

The Transformation Curve

The L&D journey to deliver
lasting business impact

Learning Benchmark Report

January 2018

About this research

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognised longitudinal study exploring how effective learning innovation influences business impact. The findings are informed by the input of 6,500+ L&D leaders and 40,000+ learners gathered since 2003.

This report follows the publication of *L&D: Where are we now?* Released in November 2017, it describes the current status of global learning and development: the goals, outcomes and challenges that L&D face in modernising learning to better support business transformation.

In this report, we apply new data analytics to reveal the most effective combinations of actions, tools and strategies to make the next step change on the learning transformation curve.

Data for this report is drawn from:

- > The Towards Maturity 2017 Benchmark™ research with data from over 700 global L&D leaders gathered between August 2016 and July 2017
- > Data from a sample of over 10,000 learners who took part in the Towards Maturity Learning Landscape during the same period

The full range of Towards Maturity's research reports is available from:
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Acknowledgements

This report is free to download thanks to the support of Towards Maturity's Ambassadors (see Appendix for details). www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors

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Foreword by Donald H Taylor

The Transformation Curve is the most significant Towards Maturity report since the research began in 2003. Drawing on increased data sets for this year, the longevity of the research and experience in the industry has allowed the Towards Maturity team to do something very difficult and brave for any research team.

They have refused to revisit this year's data in the light of last year's, instead they have created something which I believe will be invaluable to the L&D profession - a model of maturity that relates not only to the use of technology but to everything that L&D departments do on their road from being fulfilment houses of formal training to catalysts supporting an effective organisation.

Individuals, as well as organisations, will recognise themselves in the pages of this report. Each one of the four stages described is a recognisable manifestation of how learning and development is approached today – from small to large organisations around the globe.

The power of the research is to describe in six dimensions exactly what these stages look like and how to progress through them. The pivot points identified between each stage are a data-driven, practical guide to the bitter reality that, in Marshall Goldsmith's words – 'What got you here, won't get you there...'

Because this is about organisations and their need to learn, this report becomes essential reading not just for L&D leaders, but for everyone in the business who wants to understand how to become a competitive, agile 21st century organisation.

What is exciting about this research is that it began with technology and built out from that. It reaffirmed the common understanding that technology is only a tool, and while this was evident even in the early 2000s, what has changed is not the power of technology but the urgency by which organisations need to adapt to survive. Successful organisations are those that learn and our work in L&D needs to support that. This report shows us how to step up to the challenge.



Donald H Taylor
Chair of Learning Technologies Conference

Towards Maturity have created something which I believe will be invaluable to the L&D 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.

1. Starting out

This unparalleled time of change for organisations offers a great opportunity for L&D to shift from delivering courses to delivering strategic value. However, too many are still at the starting point of their transformation journey. This report maps out the destination – and the roadmap of how to get there.

We are going through a period of huge transformation in business, in the labour market, the economy, in technology and in learning and development. Organisations are continually adapting to change and face mounting pressure on all sides. To stay ahead, they need to strike a new balance between agility and stability, and be able to transform their product or service offering to take advantage of the benefits of technology in innovation, research and development, marketing, analytics, customer communications – and learning.

Figure 1. The pressures on organisations today



Digital transformation is disrupting traditional methods and culture. Organisations are changing established processes and leveraging the massive amounts of data at their disposal. But harnessing new technologies is as much about people as it is about technical challenges.

Learning professionals know they have an important role to play but our evidence shows that they struggle to break free from existing paradigms. Getting the buy-in of all concerned to modernise learning has been an uphill struggle. The snapshot of the current status published in *L&D: Where are we now?*² reveals a well-resourced, technology-enabled profession, but lacking in some of the essential capabilities they need.

“

“Digital transformation is really a human story”

Brian Solis¹

”

¹<http://www.briansolis.com/2017/01/definition-of-digital-transformation/>

²*L&D: Where are we now?*, Towards Maturity, 2017. www.towardsmaturity.org/learningtoday2017

1.1 Rapidly changing L&D practice

L&D professionals have considerable opportunity to change the way in which they operate in order to add new and lasting value in this changing world.

High performing L&D teams have a history of disruptive thinking. Of asking the challenging question. Of turning the conversation that we have with the individual about 'what courses can we help you with?' to a new conversation about 'what will help you perform at your best in your job?'

The destination is set.

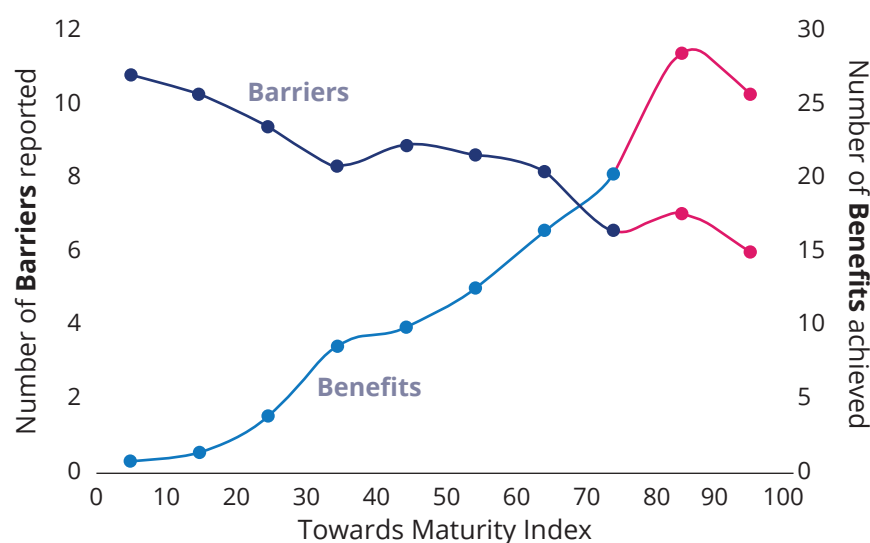
It is clear we need to become a flexible, adaptable learning organisation.

The New Learning Organisation³ puts learning at the heart of business, underpinning growth, productivity, profit and transformation. It is a place of readiness for change.

The tactics and strategies embedded in the Towards Maturity Model⁴ underpin the high performing learning organisation – the more they become everyday practice the more business impact that learning innovation delivers. Those that are applying the principles of the Towards Maturity Model show us that the destination can be reached. We track that progress through the Towards Maturity Index.

There is a strong correlation between the independent Towards Maturity Index and the achievement of goals for learning and development.

Figure 2. Impact of learning maturity



Rooted in evidence from over 6,500 learning professionals and leaders from around the globe, the Towards Maturity Index provides the 'X' factor that can reliably predict the outputs from L&D in terms of efficiency, performance and agility and show how to accelerate performance and reduce the barriers to progress – see figure 2.

This report provides new evidence for the change needed to shift mindsets, influence behaviours and **open up conversations with business leaders**. It is time to break through the barriers that are restricting change and take the next step on the maturity journey.

³<https://www.towardsmaturity.org/learningorg2017> for a detailed look at the characteristics that define the New Learning Organisation

⁴<https://www.towardsmaturity.org/model> See Appendix A

1.2 The transformation journey

The Top Deck⁵, those in the top 10% of the Towards Maturity index in our study, are continually evolving their learning strategy in line with business. They are willing to change and take risks, championing new ways of working and learning, even when everything is “working” just fine.

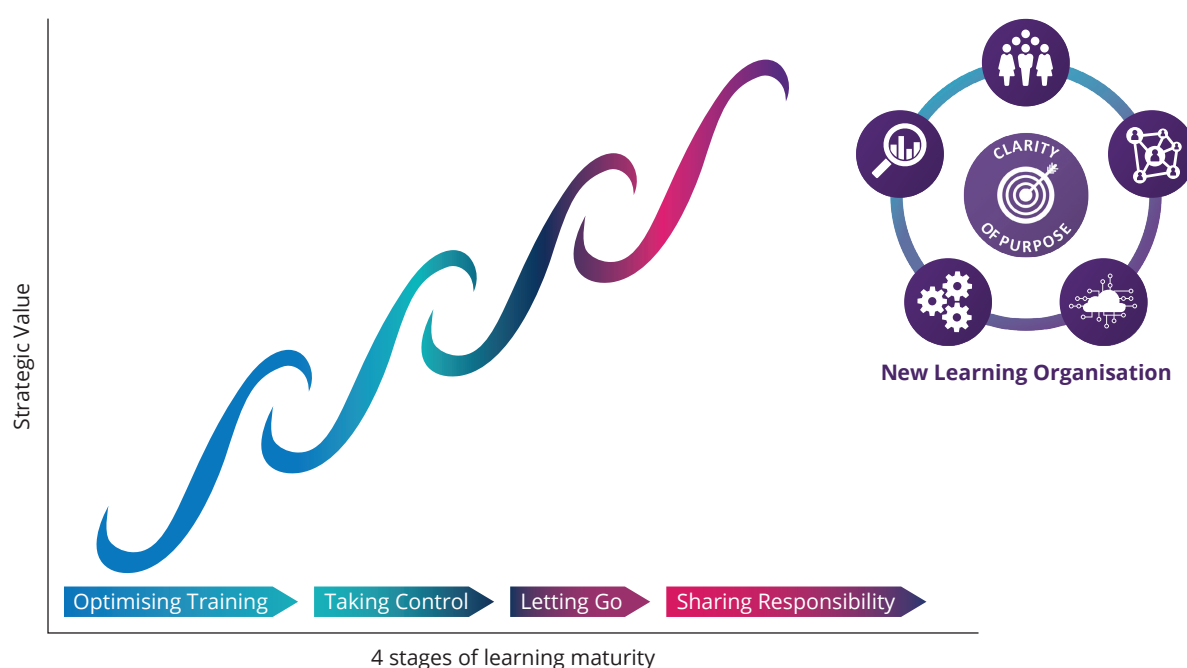
Regardless of size or sector, their transformation journey has resulted in common characteristics that we define as the New Learning Organisation. A feature of the New Learning Organisation is that it is constantly evolving as it responds to change.

New Learning Organisations enable performance, growth, productivity and business transformation.

Our evidence over the years has shown that the journey towards maturity is not a simple one – there are complex factors at work that get in the way. Whilst the majority of L&D leaders at this level have high aspirations, few are attaining their goals despite clear evidence of the factors that consistently contribute to success.

Getting there is not a single stage process. Indeed, many Top Deck organisations make progress in some areas but not in others. In our new analysis, we revisited our extensive data to explore what is really holding us back and how to break through those barriers.

Figure 3. The transformation curve



What the classic transformation curve confirms however, is that just as you reach a **period of growth** and are making great progress, it is already **time to move on *before* the start of the decline phase**. This critical moment is the **pivot point of change**.

Responding to this pivot points of change, just when everything seems to be on an upward trajectory, takes vision and courage. It also takes confidence and expertise and a new blend of skills for L&D.

