



# THE FUTURE OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

TRENDS, TOPICS & TOOLS TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How are the world's leading organizations developing their people and honing employees' skills? What is the role of the Learning & Development function today and how will that change in the future?

future**think** asked today's leading thinkers in the area of Learning & Development to share perspectives on where things stand today — and where they are going in the future. The findings may surprise you.

To garner insights, we designed a 30-question survey and reached out to professionals at some of the most innovative firms. In this white paper, we have organized the survey findings to help you see the trends through two lenses: TODAY and TOMORROW. This approach will allow you to measure your own organization against the appropriate benchmarks. How do your efforts rank in comparison to the leaders in the industry?

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY:

- **74%** see the influence of L&D expanding in the immediate future (0-2 years)
- **Almost 50%** believe their training offerings will grow in the next two years
- **Online learning is set to take center stage**, with eLearning (62% will offer it), collaborative training (62%) and webinars (55%) being the formats identified as necessary for success
- **85%** agreed/strongly agreed that the majority of learning will be collaborative going forward
- **100%** agreed/strongly agreed that learning in the future will be done in short timeframes, using 'micro modules' to provide more focused learning and achieve better results



## WHAT MUST CHANGE IF L&D IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

While Learning & Development professionals face a wide range of issues, some of the most prominent challenges are around the practice of training itself. The big “AHA!” many are realizing is this: the reason training offerings aren’t more successful isn’t because of the people that attend them (or don’t attend them) — it’s because of the courses themselves. If L&D teams want better attendance and better ROI for their training offerings, survey respondents voiced that course offerings and presentation need to change dramatically.

### ▪ Stop offering boring courses

Despite the ability — and technology — to do otherwise, most courses offered today are too long, too boring, and ‘too PowerPoint’. Several respondents commented that we need to “stop blaming people for not coming to training, and start improving the courses!”. Courses offered today are often dull and not compelling enough for people to sit through even a half-day of training. If L&D specialists want better attendance and more ROI from training initiatives, many voiced that they need to take a look at how well the courses are delivered and if they are up to speed with current learner expectations.

### ▪ Start focusing on timely topics

If L&D groups want to truly get a seat at the executive table, there is a strong feeling that they will have to do a better job of being true business partners, offering courses that teach the topics that help management *drive business*, not just build foundational skills. While courses on ‘team-building’ and ‘difficult conversations’ are important, survey respondents commented that they are working to offer more courses about current issues like social networking, open collaboration, and competitive trends.

### ▪ Collaborative and experiential approaches a must

To really embrace learning, respondents readily admitted that courses needed to let the participants do more *participating*. Most courses today were described as: presentation-heavy, ‘death by PowerPoint’, or too individually focused. When describing their strongest courses, however, words/phrases used included: engaging, experiential, team-exercise driven, and balanced (teaching vs. application of content.) Note: being engaging and experiential did NOT mean that technology was required or had to be used in place of in-person learning. In fact, some of the best courses mentioned were leader led, but done in a way that was more interactive in the overall delivery.

### ▪ The need for inspiration

Learning and Development professionals share a common goal: to help people reach their potential. To truly be successful, L&D leaders need to motivate and inspire people to learn, grow, and take on new challenges. This needs to happen not just through the courses they offer, but with the people that teach them. This needs to happen in the programs they create and at the conferences they attend. Injecting a sense of passion for what they do and what they teach is something that many voiced as a call to action that must happen in the near-term in order to make learning exciting again.

### ▪ Embrace flexible, blended learning

Most organizations use in-classroom workshops as the primary means of learning. But in a time where budgets are tight and teams are geographically dispersed, this just isn’t reasonable anymore. Managers need training alternatives that let people learn on their own time, or in the ways they learn best. Flexibility in training is key.

### ▪ Get to the point

Why are training courses so...long? Many respondents commented that the vendors they use could deliver the same course, more effectively, in a lot less time if they tried. Good course design needs to be pushed to the next level to better respect participants’ time — and better leverage their brainpower. Gone are the days when people could sit in a classroom without multiple interruptions or the fear of political backlash. Stress levels and attention spans being what they are today (short), “micro-courses” are seen as wave of the future.

**How do these insights compare with your own thinking? Do these findings align with your organization’s learning and development plans for the next few years?**



**“We’re changing the model before we figure out what’s GOOD. Technology is needed but it isn’t the magic elixir — we must figure out what works first, and apply the right technology second. The key is to figure out the framework around what makes the experience right — and then figure out the technology and delivery solution (online or classroom). Better courses are a must.”**

—JIM TRUNICK, SENIOR DIRECTOR, CORPORATE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, ALLERGAN

## GET A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE WITH OUR FUTURE OF TALENT AND HR INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

How can you create the best organization to work for? What skill sets, mindsets, and talent development approaches will make you an employer of choice in the years to come?

Start your 2011 planning efforts with an interactive session that enlightens your team on what top organizations are already doing to create the leading organizations of the future. Our Future of Talent and HR workshop brings your internal team together to focus on what your organization needs to look like and how you'll get there.



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- Workshop Format: Highly interactive best practices presentation, complete with discussion breakouts, 2011 ideation, ‘how-to’ exercises, and key tactics/techniques to jumpstart 2011 efforts
- Outcomes: Awareness of Future of Talent/HR tactics, problem solving and ideas generated in the room, strategic roadmap to get started, and quick win tactics to create immediate activation
- Participants: HR leaders and talent professionals with their core teams. Interactive sessions accommodate up to 30

**Let the future begin. Contact us to learn game-changing insights and tactics that will transform your business.**

Call us at 646.257.5737 or [arichards@getfuturethink.com](mailto:arichards@getfuturethink.com). To read the entire white paper, and to find out more about what we learned from the survey and how you can use these results to guide your company’s learning and development strategies, go to <http://bit.ly/futureofld>.

