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# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR L&D:

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS



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INTERNATIONAL  
WORKPLACE



# INTRODUCTION

Now it's 2023, we can say we've made it through the first full year of a post-pandemic workplace. The landscape is extremely different to anything we knew before. Post-pandemic employees are different from before.

However, despite the current challenges, employees' desire to learn and grow isn't dampened. In fact, according to Corndel's Workplace Training Report 2023,<sup>1</sup> 56% of employees would consider leaving if they didn't receive support with their development.

Learning and development are vital for business success. The fast-paced and ever-changing business world needs training and development programs to keep up with new challenges.

Unprecedented change due to a global pandemic has heightened the existing complexities of the workplace

and introduced new ones, particularly those arising from hybrid and remote models of work. Employers and training specialists should recognise now as a pivotal time to come together and deliver skills in a way that works for everyone.

Employees are the most valuable asset of a company and investing in their training further enhances their capabilities and productivity. There are huge benefits that companies can gain by focusing on training and development in their strategic business plans.

This guide delves deeper into learning and development and why it's a key driver for business success and competitive advantage.



**KELLY MANSFIELD**

Editor,  
International Workplace



# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“One of the main challenges of a company is to stay ahead of its competitors. Developing a competitive advantage can be a tedious task and involves implementing loads of different strategies across all departments to make your business stand out from the crowd,” says Employment Hero in its report, Seven ways Learning and Development can create a competitive advantage.<sup>2</sup>

“Training and development can play a big role in making a real difference to your competitive advantage. By making sure that employees are constantly progressing, the company automatically gains more value and continues to move forward with a strong position in the market. If you can make your team stronger, more knowledgeable and a force to be reckoned with – the strategies you have in place will be even more effective.”


“The impact of learning on a business is immense,” says knowledge-sharing platform [eLearning Industry](#). “A new employee’s ability to retain learning can impact the business in a multitude of ways. Without proper training, they could make a mistake that could damage the company’s reputation, cost the company money, or even worse, injure themselves or someone else. Ideally, training

inspires employees to solve problems, equips them with information to adapt and innovate, and helps grow their careers.

“High-quality training drives revenue by equipping employees to create positive customer interactions and deliver innovations that help retain customers. The quality of learning at a given company impacts future business by contributing to satisfaction ratings, which in turn contribute to the overall corporate reputation.”

Your organisation’s brand is also impacted by learning. When carefully crafted, a brand can communicate how successful your organisation is, and the position your organisation holds in the industry. Learning and development can improve your organisation’s reputation and help to attract new talent. A strong brand communicates a clear message to prospective employees and customers.

Training can also be a preventative measure, due to the wider negative effects that poor service, providing inaccurate advice or a lack of understanding can have on a company or place of work, should a staff member fail to meet a set standard due to a lack of proper training.



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*eLearning Industry article 'Impact Of Learning And Learning Measurement On Business'*



# REWARDS OF L&D

Although the financial benefits of staff training are far less obvious, it's true that they significantly offset the staff training costs.

The financial benefits of staff training have been proven throughout years of business studies and observation of how workplaces function. According to [Staff Skills Training](#), some of the benefits of training for your business's bottom line include:

- The benefits felt by employees directly translate into financial benefits for the business. High turnover rates are expensive, so cutting down on turnover can easily save plenty of money. Loyalty and morale improvements cause higher rates of productivity. Employees are able to accomplish more in less time, as well as do so with far fewer mistakes than usual. This results in less wasted time and less wasted money correcting these mistakes.
- Another important financial benefit of conducting staff training is the avoidance of any potential legal issues or large customer complaints. When every employee is properly trained, accountability is high and employees are aware of the stakes of doing their jobs correctly. This is especially true for training on matters such as health and safety, fire safety or human resources procedures. It's essential that employees know about these things in order to avoid significant losses due to mistakes.

## EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

To keep your most valued employees within your organisation, they need to feel part of it. A workplace that invests in professional development has a higher employee satisfaction rate. A workplace that goes above and beyond professional development and also offers specific initiatives to support workplace culture and wellbeing has an even higher satisfaction rate.

Giving your employees a path towards success and progression is extremely inviting and could be the difference between keeping and losing your most exciting talent.

Forgoing employee development because of budgetary challenges will only further impede your business in the long run. Corndel's research found over half would consider leaving their role if they do not receive the development support they need.

Furthermore, the Corndel report shows when considering a role with a similar salary and benefits, three in five (60%) would be more likely to go for a position with a personalised professional development and career progression plan. The opportunity to grow within your organisation and learn as they progress is a powerful incentive for retaining and recruiting the best talent.