⁵See *L&D: Where are we now?* Chapter 4 for more Top Deck information. www.towardsmaturity.org/learningtoday2017

1.3 Navigating the journey

New analysis of the Towards Maturity Index has identified a series of transformation curves (Figure 3), four distinct stages that signpost the journey towards organisational learning maturity:

Stage 1 – Optimising training

Stage 2 – Taking control

Stage 3 – Letting go

Stage 4 – Sharing responsibility

We have uncovered **six key dimensions** that shift at each of these stages. In order to move on, a holistic approach is needed across all six dimensions and, in the pages that follow, we look at the pivot points on the transformation journey that highlight when a step change will be needed. We provide guidelines to help identify what needs to be done, why and how to make the change.

Dimension	At each stage we consider:
 Governance	How are ongoing decisions being made about learning? Who is influencing that decision and how is data being used?
 Formal	How are learning teams addressing formal learning provision? What tools, technologies and approaches are being used?
 Informal	How are organisations enabling the interchange of ideas, experience and mutual collaboration to support personal and business goals?
 L&D	What are the roles, skills and contribution of the learning professional?
 Individual	What are the roles, expectations and contributions of the individuals in the learning process?
 Manager	What are the roles, expectations and contributions of the managers and leaders in the learning process?

At a glance, these are some of the characteristic shifts that we will be exploring through the report (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of changing behaviours across the transformation curve

Dimension	Optimising training	Taking control	Letting go	Sharing responsibility
Governance 	Response-driven rather than strategic planning	Increased business awareness	Outcomes first	Shared focus on outcomes
	Data free decision making	Decisions made in isolation	Using data to evidence and inform change	Using analytics to inform and fine-tune
Formal learning 	Demand-led, reactive provision	Increased blending with more technology	Focus on learning application at work	Holistic user experience
	Limited technology used to target compliance	Greater flexibility and access to learning	Designing with multiple stakeholders	
Informal and social learning 	Peer to peer learning is not on the L&D agenda	Marketing campaigns designed to engage	Course no longer considered the only option	Digitally enabled culture of sharing
		Security fears holding back sharing	Focus on performance support	
Role of L&D 	Digital learning held back by lack of knowledge	Limited skill and confidence to leverage technology	L&D more confident as business savvy enablers	Underpin rather than interfere
		Starting to invest in L&D capability	Shift to a performance consulting approach	
Role of the individual 	Considered 'recipients' not 'contributors'	Believed to lack skill to manage learning	Individuals have a voice Increased support networks	Connected contributors
Role of the manager 	Line managers not involved	Increased management input on design	Committed to on-the-job learning	Creating a culture of permission
		Limited influence on learning culture		

This report aims to help those in L&D navigate the journey across the 4 stages of transformation, recognise the counter-intuitive pivot points of change and take the next step towards effective learning transformation. In each section, the quoted statistics, whilst quite low in some cases, are those with the strongest correlation with the TMI at that stage.

Let us take you on the journey.

In the next four sections, we map out four stages of the transformation journey. At each stage, we highlight the successes and the characteristics relating to each of the dimensions above.



2. Optimising training

How do we deliver more for less? This is the perennial question for L&D leaders and the key driver for investment in technology. At this stage, organisations in the bottom quartile of the Towards Maturity Index are looking to bring efficiency to the training process – increasing choice, volume and improving the administration of learning.

Since the primary raison d'être for investment in the learning and development function within the organisation often starts with a need for training, it is logical that in the early stages of the maturity journey, the focus is on optimising training.

For those at this stage (defined by the bottom quartile of the Towards Maturity Index), the emphasis is firmly on the provision of formal learning, and building greater efficiency into the course offering.

For a large and distributed organisation, sorting out all the training requirements is no easy task. Managing and growing the course catalogue to offer better choice is a costly and time-consuming business. Managing an army of classroom trainers, training facilities, timetables and last minute changes of personnel or staff availability is a constant challenge for the busy training department head.

For smaller businesses, delivering across the range of skills required often leads to outsourcing specialist training, requiring expert planning and negotiation skills. The risks can be significant whilst building relationships with trusted partners.

With the introduction of technology comes significant efficiency savings, more learners, greater choice and the potential to improve every aspect of formal learning. Systematising training content and approach using technology can also deliver improvements in the reach, quality and consistency of training. Those in the early stages of the maturity journey are stronger at efficiency rather than improving quality.

2.1 Building the course portfolio



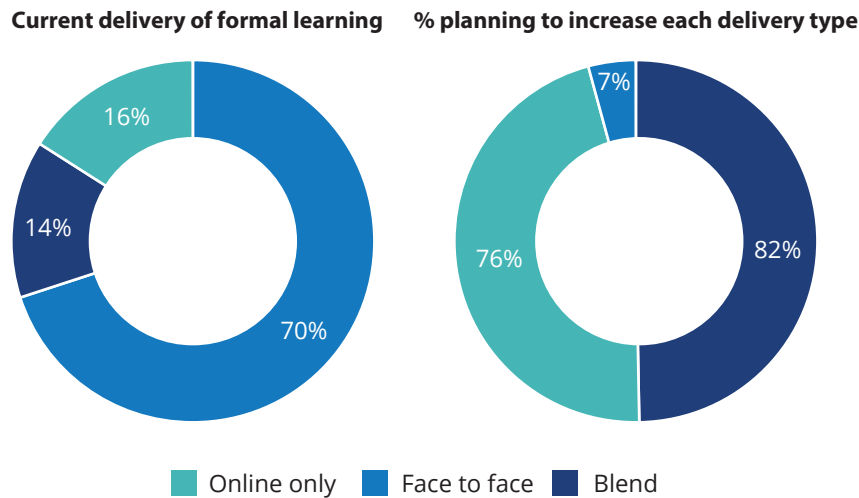
Demand-led, reactive provision

Business expects L&D to deliver courses so the focus for those starting out on the transformation journey is on building a more efficient course portfolio. Some formal learning is shifting to online delivery, but with mixed results. **The 'go to' method is classroom training.** With 70% using face-to-face courses (Figure 4), the shift to a more blended learning or online approach is more aspirational than reality and more ad hoc than planned.



54%

of L&D at this stage consider the 'course' as the only option for building skills and performance

Figure 4. How is formal learning delivered at stage 1?

Limited technology used to target compliance

Those starting to create blended programmes at this stage rely on e-learning delivered via a Learning Management System to support compliance. Online-only options are also directed mainly at compliance.

- > 71% offer industry-specific courses online
- > 59% offer health and safety online
- > 52% offer equality and diversity, CSR or environmental training online



14% of L&D budget is spent on e-learning and associated learning technologies

In the Optimising Training stage, the benefits of being able to track learners, their progress and completion of modules leads to an encouraging 58% claiming that they have improved their ability to prove compliance with new regulations. In addition, 28% highlight improvement in compliant behaviours as a result of technology-enabled training.

However, there is little work being done to develop soft skills online, including building the metaskills for effective learning and study:

- > 11% offer learning and study skills
- > 12% offer programmes for developing innovation and creativity

With a strong focus on e-learning courses and their distribution, few at this stage are yet integrating their LMS with other business systems or looking at how they can use their LMS to integrate with external video libraries, or link to social media or mobile apps.



79% have an LMS but only 28% integrate their LMS with other systems

Very few at this stage grasp the full potential of mobile learning, with only 11% using bespoke mobile apps. Even fewer are using mobile app development tools (2% at this stage) despite 67% using mobile devices to provide access to content.

Looking ahead, those optimising training are primarily planning to increase technology to support learning delivery rather than using technology to re-think the way that they support the wider capability agenda. Their planning is all about further increasing programme reach and efficiency and in shifting what is working well in a face-to-face environment to online solutions.

Once the course is completed, the danger is in thinking that the job is done for those in L&D. Indeed, only 1% use defined performance support practices to support learning transfer after formal training.

Two-thirds (77%) have embraced the use of live online learning platforms such as VOIP and webinars and nearly half (45%) have access to internal social networking platforms such as Yammer or bespoke systems. However, only 13% encourage learners to share experiences and solve problems using these tools.



Peer-to-peer learning is not on the L&D agenda



94% want to improve the sharing of good practice, only 8% achieve this goal

L&D at this stage are looking to optimise training, rarely thinking beyond the formal course and missing the opportunity that networking can bring.

Learning is seen as an ‘event’ rather than as a ‘process’. The shift to continuous learning has barely begun.

2.2 Priorities for L&D

One of the big challenges for L&D teams starting out on the road to becoming a modern learning organisation is their lack of knowledge and awareness of the potential of technology.



Digital learning held back by lack of knowledge

Collectively, the L&D team are well skilled to succeed in a more traditional classroom situation (Table 2), however, they lack the knowledge and skills to harness technology. Classroom trainers, in general, are good at what they do but are not all comfortable with social technologies – only 23% actively encourage collaborative learning and 24% are reluctant to use technology. One of the biggest challenges for L&D at this stage is their lack of **knowledge** about what technology can bring to the learning agenda.



65% believe their L&D staff lack knowledge about the potential of technology

The priority L&D skills most likely to be in place at this stage are:

- > Classroom delivery (73% have these skills in place now)
- > Learning management (53%)
- > Teaching and assessment (49%)

However, they lack many skills that L&D consider a priority for development, including coaching and facilitating collaboration, thinking strategically and managing the communications that are such an essential part of stakeholder engagement. Table 2 shows the most important skills gaps that L&D leaders identified.

Table 2. What priority skills are still lacking at this stage?

> Facilitating collaboration (92%)	> Information management (73%)
> Communications (78%)	> Stakeholder engagement (67%)
> Setting learning strategy (76%)	> Coaching skills (64%)

2.3 The 'directed' learner

L&D, in general, have little confidence in the individuals that they support.

