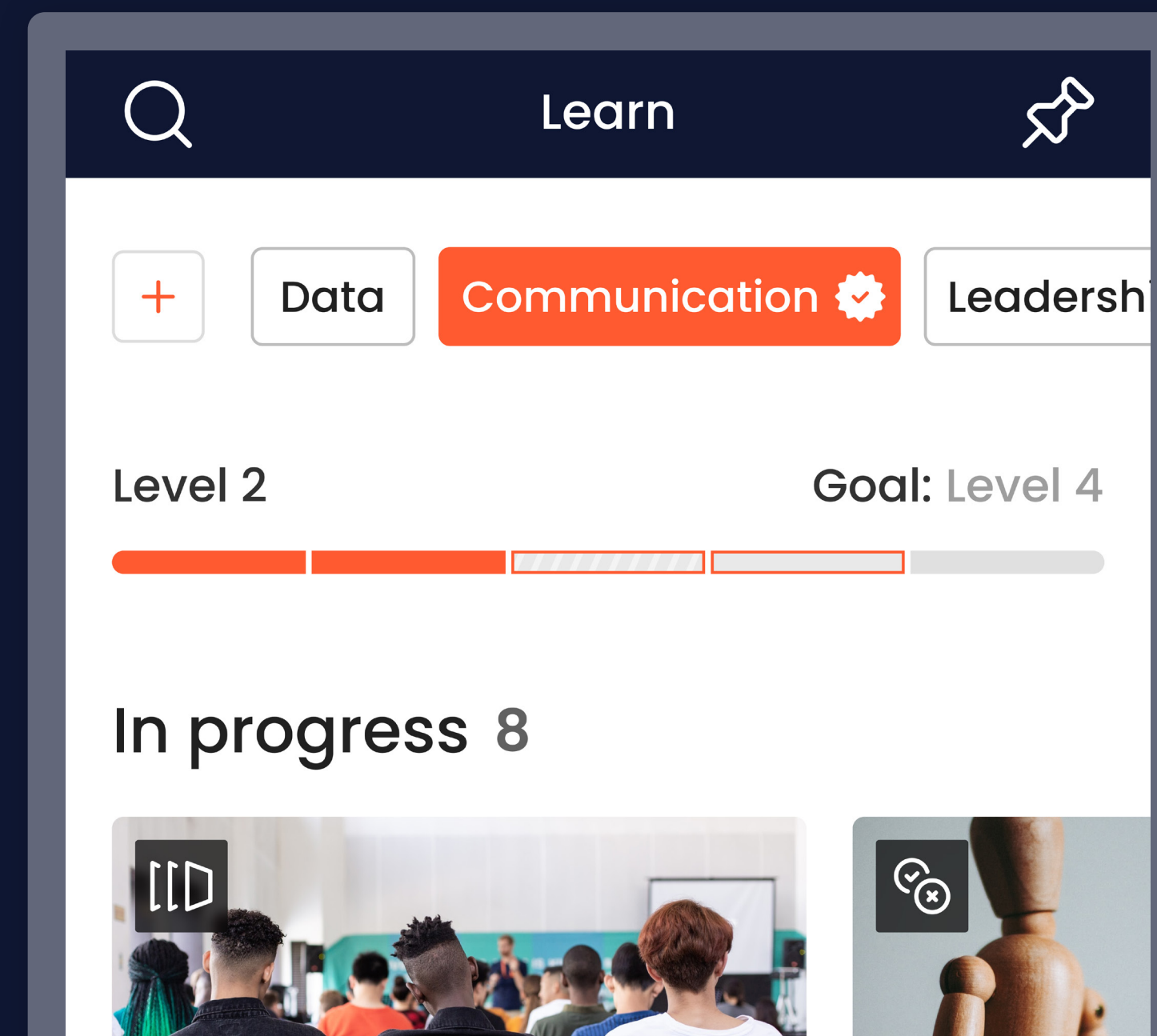
Your learners expect more

Covid-19 has sped up our digital economy. We now purchase, order and perform most of our day-to-day activities online. Just think about the QR codes on menus in restaurants and bars or GP surgeries only issuing prescriptions online. People are beginning to expect that they can do everything online that they used to be able to only do face to face.

To keep up with the pace, you need a learning ecosystem that offers more than just compliance training. You need an L&D culture concerned with holistic growth.

Can your LMS do more than deliver training?

THRIVE LXP helps you empower a continuous learning culture by fostering collaboration, communication and community.



"Agile ways of working... as well as user-centric approaches to product development, require greater collaboration..."

But these tools will only ever enable organizational change, not fundamentally change the way organizations work on their own. Companies would do well to think first about the broader, holistic changes they want to make and then decide how social and digital technologies can play a supporting role."

McKinsey & Company

A portrait of a smiling woman with long, dark braids, wearing a vibrant rainbow-colored scarf. She is set against a teal background and is framed by a thick orange circular border. The overall aesthetic is bright and celebratory, consistent with the 'Pride' theme of the document.

Unlike a traditional LMS we recognise the importance of coupling learning with communication to connect your teams, help them feel a sense of belonging and give them the answers they need wherever they're working.

We've recently launched a new comms tool: broadcasts. A built-in live video tool that allows business leaders to connect with their entire organisation in real time. Harnessing the power of interaction, you'll be able to see how your team is feeling with reactions, get answers with polls and host Q&As through live chat.

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