"The 2023 workplace landscape is driven by flexibility and adaptability, with employers needing to recognise what they can give back to their people. Turning knowledge into business performance is more than possible with the right approach to people development," Corndel says.

"Another advantage of internal promotions is that, unlike new employees, your existing employees have better insights about the business as well as the required skills for the new role," adds Employment Hero. "They are people who you have already built trust with, and they already know how the company operates."

# ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

Recent data from Gallup<sup>3</sup> shows that only 34% of employees are engaged in their work. That means companies are constantly on the lookout for ways to hold the attention and appreciation of their employees.

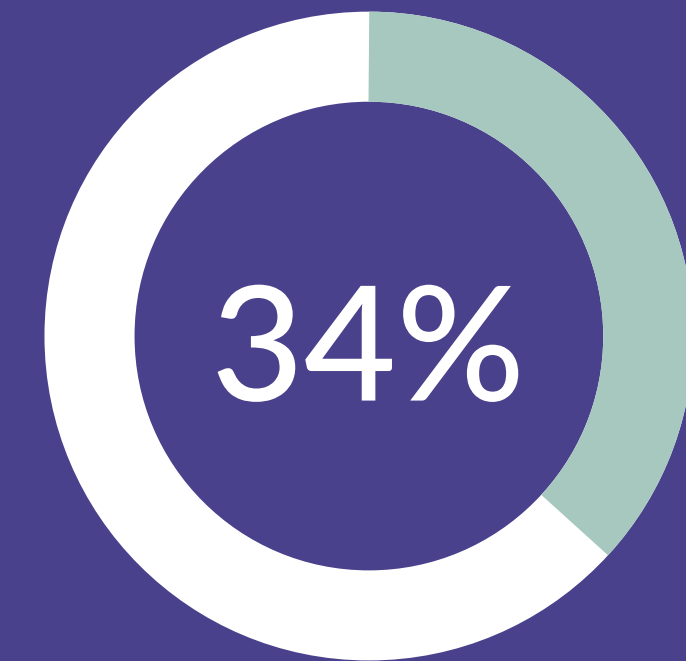
A focus on learning and development can help, says GoSkills<sup>4</sup>:

“Quantified studies are tough to find, but one that was conducted with UK employees found that those who had formal personal development plans and actually received regular performance reviews in the past year had engagement levels that were significantly higher than employees who didn’t.”

Training and development also naturally lead to more productivity in the workplace. By making sure that necessary training is given to employees to improve their skills, the company is, in turn, ensuring a higher productivity rate. Well-trained employees show both quality and quantity in performance – leading to less wastage of time, resources and money.

**The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) defines employee engagement as:**

*“A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organisation. The organisation must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.”*



Only 34% of employees are engaged in their work.



# ATTRACTING THE BEST PEOPLE

Nowadays, many people are on the hunt for opportunities that are best for them and that offer them more flexibility and growth. Companies are being forced to reevaluate what attracts the best candidates, what keeps these top performers around, and how their corporate learning culture will meet these new expectations.

In its 2022 report,<sup>5</sup> Absorb states:

“To find and secure the most qualified candidates, you must show how your company can help them grow, advance and make increasingly meaningful contributions.

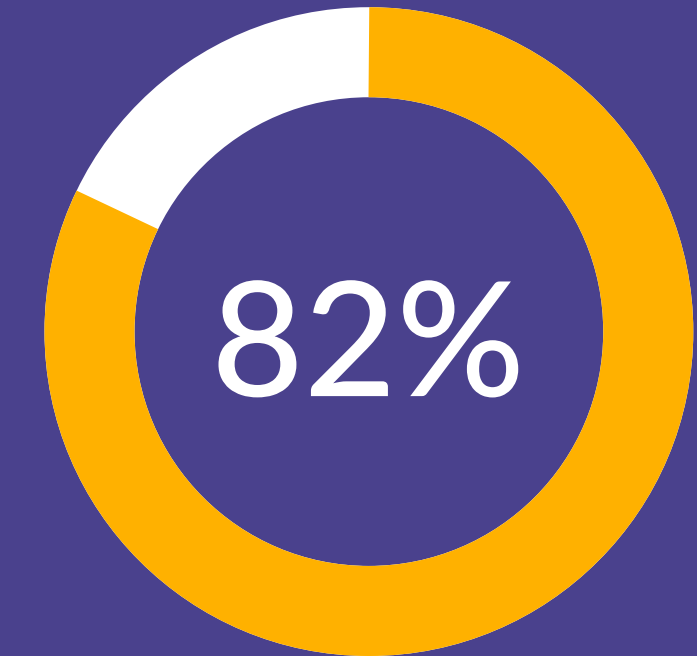
“A company-wide learning culture shows prospective candidates that you take training and development seriously. It also offers candidates an early glimpse into your organisation – and employee onboarding, as it’s a critical part of the learning experience. Did you know that nearly 50% of candidates would turn down a job offer after a poor interview experience? In fact, a strong onboarding process improves new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%. It’s hard to ignore the correlation between strategic learning programs and a candidate’s first impression of your company.”