49% believe staff are reluctant to learn with new technologies. What is more, 95% think their staff do not know how to work together to productively connect and share knowledge (not surprising when only 4% are aware of how staff are already using social media outside their workplace to share ideas). The culture in the organisation is not yet one where people feel supported and can take ownership of their learning. We are not using activities that can help them to do so:

- > 14% use coaching and mentoring as an important part of their work culture
- > 8% help people locate in-house experts when they need them
- > 1% use available support systems to promote self-reliance, not a culture of dependency



65%

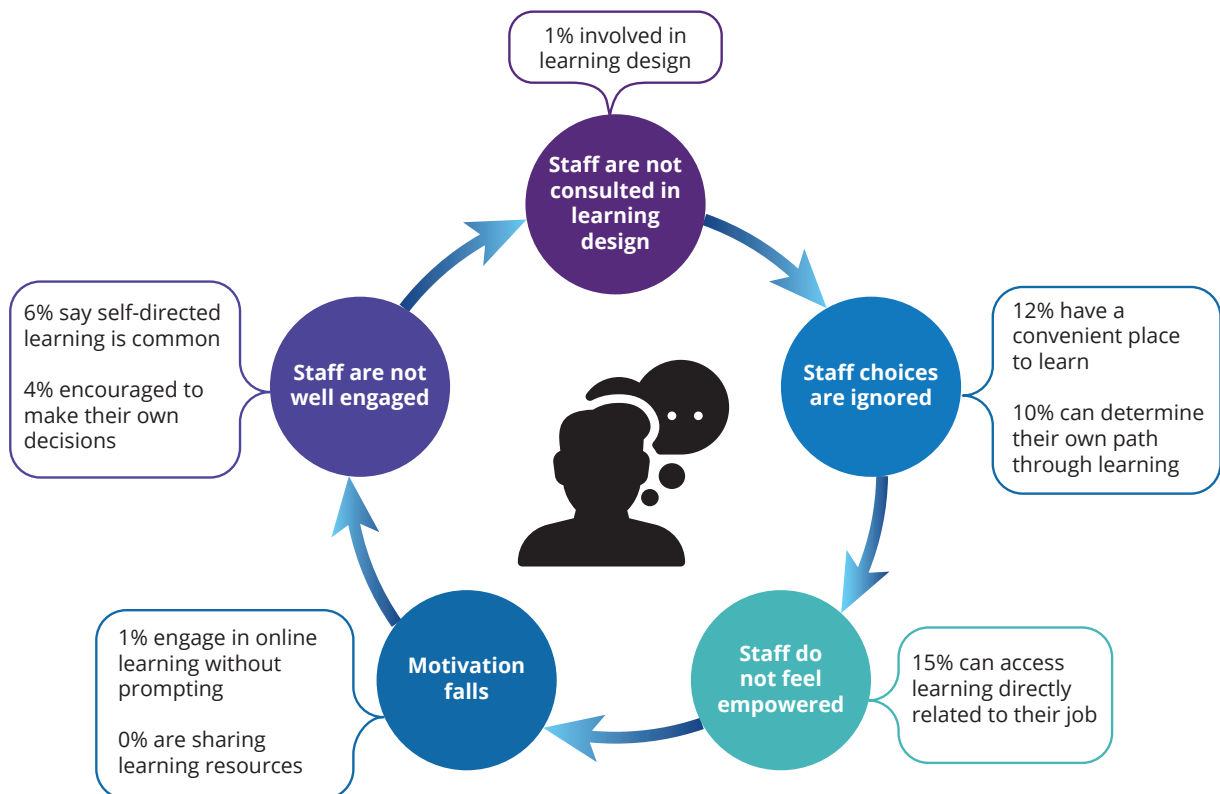
of L&D think that staff are not able to manage their own learning



Individuals considered 'recipients' not 'contributors'

At this stage, L&D perceive that staff are passive recipients of learning, inactive and not willing to be self-directed. In turn, they do not proactively involve individuals in decisions about learning – this could contribute to a downward spiral of learner engagement (Figure 5).

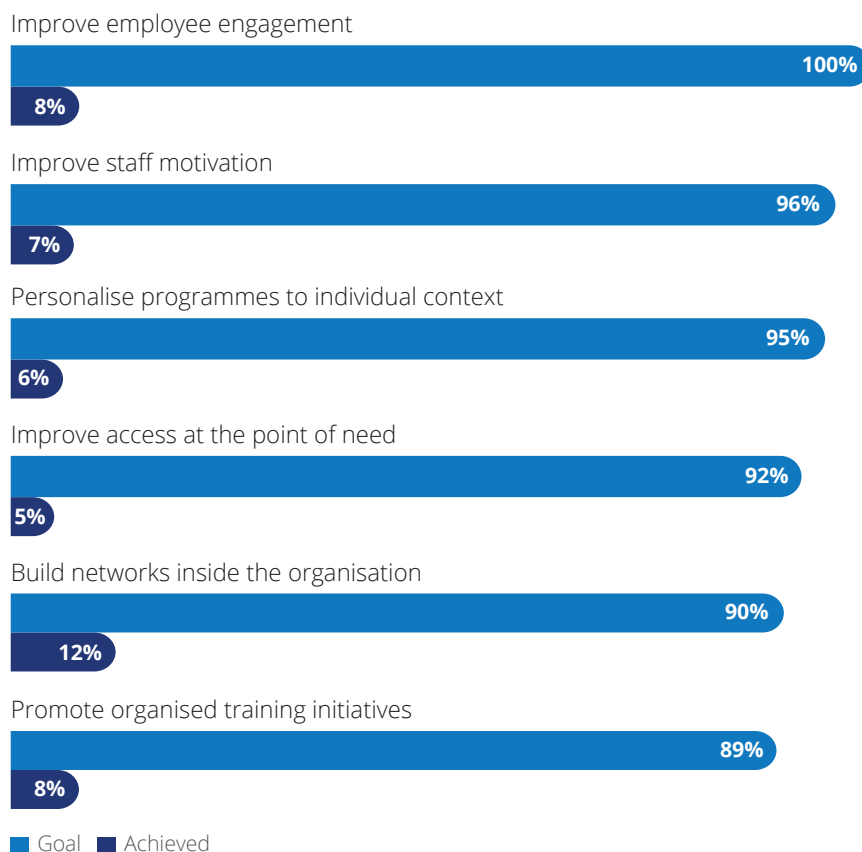
Figure 5. The downward spiral of learner engagement



% of those at this stage active in engaging learners

Increasing learner engagement and motivation are universal goals for L&D teams, but at this stage, the downward spiral of learner engagement means that few are achieving their goals (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Goals that remain out of reach



2.4 The business influence



Response-driven vs strategic planning

Whilst they are occupied delivering training courses, L&D departments are struggling with management commitment. That said, their strategy is not conducive to understanding or meeting the needs of the business:

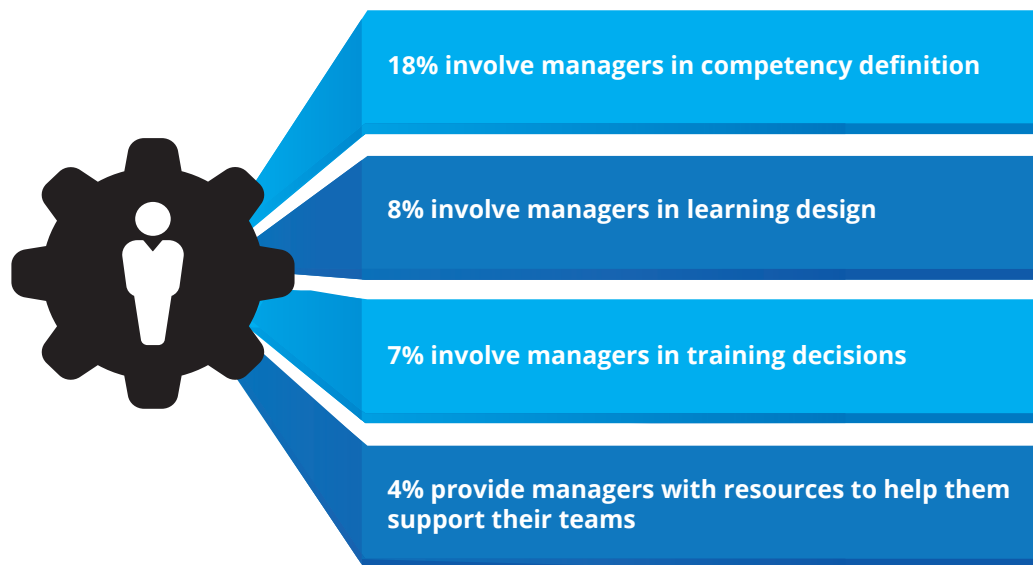
- > 5% define metrics or Key Performance Indicators for learning in partnership with senior management
- > 5% have a plan for how they are going to monitor and deliver against those targets

They are not well aligned with the business goals:

- > 19% agree that everyone on the L&D team understands the strategy, goals and plans of the business
- > 21% agree that L&D team activity is fully aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation

Senior managers are not endorsing the value of learning:

- > 15% of organisations assign board-level accountability for learning
- > 17% of senior managers demonstrate a commitment to learning

Figure 7. Involving managers in learning

What is more, communication is sparse and follow up is non-existent:

- > 0% collect feedback from line managers
- > 4% give feedback to line managers

Consequently, managers do not recognise the added value that learning professionals can bring to the organisation. No wonder that 62% of L&D leaders think that learning is not a management priority and that 68% think line managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning.

The conversations with business leaders have not even started.



Data-free decision making

There is limited evidence that L&D are using data to influence decision-making. They are not being proactive – even when it comes to decisions about how best to improve learning efficiency and achieve process improvements.

A contributing factor to a lack of management engagement is the limited use of evidence to influence decision making.

- > 15% have data analytic skills in-house

Without the skills in house to analyse data, they are not even reviewing their formal programmes or gathering and acting on learner feedback:

- > 10% regularly review programmes and check that they support and enhance organisational goals
- > 2% use performance data to measure and improve the impact of their programme
- > 5% routinely collect feedback from learners on the extent to which learning points have been **understood** and only 2% collect feedback on how that learning has been **applied**

It is therefore unsurprising that it is not until stage 3 on the transformation curve that some of the benefits related to the alignment of business and learning become apparent.

**Line managers are not involved**

Line managers can play such a critical part in ensuring that learning and sharing are at the core of their team culture but, at this stage, they have not been encouraged or included by learning professionals. Managers concentrate on what happens in the course and do not appreciate their own role in ensuring that learning is consolidated or that timely opportunities are given to practice and further develop new skills. Figure 7 shows how few L&D leaders involve managers in the learning process.

2.5 The pivot point for change

What does success look like at the Optimising Training stage?

Despite having the lowest TMI, efficiency improvements at this stage are often close to or exceeding benchmark values⁶ averaged across all of the stages. Harnessing technology to support learning has resulted in:

- > 31% cost reduction (33% benchmark)
- > 55% reduction in delivery time (48% benchmark)
- > 32% reduction in study time (39% benchmark)

Holding onto this initial flush of success could restrict future progress.

Why do we need to move on?

The data shows that L&D at this stage may be reaching the limit of efficiency improvements.

