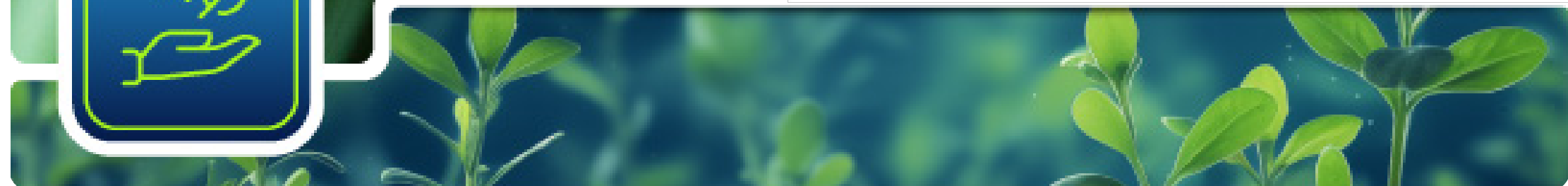




How to Help Your L&D Team Thrive

A tactical playbook for business leaders

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Contents and Introduction

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“

[L&D] programs both ensure that employees have the skills and capabilities necessary to do their jobs well, and demonstrate to those employees that their employers believe they are worth investing in—ultimately boosting company culture and fostering greater commitment to the organization.”

Source: [Harvard Business Review](#)



INTRODUCTION

Building a thriving culture of learning is a powerful investment in your organization's growth. When your Learning and Development (L&D) team is properly supported and resourced, they enable learners to deepen their skills, enhance their knowledge, foster a strong company culture, and improve business performance.

But all too often, leadership fails to set these teams up for success. They may focus solely on L&D software while overlooking staffing and resourcing needs—or vice-versa. Even when leaders invest significantly in their hiring and software needs, they may fail to properly align those teams with company goals and objectives.

Whatever the case, the impact is clear. When leadership fails to properly resource and align L&D teams, they risk missing out on the groundbreaking benefits of effective learning, including increased learner retention, bolstered efficiency, and deeper skill sets.

While there isn't a catchall solution to organizational success with L&D, there are key building blocks you can assemble to set up a successful learning foundation.

Use this guide to take stock of your overall L&D strategy, from the e-learning tools you use to the company goals you set.

Plus, get actionable tactics for filling any gaps— all to maximize the return on investment (ROI) in your L&D team.





Level-Set for L&D Goals

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WHEN L&D GOALS MISS THE MARK

Measuring success is a common challenge among L&D teams. Two major issues often cause this:

1. There's misalignment between L&D goals and overall company goals
2. Because of this, the wrong projects are assigned to L&D teams—often, projects that have less impact on the organization's goals

The effect of this disconnect can be monumental, setting L&D teams up to fail before they've created a single course. The good news? These issues are preventable and lie largely in the hands of company leadership.

So, how can your leadership team manage better outcomes? First, you must clearly communicate your goals to L&D leaders to ensure organizational change occurs. Meanwhile, develop a baseline understanding of what can—and should—be solved through L&D efforts.

Second, you can work with your L&D team to align their success metrics with those of the overall organization. This can allow you to more effectively advocate for the L&D team's work and provide deeper visibility into the ways that the L&D team's work contributes to the company's success.

These efforts don't just make progress easier to track. They pave the way for effective learning experiences that drive true organizational results—the ultimate value-driver of an L&D team.

“

L&D functions often face an overload of initiatives and insufficient funding. L&D leadership needs to maintain an ongoing discussion with business leaders about initiatives and priorities to ensure the requisite resources and support.”

Source: McKinsey & Co.

WHAT CAN YOUR L&D TEAM SOLVE?

Training can be a powerful solution to many organizational problems. However, it's not a silver bullet for every issue.

In order to analyze issues effectively and determine an appropriate solution, the relationship between L&D and executive teams must be highly collaborative. L&D leaders should set the tone with company leadership on which problems can and should be tackled, while company leadership should provide appropriate context and resourcing on project requests.

Without proper project vetting, it can be complicated to solve problems and measure results accurately.