Demand for labour is high in the UK, with vacancies outstripping people looking for work. In a competitive hiring market, these potential employees have the luxury of being able to shop around. They’re going to care about things like salary and job location, but they’re also going to be swayed by the training programmes, career growth opportunities, and potential to learn and develop new skills that your organisation offers.

“No employee wants to enter into a dead-end job in which the employer won’t partner with the worker and make an investment in training, learning, skill development, continuing education, and career growth,” comments Vector Solutions.<sup>6</sup> “The training programs your department makes can help your organisation hire the best people, and that’s very valuable.”



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# FILLING SKILLS GAPS

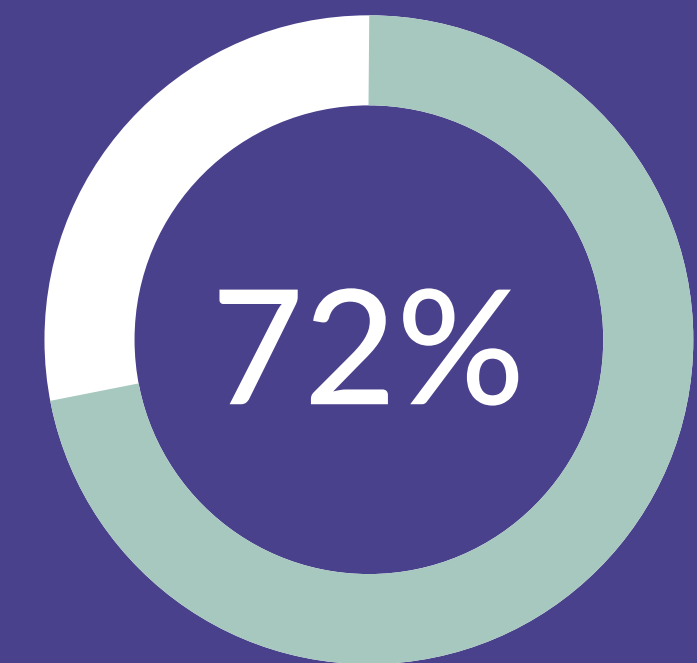
The British Chambers of Commerce 2022 Business Barometer report<sup>7</sup> found 72% of employers think skills shortages have increased the workload on other staff, and 78% are seeing reduced output, profitability and growth as an after-effect. A well-structured professional development programme can focus on the areas your business is struggling with.

“Furthermore,” says Corndel, “offering professional development programmes that give your employees a chance to move into a new area of the business or move into management improves their chances of remaining with the organisation. This is especially true of early career employees. Investing in early talent is vital for your business, embracing the digital and data transformation at the heart of the working world. Supporting younger employees requires a different approach, but learning and development should be at the heart of this.

“High vacancy rates and labour shortages mean now is the optimal time to invest in the talent you already have and maximise their potential. We have to adapt to the post-pandemic world and provide our people with the tools to do so, as 83% of senior HR leaders we spoke to confirmed the pandemic highlighted a skills shortage within their organisation. Recognising and resolving skills gaps is essential to keeping employees and the business moving forward, especially in difficult times.”

## REDUCING LAYOFFS

Business priorities can change fast in today’s world. Unfortunately, that can lead to layoffs when employee skills no longer align with their employer’s needs. Layoffs can significantly impact morale among the employees left behind and come with the costs of severance payments and rehiring. Often, there are ways to avoid layoffs. Upskilling and reskilling employees for new or expanded roles that meet business priorities allows companies to shift existing talent rather than start from scratch.



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# KEEPING UP WITH INDUSTRY CHANGES

It is essential to make sure that your employees are up-to-date with any industry changes or developments. Ongoing training can help you do this.

This kind of training helps your entire workforce stay aware of what's happening in the industry around them, therefore keeping you one step ahead of your competitors at all times.

It also means your business will avoid being left behind and makes sure you are complying with any industry regulations that might have been introduced.