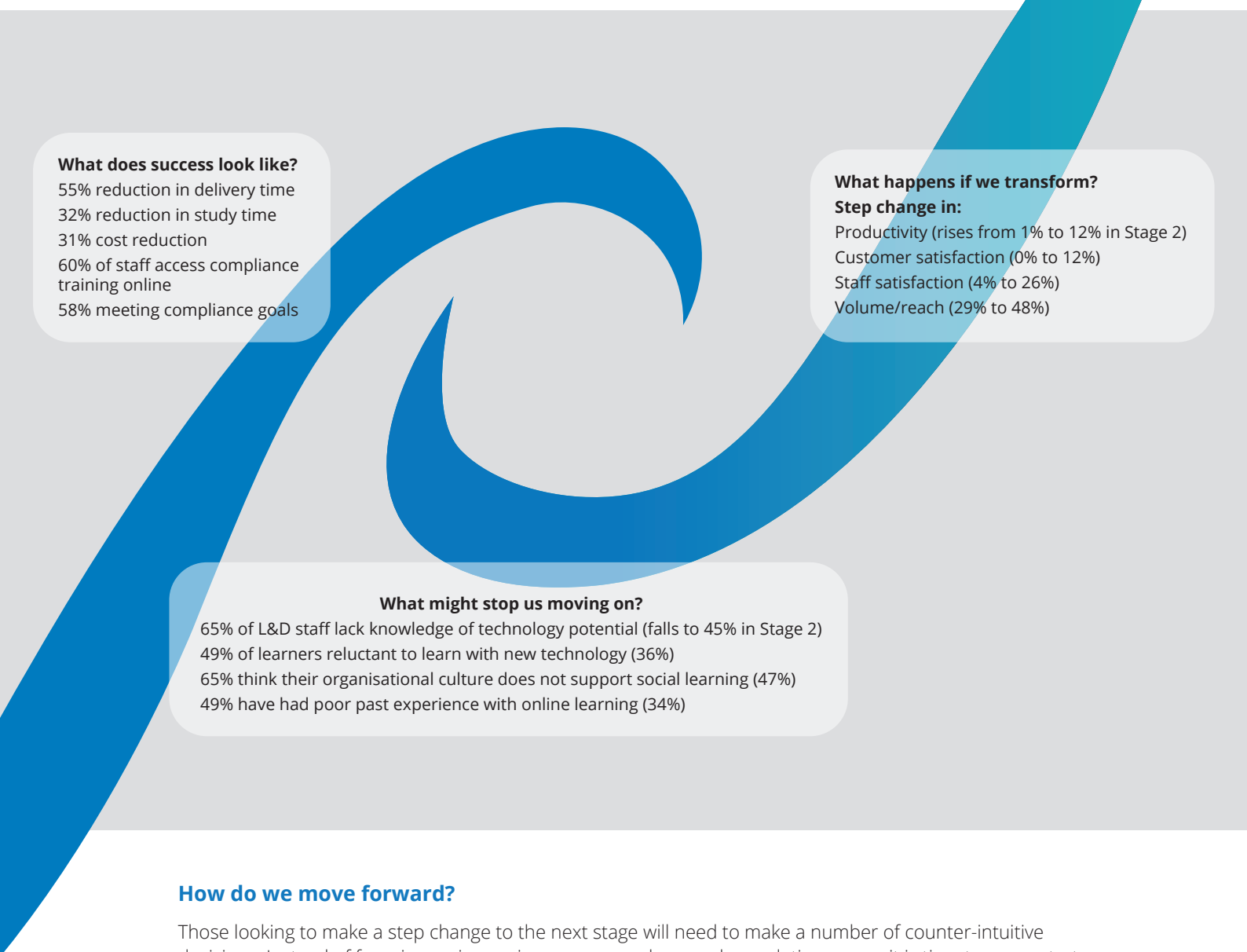
Training delivery time and cost have been decreasing. Course and compliance administration are strong but further improvements are progressively harder to achieve. Manager and learner engagement are static or declining and the lack of vision for technology is not helping to overcome reluctance on all sides (Figure 8). Above all, productivity and performance goals are nowhere near being met.

Doing more of the same is not an option.

Figure 8 also highlights that the barriers that seem insurmountable at Stage 1 fall dramatically in Stage 2. People become less reluctant to change and the culture becomes more open. This leads to a breakthrough in productivity improvement and increased satisfaction for both staff and customers.

⁶Benchmark value is the average improvement reported across 700+ organisations as a result of introducing technology over the last 3 years.

Figure 8. Optimising Training – the pivot points for change



How do we move forward?

Those looking to make a step change to the next stage will need to make a number of counter-intuitive decisions. Instead of focusing on improving course numbers and completion scores it is time to concentrate on what really matters to the business. This may mean being willing to let go of:

- > **Past successes:** what drives compliance goals doesn't always link to better engagement
- > **Hidden assets:** having big libraries in the LMS does not link back to adoption
- > **Fear of the unknown:** the perceived risks of introducing new technology *can* be turned into benefits

The next stage shows us that success is reliant on prioritising the needs of the business rather than purely driving efficiency in the training function.

In essence, this transition to the next stage is about:

Business first – not delivery first

In the next section, we explore how the governance, learning blend and roles and responsibilities evolve when L&D stop taking orders and start taking control.

3. Taking control

With TMI scores below average, L&D leaders are looking beyond efficiency to aligning learning and business and improving employee engagement. Their role is changing from ‘taking orders’ to ‘taking control’.

As Towards Maturity Index scores move up from the bottom quartile towards average, we see the rewards of the successful training department reflected in improving outcomes and greater consistency and quality of provision. With the switch from ‘delivery first’ to ‘business first’, alignment to business goals becomes a priority rather than course efficiency. Whilst awareness of the potential of technology has increased, L&D are still battling with their own lack of skills and lack of commitment from stakeholders. They are not gathering and using the evidence to make further improvement.

Reducing training costs and time away from the job not only helps business profitability and productivity but can potentially start to release L&D time and energy to direct their attention to other development. This might seem the stage when L&D are at their peak. There is a great choice of excellent learning content; learner engagement is rising and the workforce is becoming better qualified.

At the Taking Control stage, the emphasis is on harnessing technology to support both formal and social learning and extend the reach of their learning solutions.

3.1 Technology – the silver bullet

With early successes in the efficiency gains to be made from using technology to enhance formal programmes, L&D are now appreciating the benefits that technology can offer to further extend programme reach and reduce study time. Technology is seen as the answer to improving access, flexibility, choice and communications.

L&D are the most excited about technology at this stage compared with earlier or later on the journey. The proportion that is concerned about the pace of technological change is lower than at any other stage, before or after.



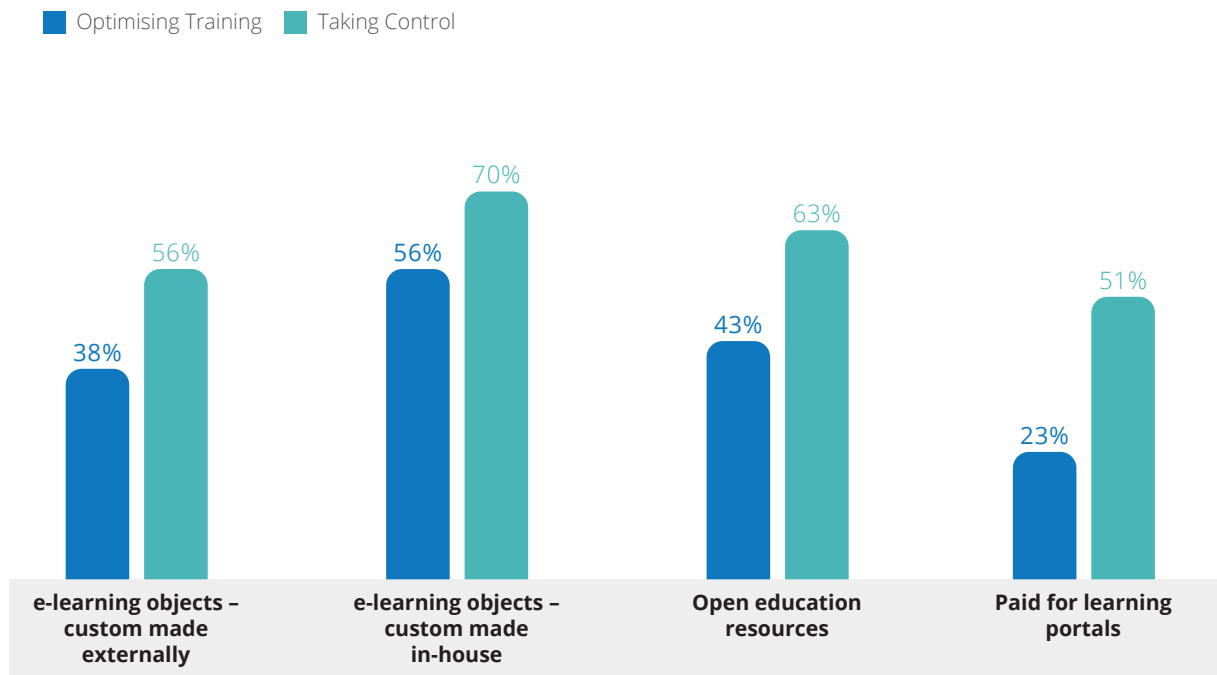
The number of technologies used in learning has almost doubled (from 12 to 21)



Increased blending with more technology

E-learning remains the most widely used technology (in 90% of organisations at this stage) and is still used most for mandatory courses, but as L&D build their online portfolio, they are increasing the use of video clips of effective practice, animations and better images, as well as text into the mix. Virtual meetings, webinars and live online communication tools are now widespread.

Over 51% of all learning content is developed in-house, although there is also a large increase in the proportion accessing both free and paid for external content (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Shifts in e-learning content

Greater flexibility and access to learning

Technology is opening more opportunities at the Taking Control stage.

L&D teams are looking to use more technology to support their formal learning offering :

- > 88% want to increase the amount of blended learning offered
- > 81% want to increase pure online learning

L&D teams are providing more choice in terms of range of provision, time and place of learning:

- > 45% of learners can access learning provision at times to suit them (up from 21% at the previous stage)
- > 62% specifically enable content for mobile devices (three times the previous level)

They are tackling more subjects in the blend:

- > 8 skills areas now e-enabled by over 50% of organisations (up from just 3 in the previous stage) including leadership and management

Specifically, they are more likely to be automating more of the transactional skills programmes:

- > 69% of health and safety courses are delivered online (up from 59%)
- > 64% of induction/onboarding programmes (up from 41%)

Improvements in reach, volume, quality and consistency at the optimising training stage has lulled L&D teams into a mindset that the more technology they include in the blend the better the results will be. As we shall see in later chapters, this is not the answer.

3.2 The campaign trail

By far the most important benefit that L&D leaders are seeing from the use of social media is for promotion of organised training initiatives – up from 8% at the previous stage to 35%.



Marketing campaigns designed to engage

L&D have made great efforts to raise awareness of their programmes. Their own skills in marketing and communications have improved and 34% have now provided their learning initiatives with a specific identity and brand.

The emphasis on e-learning courses and their distribution is beginning to shift to thinking how technology can help to connect people together. Indeed, those in L&D are setting up interest groups, joining external networks and building their own personal networks. As they grow in confidence in using these tools for themselves, so they are seeing their potential for improving communications with learners.

Use of social networks for informal learning in L&D is still at a very early stage, but there is a strong appetite to increase the proportion of social and informal learning in the blend.

3 in 5 L&D leaders are more aware that they need to shift to supporting learning in the workplace and 43% are starting to use models of learning that support learning in the workplace (e.g. 70:20:10). However, this awareness is not backed by action. Only 5% are blending learning approaches, NONE have started to introduce performance support to aid formal learning transfer, and only 7% are using available support systems to promote self-reliance.