In her Action Mapping framework, expert instructional designer and consultant Cathy Moore offers an excellent tool for identifying the best solution for specific business problems. This framework asks L&D and company leadership to align on topics like solving specific issues, determining

measures of success, and planning actions that help achieve success.

If education or training are actions that would help achieve success, then L&D is an appropriate route to solving the issue. If not, company leadership should look elsewhere to effectively tackle the problem and protect their L&D team's time.

By aligning expectations from the start, leadership can set teams up to solve problems efficiently and successfully. Remember: Your L&D team should be a trusted partner in business problem solving.



NAILING THE “PROVE IT” ELEMENT

Even when the right issues are tackled through education and training, it may be difficult for L&D teams to prove success if their goals differ from those of the organization. To showcase their true value, L&D goals must ladder up to company goals.

To align L&D content with performance based outcomes and create true impact, participants must have a chance to apply the content that they've learned in the course.

Leadership must understand the need for application in performance-based courses so L&D teams can create useful assessments to measure success.

Beyond content, successful learning experiences must provide opportunities for the learner to practice making the types of decisions they'd make in real life when applying their knowledge.





Hire the Right Team

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YOUR L&D DREAM TEAM

Having the right people in place is crucial for an effective L&D team. This team delivers everything from online courses to in-person instruction, and these deliverables require a variety of skill sets.

To achieve meaningful learning experiences and maximize the value of e-learning software and other tools, leadership must hire individuals with expertise in instruction.

These team members specialize in organizing information in ways that are easy to understand and engaging for learners, and may be trained in the principles of instructional design.

While other content specialties are necessary for representing the business, communicating with customers, and marketing materials, this type of experience is critical when it comes to L&D.

Complete your L&D team's efforts with internal or cross-functional access to these complementary disciplines.

Skill sets to support L&D teams:

- Instructional expertise
- Graphic design
- Accessibility
- Facilitation

Remember: This list is only a starting point. A variety of other skills can be necessary to produce high-quality L&D, including performance consulting, project management, consulting, project management, consultative skills, and technical know-how.

How can leadership help?

In today's market, getting approval for new hires can be an uphill battle. Therefore, if L&D goals are a priority for your organization, it's important to plan for these disciplines when hiring.

Budget ahead for these skill sets to speed up approvals, avoid bottlenecks, and allow your L&D team to hit the ground running.

Next, let's dive into four of the core disciplines that make up a successful L&D team.



CORE DISCIPLINES FOR EFFECTIVE L&D

INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERTISE

To create courses that truly engage your learners and help them achieve meaningful results, it's key to hire trained instructors.

They may research and write scripts, write assessment questions, QA courses, develop courses in an authoring app, and more.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

L&D is highly visual, making graphic design expertise an integral element of your team.

Graphic designers can help ensure visuals reflect your brand, engage without overwhelming, and build on text and other elements.

ACCESSIBILITY

When L&D is accessible, it's designed for all learners—including those with auditory, visual, mobility, or learning disabilities.

Trained accessibility specialists don't just ensure your courses are legally compliant—they also enable you to reach a much wider audience.

FACILITATION

Most organizations don't just create self-paced learning.

At some point, you'll need a point person to deliver presentations and facilitate workshops—even if everyone works remotely.

This can also allow your team to analyze campaign results more effectively.

A COMPLEX PUZZLE

L&D is a vast and varied system made up of multiple disciplines that work together. Ensure those disciplines are represented at your organization, whether they all sit on your L&D team or work closely with those individuals.

And remember, not every L&D pro is going to be an expert on every aspect of the field—no matter how seasoned they are. As a leader, your job is to thoughtfully build a team of people who have different mixes of essential, complementary skills to cover the breadth of expertise needed to succeed.

Next, we'll talk about the tools and software your team may need to bring their courses to life.

“

Good instructional design helps move the learners through a lot of extraneous information and get right to the important stuff focused on real learning experiences.”

Tom Kuhlmann, Chief Learning Architect, Articulate

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Prepare Your Tech Toolbox

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L&D SOFTWARE ESSENTIALS

As a business leader, it's crucial to know L&D software applications and tool basics. These resources enable your team to produce outstanding courses efficiently through elearning—a vital component of L&D. Any missing pieces make it more challenging to build toward company goals.