As Corndel CEO James Kelly asserts:

“There is well-publicised proof that the UK is in the midst of a data skills shortage. The government’s own data found 48% of businesses are recruiting for roles that require hard data skills, but 46% have struggled to recruit for these roles over the last two years.”

For any organisation to meet the demand for data skills, there has to be investment in this area. There is, of course, the option to recruit highly-trained individuals, but filling data roles is proving a challenge for organisations of all sizes. It is vital, instead, to look within your organisation and upskill people. To truly advance towards a data-driven future, skills have to be developed across the organisation through upskilling.

Future-focused training and development are important for your employees, and investing in their careers could be the difference between remaining with your company and choosing another employer. When organisations ensure that their employees are ready to pivot and adapt as needed to accelerating and unpredictable change, they will be better positioned to come out ahead of the competition. As the skills needed in the workplace change, skills attainment must continue.





# CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Learning can become a powerful cultural force, says eLearning solutions provider [Brainier](#):

“Creating a culture of learning means your people can rightfully expect to grow in their roles and see viable career paths as they learn new skills and competencies. Demonstrating your organisation’s commitment to learning not only results in a more skilled workforce, but it reinforces the sense that you care about their development and safety. These are foundational aspects of a culture of belonging.”

According to Udemy’s 2023 Workplace Learning Trends Report,<sup>8</sup> a learning organisation that connects work culture to strategy provides a clear career path for employees, helping to ultimately engage and retain key talent. It also fuels the organisation to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow by ensuring employees are acquiring the skills needed for emerging roles. When learning and culture are closely aligned, they mutually reinforce each other, creating a powerful flywheel for employee and company growth.

Global training provider [Go1](#) adds:

“Learning and development can also be helpful to communicate the values your organisation wants to prioritise. When many companies are becoming increasingly virtual, it can also help to build a sense of community and connection between employees. Millennials are particularly interested in working for organisations they share values with, and those that make a contribution to society.”



# TEAM BONDING

Finally, chances to explore new topics, refine new skills, and expand their knowledge presents an opportunity for your team members to actually bond with each other, says learning provider [GoSkills](#).

Not only do they get to tackle new challenges together, but they can also lean on one another for various learning opportunities by collaborating with colleagues who have specific areas of expertise. Recent research<sup>9</sup> found that 48% of survey respondents said that peer collaboration is actually their preferred method of learning.

Learning from each other's strengths not only leads to a more well-rounded workforce, but those bonds can also improve retention and engagement.





# CONCLUSION

In the modern world of work, learning experiences are rewarding, engaging, and accessible to all. When done right, learning supports internal mobility and exists to enable engagement, performance and innovation in the workplace. For a culture of belonging to exist, your employees need to know they are supported in their career and learning goals with the time, technology and space to do it when, where and how they want. When you take the time to understand what your people want and need, you can begin to identify and prioritise the gaps in your learning programmes. Whether you prioritise technological or content-based improvements first, the aim should always be to promote a culture of belonging through learning that is relevant, individualised, flexible, and accessible to all your people.

There are more skills than ever to be learned and the demand to learn them – both from employees and their organisations – is only growing.

“It’s clear that employees are ready to learn and understand the importance of continually pivoting to advance their skills, their careers, and meet the needs of their organisations,” says Udemy. “It’s the organisations that can provide them with the time, tools, and culture to engage deeply with learning.”

Your people want the opportunity to develop and grow, and your business needs new and emerging skills. This is the perfect time to invest in your people and grow your business to new heights.





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- > Employers and training specialists should recognise now as a pivotal time to come together and deliver skills in a way that works for everyone.
- > Training and development can play a big role in making a real difference to your competitive advantage.
- > Learning and development can improve your organisation’s reputation and help to attract new talent.
- > Although the financial benefits of staff training are far less obvious, it’s true that they significantly offset the staff training costs.
- > A workplace that invests in professional development has a higher employee satisfaction rate.
- > Well-trained employees show both quality and quantity in performance – leading to less wastage of time, resources and money.
- > To find and secure the most qualified candidates, you must show how your company can help them grow, advance and make increasingly meaningful contributions.
- > Offering professional development programmes that give your employees a chance to move into a new area of the business or move into management improves their chances of remaining with the organisation.
- > Training helps your entire workforce stay aware of what’s happening in the industry around them, therefore keeping you one step ahead of your competitors at all times.
- > Demonstrating your organisation’s commitment to learning not only results in a more skilled workforce, but it reinforces the sense that you care about their development and safety. These are foundational aspects of a culture of belonging.