59%

agree their
L&D role is
shifting from
learning
delivery to
supporting
continuous
learning



Security fears hold back sharing

However, there are major concerns that social networks are complex to support and prone to security problems. 83% of organisations now allow their use, but there is a clear preference for in-house systems where security can be more tightly controlled. This is a particular concern where L&D appreciate that almost half (46%) of all learning is taking place outside the formal remit of L&D and beyond their direct control.

Table 3. Shifts in use of social media in learning

	Optimising training	Taking control
Virtual meetings/webinars	68%	84%
Communications methods	61%	83%
VOIP communication	51%	75%
In-house/enterprise social networks	45%	59%
External social networking	22%	43%

Whilst L&D professionals are organising more opportunities for informal learning, **they are not really encouraging people to be social**. For example, only 35% have set up coaching and mentoring schemes and three in ten encourage learners to share experiences and solve problems together using social media.

- > Only 9% at this stage believe that staff know how to work together to productively connect and share knowledge
- > Only 15% of those wanting to increase the sharing of good practice have achieved their goal



Individuals believed to lack the skills to manage learning

Whilst there is a slight shift towards a culture of self-efficacy, 73% of L&D are of the opinion that their staff lack skills to manage their own learning. This viewpoint is not yet changing.

3.3 Upskilling the learning team

Skills in classroom delivery, learning administration and coaching have significantly improved since the previous stage, to the point where over seven in ten organisations have these skills in house. However, as L&D are starting to better understand the potential that technology can offer, there is a scramble to gain the skills to design, build and deliver online content, despite now using more external content.



Limited skill and confidence to leverage technology

With increasing technology in the blend, 25% of formal learning is now delivered using e-content or virtual classroom, and 51% of learning content is developed in house. However, the greatest barrier noted to progress at this stage is the **lack of L&D skills to manage and implement** technology-enabled programmes. Only 30% would agree that they understand the capabilities of their IT systems and only 40% are working closely with those in IT (both factors which increase considerably at the next stage).

- > 88% lack skills to design solutions to business advantage
- > 81% lack confidence in incorporating new media in learning design

63% report that their teams lack skills in using learning technologies. At this stage, despite noting these as priority skills for development only:

- > 32% have skills in online delivery
- > 34% have skills in digital content development
- > 23% have skills in supporting facilitation



Starting to invest in L&D capability

L&D leaders are taking a much more proactive approach to address the skills issues of their team, with 31% offering some form of online L&D professional skills training and 65% encouraging staff to take professional HR-related qualifications – both a considerable advance from the previous stage. They are at least moving in the right direction by making connections outside their organisation and reading more widely:

- > 76% are encouraged to join external networks and professional bodies
- > 30% keep up to date with learning theory
- > 29% research emerging technologies and their impact on outcomes
- > 43% use models that support learning in the workflow (e.g. 70:20:10) to help shape their approach

Skills in business acumen, communication and negotiation have significantly increased since the previous stage, which should start to improve the credibility of learning with stakeholders.

3.4 Business involvement



Increased management input on design

There is evidence that managers are getting more involved in learning at this stage. They are beginning to take more responsibility for the skills of their teams and being consulted during the design phase. Where we see a significant increase in manager involvement from the previous stage is in the definition of competency frameworks and learning design:

- > 31% are involved in learning design (up from 8%)
- > 41% are involved in competency definition (up from 18%)

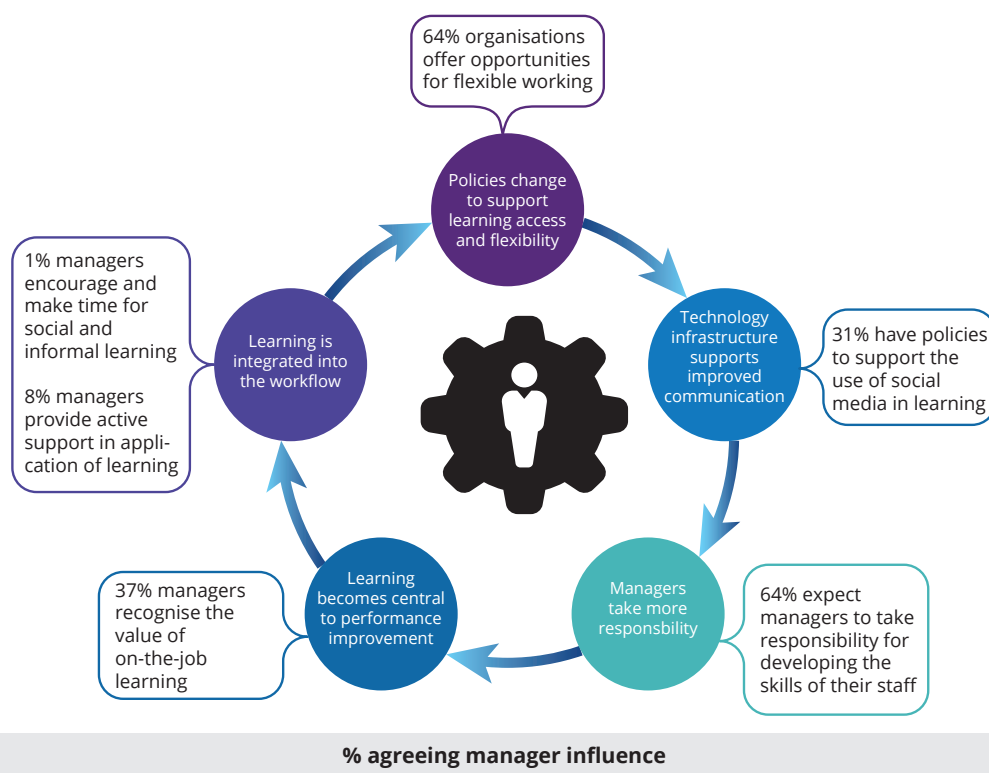
Line managers are seldom asked about the degree to which their staff apply the learning from formal programmes (5%). At this stage, learner reluctance to learn with technology is perceived to have fallen sharply (36% report this barrier, down from 49%), but senior managers are still playing catch-up. They are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning and working (52%).



Limited influence on learning culture

As communication with managers improve, we see an improvement in the policy environment with more managers taking responsibility for the skills of their staff. However, wider management decisions play a key role in influencing change and establishing an effective environment for learning. But the cycle of change in Figure 10 is getting stuck with managers failing to use their influence to support learning back in the workplace.

Figure 10. Management decisions that influence change





Increased business awareness but decisions still made in isolation

Despite L&D becoming more business-aware, there is little evidence of the effective use of data, analytics or even business leaders themselves influencing learning decisions. Although a higher proportion now *think about* targets, evaluation and learning metrics, they are not taking the steps needed to follow through (Figure 10). The implication is that whilst they are now framing solutions to address business needs they might be still making decisions on behalf of the business rather than with the business.



23%

identify
metrics in
partnership
with senior
managers

3.5 The pivot point of change

What does success look like at this stage?

The increase in achievement of benefits from the previous stage is an indicator that the shifting focus from 'delivery first' to 'business first' is paying dividends. Application of new approaches has improved productivity, staff and customer satisfaction:

- > 38% see an improvement in customer satisfaction (up from 18% in the previous stage)
- > 45% see improvement in compliant *behaviours* rather than just proof of course completion (up from 28%)
- > 33% see a better qualified workforce (up from 12%)
- > There is an average productivity improvement of 12% (up from 1%)

Evaluation metrics are being used to measure training efficiency, qualification outcomes, and prove compliance. Improvement in these metrics masks the fact that performance is not being measured against business improvement measures.

Learner motivation is also rising (from 7% to 23%) as is the ability to personalise content (from 6% to 22%). L&D are enhancing their brand and reputation (up from 7% to 32%) and delivering greater value for money (up from 16% to 30%).

Why do we need to move on?

The successes are compelling but the vision of becoming a learning organisation is not yet a reality.

Learners are not well engaged. Attempts to introduce elements of gamification (15%) or achievement goals (22%) are hindered by a lack of design and development skills.

The rapid increase in the use of technology in learning may cause issues for the IT department if they are not fully on board with the direction of travel.

In large multi-site organisations, a proliferation of learning administration systems and local technology platforms have not delivered. With the first extension of learning to contractors, freelancers and temporary staff, there is pressure to extend learning to suppliers, customers and service users and the extended enterprise. However, with this comes a greater fear of losing control of the corporate infrastructure and the systems and processes are creaking at the seams.

We need to move on if we want to reduce time to competency and increase agility for our wider audience. The next stage shows us this is possible (Figure 11).

It's time for another step change.

Figure 11. Taking Control – the pivot points for change

What does success look like?

68% report better proof of compliance
 45% improve compliant behaviour
 43% increased volume of training
 42% reduced training costs

What happens if we transform?**Step change in:**

Ability to roll out new IT systems
 (from 14% to 38%)
 Reduction in time to competency
 (20% to 35%)
 Increase in compliance completion rates
 (from 72% to 81%)

What might stop us moving on?

63% of L&D staff lack skills (falls to 45%)
 58% of L&D say learning is not a management priority (38%)
 49% think mobile and social learning are too complex to support (33%)

How do we move forward?

Instead of concentrating on improving productivity, those at the next stage are examining the business and technical environment, the context for learning and building the trust of all stakeholders. Transformation will mean making some counter-intuitive decisions, and being willing to let go of:

- > **Control:** making decisions on behalf of learners does not lead to better engagement
- > **Ownership:** recognition that learning is occurring naturally in the workplace means releasing the sense of ownership that current management systems have established
- > **Technology:** rather than seek the silver bullet of the latest technology, we need to address its application in elegant ways that make sense to individuals.

In essence, the transition to the next stage is about:

Environment, context and trust

It takes the first two stages to realise the benefits related to business alignment. These benefits really kick-in in the third stage. The next step change will shift the understanding of how learning sits in a wider context in the workplace.

4. Letting go

As TMI scores move above average, the focus moves to learning in the context of work and the role of L&D shifts from delivery to facilitation. Successful organisations at this stage are integrating learning into day-to-day work and implementing the systems to make this frictionless.

People are starting to 'walk the walk' about organisational learning.

With the shift from being in control of learning to enabling others, L&D start to ensure that their time and resources are applied to what really matters to the business, helping it to perform and be productive. With over 95% seeking benefits relating to greater business agility:

- > 30% agree they provide a faster response to changing business conditions (up from 9% in stage 2)
- > 42% report faster rollout of new IT applications (up from 27%)

With greater trust and empowerment, learners are becoming more self-directed and in control of the pace and path of formal learning. The barriers to learning access and flexibility are being broken down.

- > 57% of learners can access learning directly relevant to their job (up from 31% at stage 2)
- > 35% can determine their own path through a programme of learning (17%)

4.1 Listening to business



Outcomes first

At stage 3, learning is not only seen as an L&D function but as an organisational responsibility that spans all roles. L&D are becoming more in tune with the business vision, goals and priorities, and are working to support those outcomes:

- > 80% agree that learning initiatives support the skills the business needs (up from 57%)
- > 76% analyse the business problem before recommending a solution (47%)

L&D are starting to *listen* to business and improve communication and act on feedback (Figure 12).