44%

of L&D and training executives invest in learning technology to accelerate remote and digital workforce training.

This baseline knowledge can help you expedite the approvals process, establish a budget, and foster strong, trusting relationships across departments.

1KPMG

Next, we'll cover five essential types of learning tools your team may need to achieve powerful results.

Types of e-learning tools:

- Course authoring
- Course distribution and hosting
- Media creation tools and resources
- AI
- Analytics

Of course, these may vary depending on your budget, team size, and course type.

Familiarizing yourself with key L&D software tools will help you stop bottlenecks before they occur and set your team up to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.



#1 Course authoring

The bread and butter of e-learning software, course authoring or creation tools allow your team to build valuable learning experiences for computers, tablets, or mobile phones.

Apps vary in the learning elements they can incorporate, like quizzes and videos, and the level of customization they offer. Many don't require any programming knowledge, increasing efficiency and ease of use.

#2 Course distribution and hosting

Once your e-learning has been created, you need to get it to the right learners. Two popular choices for course distribution are learning management systems (LMSes) and learning experience platforms (LXPs), which can vary in their agility, complexity, and ability to share and track learning results. Some web-based course authoring tools have easy integration with LMS platforms, which may impact the distribution tool you choose.



#3 Media creation tools and resources

Adding media to your courses is a key way to increase engagement. Resources that allow you to easily access course templates and stock assets can allow for more agile and budget-friendly course creation, while media creation tools can allow your team to produce their own assets.

#4 AI

Though relatively new, AI tools are transforming the landscape of workplace L&D. Whether focused on idea generation, administrative tasks, or research, they allow for more efficient course creation.


#5 Analytics

Beyond analyzing how courses perform, you also need qualitative data. This supports the impact of L&D on business goals, as well as insights on who has taken legally mandated courses. Some course authoring and distribution tools include built-in analytics.

AMPLIFYING THE POWER OF YOUR L&D TEAM

L&D software tools can help your team keep up with the pace of learning today, allowing them to work more efficiently, produce content on a larger scale, and easily customize their courses to suit a variety of audiences.

However, while these tools are important, they're not the be-all, end-all resource for organizational success with L&D. They're an enhancement, not a replacement, for the individuals you hire and the goals you set.



Curious about how Articulate
360 can help you achieve
your goals?

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Conclusion and Self-Check

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SELF-CHECK: IS MY L&D TEAM SET UP TO THRIVE?

Use this self-check to see if you have all the bases covered when it comes to a healthy L&D strategy and team structure in three key areas: goal setting, hiring, and tech and tool adoption.



Goal setting

- Familiarize yourself with Cathy Moore's Action Mapping framework to ensure you're using L&D to tackle the right issues.
- Ensure your L&D team is an active participant in meeting organizational goals.



Hiring

- Learn about key skill sets for effective L&D, including instructional expertise, facilitation, graphic design, and accessibility.
- Pinpoint other skill sets your L&D team may need.



Tech and tool adoption

- Develop a baseline for the types of L&D software your team may need to use, from course authoring to AI tools.
- Understand that software enhances, rather than replaces, the power of your hiring and goal-setting.

CONCLUSION

It's no wonder that leadership teams are increasingly focused on L&D. From increased employee retention to greater impact on the bottom line, the benefits of effective training can be monumental for organizational success. In fact, according to the World Economic Forum, wide-scale investment in reskilling and upskilling has the potential to boost GDP by \$6.5 trillion by 2030.

But to reach their potential and truly thrive, these teams need the proper buy-in, understanding, and investment from company leadership. They need:

- Effective ways to measure their success in terms of larger company goals
- The ability to hire the right people and represent the key disciplines of L&D
- Access to the tools that will increase their efficiency and innovation

By laying the groundwork for your own team in this way, you can harness the full potential of L&D for your business and pave the way for happier, more productive employees.

Articulate 360 is the #1 e-learning platform for creating workplace training

100

of the Fortune 100 create training with Articulate

120K+

organizations use Articulate

125M+

learners upskill with Articulate

Looking to invest in your L&D team's success?

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