# SOURCES OF INFORMATION

<sup>1</sup> Corndel: Workplace Training Report 2023: [www.corndel.com/report/workplace-training-2023/](http://www.corndel.com/report/workplace-training-2023/)

<sup>2</sup> Employment Here: Seven ways learning and development can create a competitive advantage: <https://employmenthero.com/uk/blog/learning-development-competitive-advantage/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/241649/employee-engagement-rise.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Go Skills: [www.goskills.com/Resources/Benefits-of-training-and-development-in-the-workplace](http://www.goskills.com/Resources/Benefits-of-training-and-development-in-the-workplace)

<sup>5</sup> Absorb: [www.absorblms.com/white-papers/how-high-performance-companies-are-using-lms-to-recruit-train-and-retain-top-talent](http://www.absorblms.com/white-papers/how-high-performance-companies-are-using-lms-to-recruit-train-and-retain-top-talent)

<sup>6</sup> Vector Solutions: [www.vectorsolutions.com/resources/blogs/financial-benefits-of-employee-training/](http://www.vectorsolutions.com/resources/blogs/financial-benefits-of-employee-training/)

<sup>7</sup> British Chambers of Commerce: [www.britishchambers.org.uk/page/explore-our-network/partner-with-us/policy-reports-and-publications/people-2/business-barometer-2022-report](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/page/explore-our-network/partner-with-us/policy-reports-and-publications/people-2/business-barometer-2022-report)

<sup>8</sup> Udemy: <https://business.udemy.com/2023-workplace-learning-trends-report/>

<sup>9</sup> [www.prweb.com/releases/2018/05/prweb15505146.htm](http://www.prweb.com/releases/2018/05/prweb15505146.htm)



# THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

Here at International Workplace we recognise the business benefits of learning and development. Our combination of subject-matter expertise and technical innovation helps organisations to drive performance and individuals to realise their potential.

What we do:



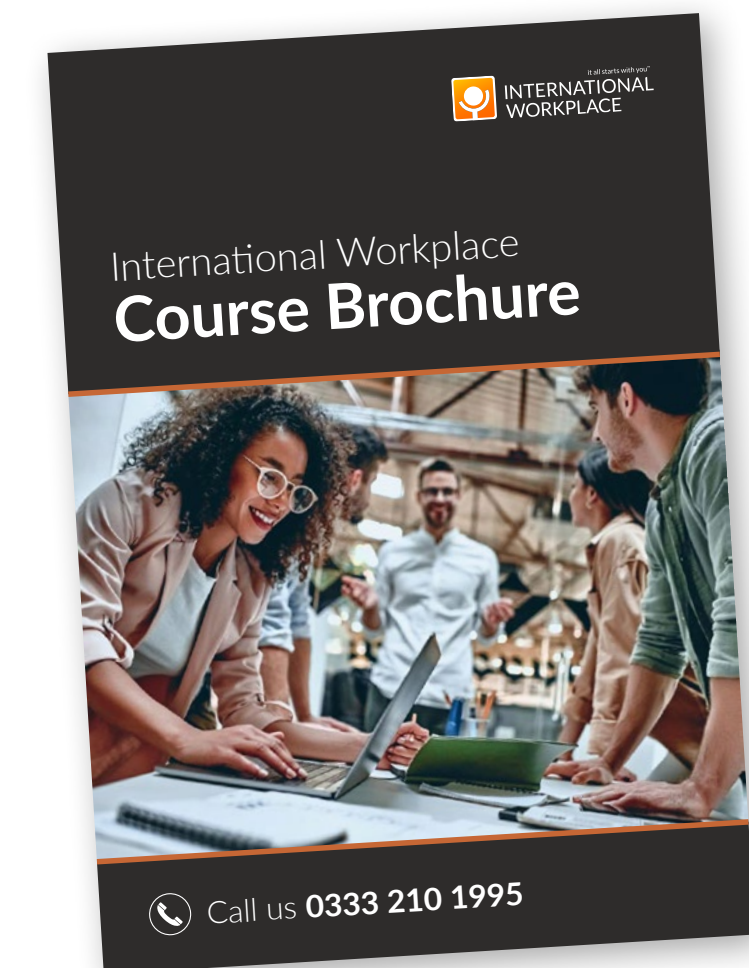
## FOSTER LEARNING

Working with respected authorities in the field of workplace management, to specify and help individuals build competence in workplace management skills and operations.



## FACILITATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Measuring and certifying the performance of individuals and organisations against a specific set of competencies or performance targets.



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