- > 35% give feedback of learning success to managers
- > 39% provide learning resources to managers to help them support their teams
- > 67% review their programmes regularly to ensure they still meet business needs (39%)

As a result, two in three business leaders now recognise that learning interventions are aligned with the business plan (66% vs 33% from the last stage).



76% of the L&D team understand the strategy, goals and plans of the business



Increasing management commitment to on-the-job learning

Learning is gaining substantial ground in the minds of managers and becoming more of a priority (only 38% don't see learning as a management priority, down from 58% in the last stage). This change is due in part to the L&D team connecting better to the business outcomes, processes and needs (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Working with managers to define success



Set out the goals – 43% identify metrics in partnership with senior managers (up from 23% at stage 2)

Plan how to get there – 48% have a plan (27%)

Measure achievement – 27% measure these metrics (6%)

Communicate success – 50% report against learning targets (19%)

Business leaders involvement in learning design (up from 31% last stage to 56%) and in training decisions (22%, up from 8%) has improved their commitment to learning.

- > 52% of senior managers demonstrate a commitment to learning (up from 29% at the last stage)

However, many line managers are still perceived as reluctant to encourage new ways of learning and work:

- > 59% of line managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning (61%)

This has hindered some of the efforts to promote continuous learning and embed social learning in the fabric of the organisation. Out of the 97% wanting to facilitate new ways of working at this stage, only 26% achieve it. Similarly, only 20% have successfully integrated learning into the workflow.

4.2 Changing behaviour



Focus on learning application

Employee engagement with learning is improving (42% up from 17%), as is the application of formal learning in the workplace. 66% of learning designs now include activities to help individuals practice the desired outcomes (up from 29%). In the previous stage only 1 in 3 include activities in formal learning design to help individuals practice desired outcomes - this has more than doubled.

As a result:

- > 33% have increased the speed of learning application in the workplace (up from 16% in stage 2)
- > 32% agree that staff quickly put what they learn into practice (up from 16%)

Importantly, the attitude of those in L&D has once again shifted with 78% now appreciating that formal courses are not the only answer for building skills and performance.

One in three organisations (33%) are now using performance data to measure change and improve the impact of their programme. Feedback is, at last, becoming a two-way process. However there is little evidence that analytics are being used to support programme improvements.

- > 42% routinely collect information on the extent to which learning points have been understood (up from 20% in stage 2)
- > 41% provide learners with real-time feedback on progress (12%)



66%

**agree formal
learning
includes actions
to practice
desired
outcomes**



Technology used to target people skills

At this stage only 45% of formal learning is delivered face to face and is increasingly becoming more people-focused. What is more, technology is now as likely to be used to support the development of soft skills as technical skills and is part of a blended approach.

- > 75% Leadership and management skills include online learning
- > 67% Communication and interpersonal skills
- > 66% Employee wellbeing/health
- > 64% Customer handling
- > 60% Teamwork

To support these blends at this stage we see a jump in the use of more in-house development and creative use of video (Figure 13).

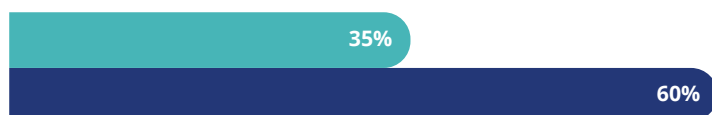


Figure 13. Increase in use of video in formal learning

Video content - best practice within our organisation



Video content - best practices outside our organisation



Interactive video



■ Taking Control ■ Letting Go

4.3 Supporting performance



The course is no longer considered the only option

L&D are starting to think about learning in the context of the work environment. L&D and managers alike are realising the importance of informal learning and looking to how they can better support performance on the job, as well as collaborative knowledge building through the use of content curation, job aids and social media.

There is finally a culture shift in favour of supporting social and informal learning, with over half of L&D leaders now encouraging staff to share and learn together.

Managers are beginning to recognise the importance of on-the-job learning (63%) although only 46% of L&D have skills in house to actively supporting ongoing workplace performance.

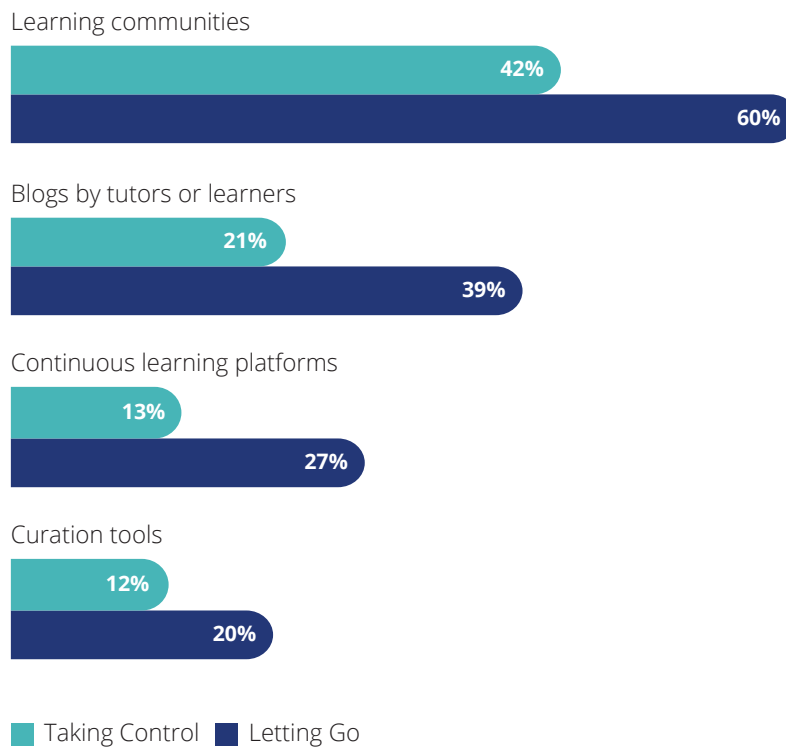
Increased support networks for individuals

Technology is now helping people become more connected. With more use of learning communities and continuous learning platforms (Figure 14), learners are being encouraged to participate in designing learning, building resources and solving problems together online.



56%

encourage learners to share experiences and solve problems using online social media tools

Figure 14. Technology to support informal learning

Individuals have a voice

As L&D build their facilitation skills, their role shifts to ensuring that learners have access to the tools and technologies – and people – that can help them. Coaching and mentoring are now offered in two in three (64%) organisations.

What's more:

- > L&D involve learners in the design of the most appropriate learning approach (33% up from 12% in the last stage)
- > L&D are more proactive in understanding how their people currently learn what they need to do their job (39% up from 8%)

However, perceived reluctance by users to learn with new technology has gone up from 36% to 53%, which may be due to an increase in the use of technology or to a bigger push from the organisation and management to embrace new working methods.



Focus on supporting performance

With L&D embracing the shifting nature of their function, learners are increasingly given permission to take more responsibility. L&D teams are starting to facilitate this, however, permission doesn't automatically lead to action:

- > 47% help people locate in-house experts when they need them (up from 23%)
- > 34% support career aspirations with technology-enabled learning (up from 7%)

L&D still fear that learners are not quite ready to take ownership just yet, due in part to not appreciating how people actually learn best:

- > 72% still do not think their staff know how to work together to productively connect and share knowledge
- > 67% build a culture of dependency on the available support systems rather than fostering self-reliance

Whilst learners are more self-directed (28% of organisations say this is common practice) and 24% engage in online learning without prompting, both these proportions are still very low and as a result only:

- > 11% of learners contribute learning resources to share with others
- > 24% of learners would recommend technology-enabled learning to others to improve job performance

The transition for learners from recipients to contributors is beginning to take effect. While the rewards are not yet visible, with only 32% of learners putting what they know into practice quickly, in the next stage.

4.4 Enabling the enablers



Increased confidence and skill to engage with business

There is a drive to increase the skills of the L&D team. Significantly more teams have access to CPD and technology-enabled formal learning for their own skills, and L&D staff are encouraged to join networks and interest groups and spend time in the operational lines of business (up to 76% from 44% in the previous stage).



63%

**use technology
to support L&D
professional
skills
programmes**

Figure 15. Shift in L&D skills and confidence**Confidence is growing in engaging with business**

Business acumen



Negotiation/persuasion



Learning strategy

**Strengthening the core skills**

Project management



Teaching and assessment



Information management

**Smarter with increasing technology use**

Implementing blended learning



Taking control
 Letting go

Figure 15 illustrates the largest areas of increase in L&D skills since the previous stage.

Classroom trainers are now more involved in improving blended learning design, and we see a large increase in the number of organisations that recognise that the blended programme is not simply a question of topping and tailing a classroom course with e-learning, but involves a range of learning approaches to help cement understanding and practice skills.

- > 67% involve classroom trainers in the design process of blended learning (up from 33% in the last stage)
- > 48% integrate learning technologies into face-to-face training (12%)
- > 35% blend several different learning approaches (5%)

However, there is still a marked lack of future planning when it comes to prioritising skills for the L&D professional with only 40% having actually audited the skills of their L&D staff against those required.



Shift to a performance consulting approach

Digital confidence is slowly increasing and L&D staff are working smarter with other professionals and feel ready for change. 73% believe the role of L&D is shifting from that of learning delivery to supporting continuous learning, although fewer than one in four (23%) achieve this stated goal and improvement does not really become obvious until the next stage.

Digital confidence also means L&D staff are working more closely with those in the IT department and better understand the capacity and the capabilities of the organisation's technology systems for supporting learning and development. This reduces the proportion that report that the IT infrastructure is a barrier to progress.



73%

**believe the
role of L&D
is shifting
to support
continuous
learning**

4.5 The pivot point of change

What does success look like at this stage?

L&D spend more time in the operational areas of the business, they are building stakeholder engagement and improving the value that they are adding back to the business.

Learner engagement has more than doubled (up from 17% to 42% achieving this goal). Time to competence has reduced dramatically (up from 20% to 35% achieving this goal). Compliance completion rates have reached a new high of 81%.

Levels of achievement of benefits have increased significantly – 52% have improved the induction process; 62% have increased learning access and flexibility and 58% have improved the quality of learning through technology. Communications are better, people are beginning to gain the confidence to share their knowledge and skills and stakeholders are better informed and engaged.

As more managers agree that learning is delivering benefits for the business, they are also seeing that learning offers better value for money.

Why do we need to move on?

As each stakeholder is doing so well it is hard to justify the need to transform, let alone actually take action. Yet, while success is evident at this stage, it is the disjointed nature of engagement that may lead to stagnation – if not decline. L&D have built their skills but need to commit to a transformative agenda for the organisation as well as learning. The link between learning and business outcomes hasn't yet been solidified in the mind of top managers/stakeholders and whilst the evidence for change is stacking up it is not yet being used. Learners are keen to take ownership but are not getting the encouragement they need.

What is needed is the holistic picture, which cannot be achieved by celebrating siloed successes by key stakeholders. The chance is there but is not being taken.

Figure 16. Letting go – the pivot points for change

What does success look like?

62% increased learning access and flexibility
58% reduced time away from the job
58% improved the quality of learning
52% improved induction/onboarding process

What happens if we transform?

Step change in:

Ability to speed up the rollout of new IT applications (from 38% to 53%)
Increased organisational productivity through learning interventions (12% to 24%)
Reduced staff turnover (from 5% to 18%)
Increased customer satisfaction (from 19% to 24%)

What is stopping us moving on?

38% of L&D say learning is not a management priority (24%)
46% reluctance by senior managers to encourage new ways of working (21%)
55% unreliable ICT infrastructure (42%)

It's time for another step change.

How do we move forward?

Having built up the trust and commitment of stakeholders now is the time to look at organisational learning and development as a shared responsibility. The next stage is not about stepping back and leaving the leadership to others, but in breaking through the barriers that are still getting in the way of lasting change. We need to let go of:

- > **Fear of failure:** taking risks, making mistakes and working out loud DOES lead to sharing, progress and recognition
- > **Traditional concepts of return on investment:** the desire to prove worth can hold us back from delivering strategic value
- > **Siloed thinking:** holistic experience for staff means that we need to challenge traditional HR and business silos

Digital transformation is as much about the people as the technology. Now is the time to break through and join the Top Deck.

In essence, this transition to the next stage is about:

Sharing responsibility

In the next section, business and learning leaders sharing responsibility opens the way forward to the largest step change yet in terms of business outcomes and achievement of goals.

5. Sharing responsibility

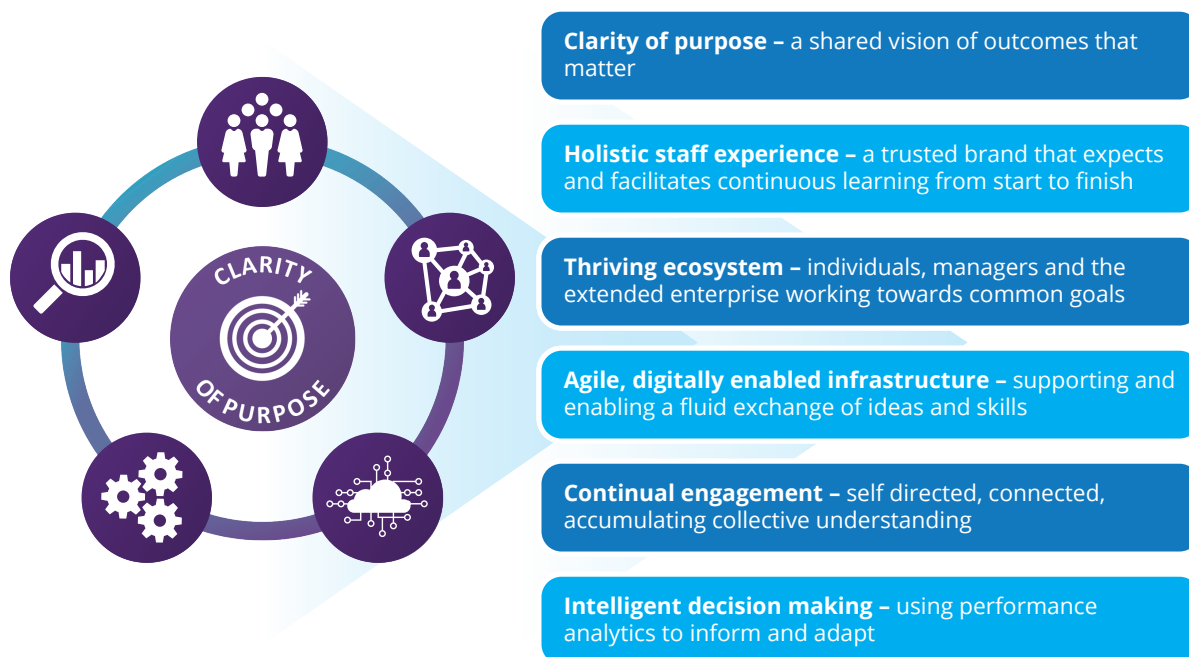
Those in the top 10% of the TMI show business and learning leaders starting to share responsibility for the way that the organisation continually learns and adapts. This stage is not the ultimate destination but the means of equipping the business for continual change and growth.

Top Deck organisations show us how learning innovation can really deliver. Compared with the rest of the sample overall they report:



Previous research has highlighted that despite the diversity of **Top Deck** organisations, they share characteristics of the New Learning Organisation⁷ (Figure 17) that lead to these results.

Figure 17. New Learning Organisation



In this chapter, we look at the **Top Deck** in detail to explore how each of the 6 dimensions has shifted again to create this critical transformation phase. However, the journey towards maturity is never complete and we highlight the areas where there is still room for improvement.

⁷<https://www.towardsmaturity.org/learningorg2017> for a detailed look at the characteristics that define the New Learning Organisation

5.1 Smart Decisions

Clarity of purpose – shared purpose across the business – sits at the heart of the New Learning Organisation and at this stage we see responsibility for learning shift from L&D to a place of mutual decision making.



Shared focus on outcomes

Business and L&D leaders at this stage are more likely to work **together** to identify the business outcomes associated learning and therefore support the learning process.

- > 88% agree that senior managers with L&D to define what KPIs to improve (up from 43% at the last stage)
- > 82% form a steering group with stakeholders to inform learning decisions (51%)

What is more, L&D is more likely to keep them in the loop, with **55%** regularly communicating performance impact to line managers and supervisors (up from 35% in the previous stage). This communication has a significant influence on building a learning culture and should be an ongoing area of focus.



Use analytics to inform AND fine-tune

Not only do business and L&D work together to make learning decisions, there is also a significant increase in the use of data to inform those decisions. Whilst this is still an area for improvement, **Top Deck** organisations are **over twice as likely to not only gather data but use it to improve services**.

- > 68% track performance data to increase the impact of the learning programme (up from 33% at the last stage)
- > 52% actively use benchmarking as a tool to improve service (25%)

5.2 Mutual accountability

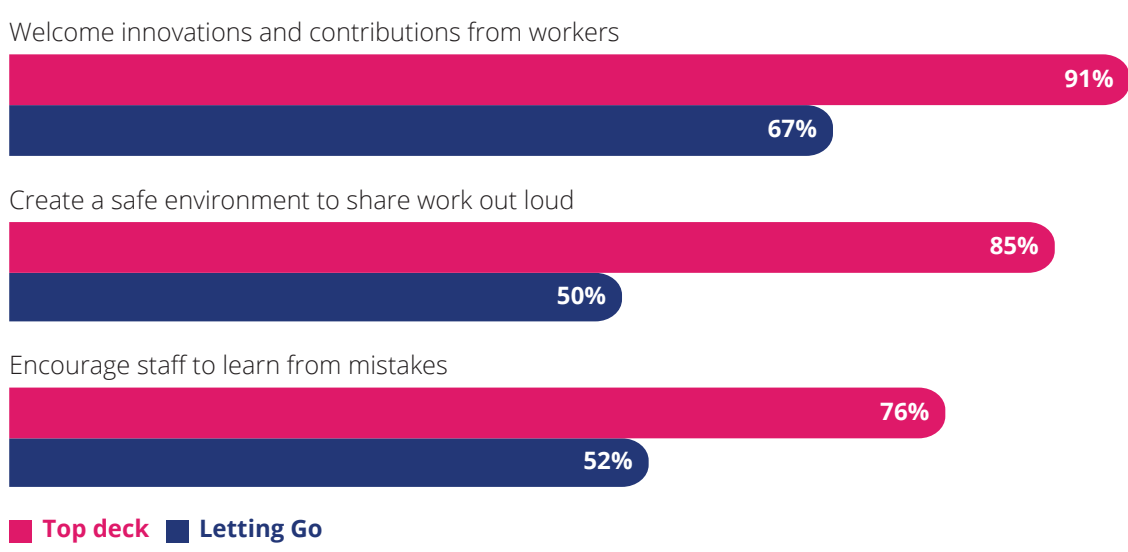
In the **Top Deck**, managers, individuals and L&D are more likely to work together, with a mutual accountability for learning and growing together.



Managers help create a culture of permission

Figure 18 shows that managers are not only active in ensuring formal learning is more successful (88% discuss aims and objectives of learning with team members vs 48% in the previous stage) but they also support an environment where individuals have permission to share.

Figure 18. Creating a culture of permission



Individuals become connected contributors

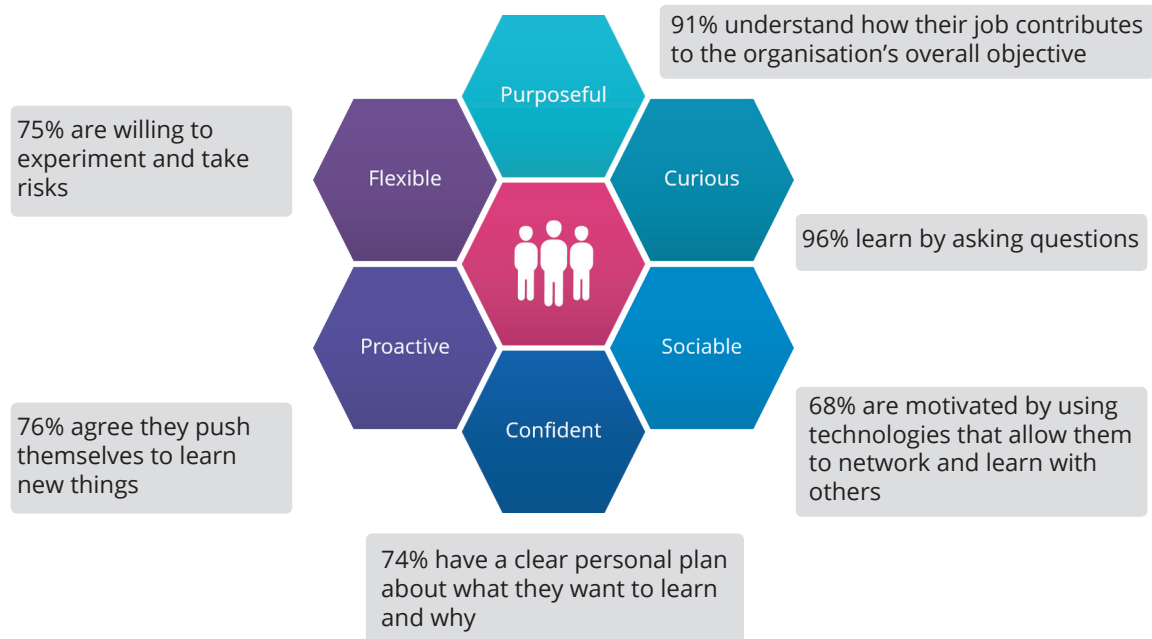
At this stage, we see that **71%** of learning professionals agree their staff know how to work together to productively connect and share knowledge (up from 28%).

L&D are tuning into the voice of their staff at this stage and their understanding is coming into line with how staff actually learn for themselves.

76% of L&D are proactive in listening to their staff

Figure 19 highlights insights from over 10,000 workers and shows that staff are more engaged, connected and are finding ways to adapt and contribute to the changing world of work.

Figure 19. How the modern worker learns



The Towards Maturity Learning Landscape has been tracking these modern worker characteristics – they consistently correlate to organisational outputs.

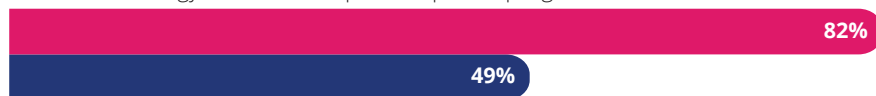


L&D underpin rather than interfere

The L&D team in **Top Deck** organisations focus on culture change to deliver the new learning organisation. Figure 20 shows that they are using their formal learning programmes to model change for managers and leaders – embedding more technology into the process. They communicate more and are starting to help staff to connect and share at their point of need.

Figure 20. Enabling the learning culture

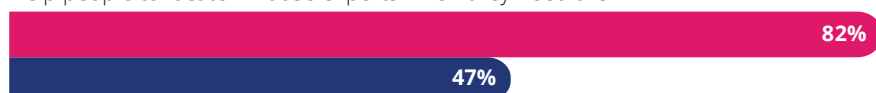
Embed technology into leadership development programmes



Encourage learners to solve problems together



Help people to locate inhouse experts when they need them



Have a communication plan for all stakeholders


■ Top deck
 ■ Letting Go
**Digitally enabled culture of sharing**

All organisations at this stage are using live online learning such as VOIP tools, webinars and communication tools. The **Top Deck** are also prioritising the skills they need internally to support sharing. Like others at earlier stages, they recognise their weakness in facilitating collaboration, the difference is that 44% of the **Top Deck** have set this as a priority area for skills development **now**, with fewer than 6% putting these skills off until later (compared to 38% at the previous stage).

**Holistic user experience**

Formal programmes are still important but Figure 21 shows how at this stage the emphasis is on behaviour change, literally by design! In programme development outcomes always come first!

Figure 21. Embedding formal learning in behaviour

Identify actions needed up-front to achieve business outcomes



Include activities to practice outcomes



Develop challenging stretch tasks to embed learning in behaviour


■ Top Deck
 ■ Letting Go

The **Top Deck** put less emphasis on formal or informal learning and more on supporting the continual learning experience.

5.3 What's next?

The barriers that have been slowing down progress are diminishing in Top Deck organisations. Table 4 shows how some of the more significant barriers shift from the previous stage.

Table 4. Shifting barriers

Percentage agreeing with each statement	Letting Go	Top Deck	Shift
Senior manager reluctance	46%	21%	↓
Line manager reluctance	59%	36%	↓
Culture does not support social learning	26%	18%	↓
Staff do not have the time to share	37%	18%	↓

The **Top Deck** do not have all the answers. In truth, even those with the maximum TMI are still battling to achieve all of their goals and are facing their own challenges. **What we do know is that compared to the bottom quartile they are at least 3x likely to achieve business outcomes:**

3x Efficiency

4x Process

5x Performance

7x Agility

9x Culture

Top Deck learning leaders are on a journey but they are working with the business to deliver common goals. They have optimised their training processes, taken control of the relationships and technology, let go of all of the responsibility for learning within the business and instead stepped up to share responsibility with business leaders to create a culture of continual learning.

They are better equipped for change and ready for the next stage of transformation, whatever that might be.

6. Stepping Up

The Transformation Curve highlights how to become a new learning organisation, one equipped and ready to deliver growth, productivity, performance and change. Fifteen years of research has shown us what's possible, however, learning transformation is a continual process that starts with taking action. Will you step up to the challenge?

Six questions to help you take the next step on YOUR transformation journey:

1. Where are you now?

- a. Where do you want to be this time next year?
- b. What are you holding onto that could be holding you back?

2. How can you listen fiercely?

- a. To your managers? They are crucial to change
- b. To your staff? They will help you engage

3. What do you need to let go?

- a. What ideas in this study are counter-intuitive to you?
- b. What new ideas will you embrace?

4. How can you use data?

- a. To open new conversations with business leaders?
- b. To challenge thinking?

5. How can L&D teams get ready for change?

- a. How can you use this report to build courage and overcome fear?
- b. How can you use this evidence to generate action?

6. What specific actions do you need to take TODAY to make 2018 a year of transformation?

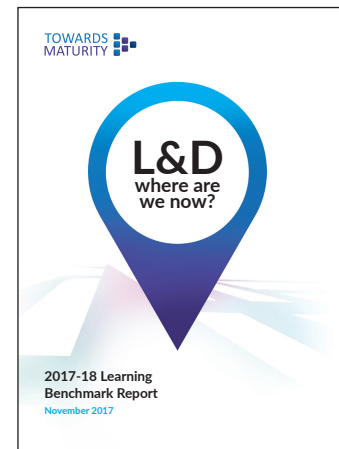
Appendix

The 2017 data sample

L&D professionals with responsibility for implementing learning technologies in the workplace were invited to participate in a two-part online review between August 2016 and July 2017. Respondents represent organisations of all sizes and with all levels of maturity and experience.

The research methodology and 2017 data sample are described in the Appendix to *L&D: Where are we now?*

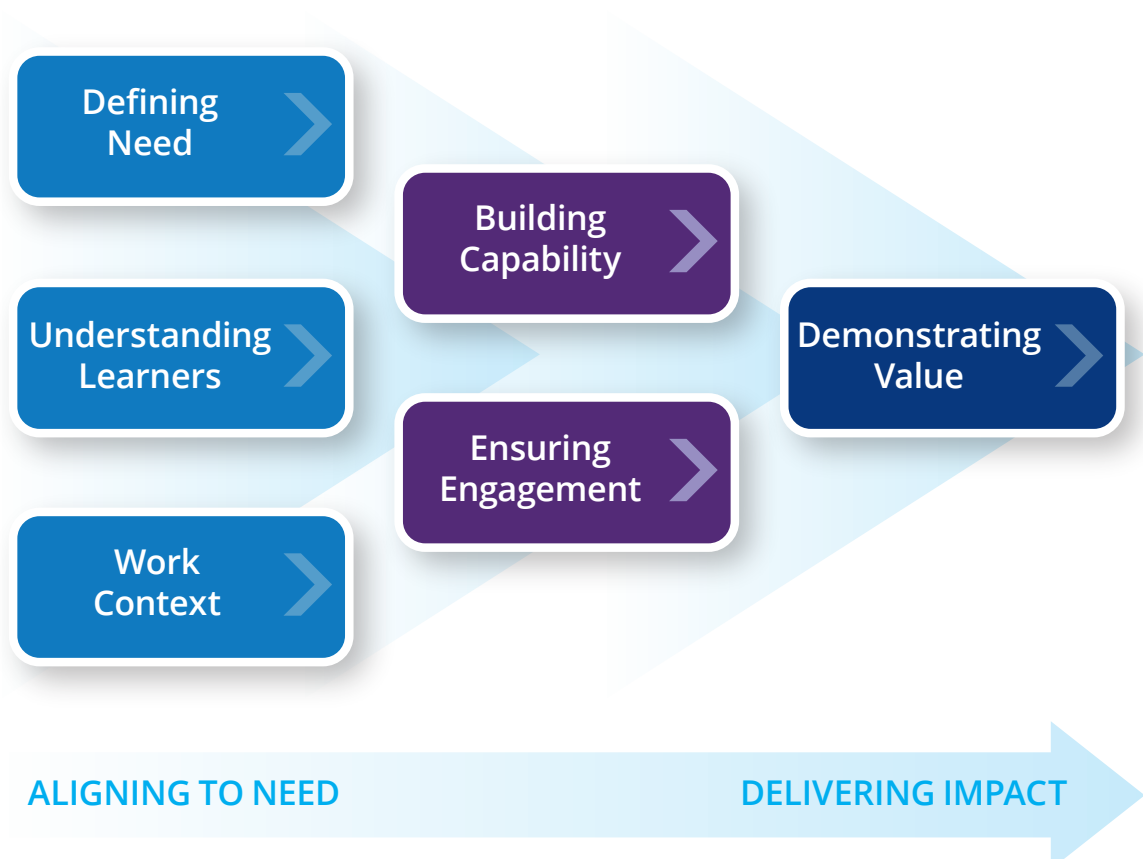
www.towardsmaturity.org/learningtoday2017



The Towards Maturity Model

Since 2003 we have worked with 6,500+ organisations taking part in the Towards Maturity Benchmark research to help them accelerate their performance, embrace change and unlock their potential. We have refined and tested six workstreams of effective practice which collectively entwine to help improve learning innovation and impact in the workplace.

Figure 22. Towards Maturity Model



New analysis has further strengthened the resulting Towards Maturity Model (see *L&D: Where are we now?* for more details) to the point where it can provide a single measure that can reliably predict the outputs from L&D in terms of efficiency, performance and agility.



The **Towards Maturity Index™** (TMI) is the single score from 1 – 100 that each organisation completing their Benchmark review receives to benchmark the maturity of their learning strategy against the workstreams of the Towards Maturity Model.

Over 700 L&D leaders went through the Benchmark review process in the past year. Their TMI shows a very strong positive correlation with the number of benefits sought that are being achieved – organisations with a high TMI report greater programme impact and benefits.

The four stages described in this report are defined by TMI scores:

- > **Optimising training: TMI scores in the bottom quartile**
- > **Taking control: TMI scores in the third quartile (below average)**
- > **Letting go: TMI scores between average and the boundary for the top decile**
- > **Sharing responsibility: TMI scores in the top decile**

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In a faster, more complex world than ever before, LEO sits alongside organisations to help them move learning to the heart of their business strategy. With an unrivalled combination of experience, expertise and capability, we design and deliver a strategic mix of world-class multi-device learning content, media, tools, and platforms. This enables us to deliver end-to-end learning architectures that fit seamlessly into global businesses and transform performance.
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Founding Ambassador

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. There is a lot of talk about the L&D department of the future and its role - measuring performance and aligning strategies more with business goals. There is a long way to go, but by working with Towards Maturity and being part of such a great group of industry leaders, we know we will get there.
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About Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity is a benchmarking and research organisation that helps people professionals around the world make smart, data-driven decisions that result in lasting change.

The Towards Maturity Benchmark™ questions are based on the framework of effective practice – to find out more about this and Towards Maturity's Model visit: www.towardsmaturity.org/model

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Group VP & L&D Brambles

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