YOUR GUIDE TO DEVELOPING TODAY’S TOP TALENT

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Introduction

The truth about the future of work is that it’s unpredictable. As technology, industries, and demographics continue to shift, organizations have found themselves in a position as exciting as it is challenging: What will the future hold, and how do you prepare for the unexpected?

While we can only guess how jobs will evolve in the next five, 10 or 20 years, we do know that everyone needs to keep learning. The key to relevance—as an organization or individual—is agility and elasticity of the mind. As a result, the way we learn at work is changing, too. Compliance training—while still important—is only one piece of the pie when it comes to investing in talent development. Instructor-led trainings and time-intensive courses no longer meet the needs of a mobile, always-on workforce. Learning and development programs as a whole must adapt beyond a “check-the-box” approach and invest in personalized learning experiences.

Employees is now in the driver’s seat when it comes to their professional paths—whether they follow a traditional career ladder, or construct a lattice of jobs. In order to attract, engage and prepare top talent for the future work landscape, forward-thinking organizations are moving from managing training to creating holistic experiences, from facilitating content to curating it. Technology empowers organizations to make these transitions possible.

As an employer, how can you meet the needs of the modern learner with these new digital tools? In this guidebook, you’ll learn about how technology is revolutionizing professional growth, and how your team can meet the challenges that accompany these changes. With seven articles on everything from identifying development trends to establishing learning cultures to aligning individual goals with your organizational mission, this eBook will help you navigate the changing landscape of L&D and provide tactics for delivering a holistic learning experience that engages and empowers your workforce.
Three Trends Disrupting Talent Development

Learning and talent development are constantly changing to react to the needs of the modern learner. If employers want to ensure that their workers are actively engaged in training and development, they have to adapt to their employees’ learning styles.

Recently, learning expert Donald H. Taylor released his annual study, the L&D Global Sentiment Survey for 2017. He asked 885 learning and development professionals across 60 countries about their take on learning and development in 2017. The top three responses included personalization and adaptive delivery (12.4 percent), collaborative and social learning (11.6 percent) and microlearning (10.5 percent).

Let’s take a look at these L&D trends and how they relate to your organization.
Personalization and adaptive delivery

Personalization, which entails tailoring learning plans to each employee’s individual needs, is achieved through adaptive learning. When organizations create adaptive learning programs, they gather data on an employee’s learning habits and use it to create courses. For example, they may factor in how long it takes for him or her to complete assessments, what courses he or she was most successful in and how he or she best works on a project.

“When talent development courses are delivered in a way that is compatible with an employee’s learning style, he or she will be much more likely to succeed at training.”

Adaptive learning and personalization are trending because everything is more personalized these days. Since people are connected to the internet now more than ever, they are generating tons of data every single minute which is used to generate personalized content and offers. In addition, everyone learns differently; there are seven major learning styles that include visual, physical, verbal and social learning. When talent development courses are delivered in a way that is compatible with an employee’s learning style, he or she will be much more likely to succeed at training.

Learning software helps organizations tailor courses specifically to the user. It is a completely personalized experienced that allows employees to learn at their own pace and receive courses that apply specifically to their jobs. Learning management tools are also adaptive and only send employees training courses best suited to help them perform better.

Collaborative and social learning

According to the L&D Global Sentiment Survey, collaborative and social learning describes how workers learn from one another as opposed to how they learn from a formal course. This type of learning topped the survey for the past few years, but now has fallen into second place. Taylor concludes that this is because collaborative and social learning have gone from hot and new to mainstream and widely utilized.

Organizations love collaborative and social learning for a number of reasons. It strengthens relationships between employees, allows colleagues to ask each other questions and receive answers, enables employees to figure out solutions to problems together in real time, and gives workers the freedom to engage as much as they wish.
Learning management tools, including learning software, feature collaborative learning. This software is comprised of the newest courses that colleagues can take together, learning announcements and a platform that colleagues can use to communicate with one another.

**Microlearning**

Microlearning involves teaching employees important information in short bursts of learning, rather than traditional learning that is comprised of long classes and involved coursework. Microlearning tools may include a short video, a quick blog post or a five-minute podcast.

The microlearning trend is sweeping organizations because it has proven to be effective. According to a study from Shift, microlearning produces 50 percent more engagement, makes the transfer of learning 17 percent more efficient and is preferred by eight out of 10 L&D professionals because their learners like it better. Plus, learning in three- to seven-minute stretches matches humans’ working memory capacity.

Learning software gives you the option to create microlearning courses for your employees. You can produce short, engaging classes and deliver them directly on the platform, while encouraging employees to learn and retain critical information.

"Microlearning produces 50 percent more engagement and makes the transfer of learning 17 percent more effective."
Millennials are quickly taking over the workforce.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 53.5 million adults ages 18 to 34 fill one in three jobs in America, making millennials the largest generation in the workforce. As more millennials graduate from college and find jobs, that number will only continue to grow.

Employers must respond to this shift by understanding and meeting millennials’ career needs and goals. According to a recent Gallup study, what millennials crave are employee training and development opportunities in the workplace. The study revealed that 87 percent of millennials said that “professional or career growth and development opportunities” are a top factor in their decision to stay at a company.

“53.5 million adults ages 18 to 34 fill one in three jobs in America.”
Meeting the Millennial Demand for Talent Development

Millennials may want learning opportunities at work, but unfortunately employers are not providing enough of them. In the same Gallup poll, only 39 percent of millennials strongly agreed that they learned new information in the past 30 days that they could utilize to perform their jobs better.

If you want to attract and retain top millennial workers, your organization is going to need to stress employee training and development.

“Only 39 percent of millennials strongly agreed that they learned new information in the past 30 days that they could utilize to perform their jobs better.”

Here are some ways in which a performance management system will help you and your millennial workers achieve talent development goals:

1) Offer development opportunities

According to a Universum Global study, one of the top three fears for millennial workers is not having enough development opportunities. Additionally, a 2015 EdAssist study revealed that 58 percent of millennials expect their bosses to provide them with learning opportunities that are relevant to their positions.

A performance management system allows employees to participate in company wide development programs and keep track of the skills they are learning on the job. Using the performance management system, they can see what skills they still need to pursue to reach their objectives.

2) Encourage goal setting

Another top millennial fear, according to Universum Global, is not realizing their career goals. About 30 percent of millennials will leave a job if their goals are not in line with their employers’, according to Millennial Branding.
A performance management system allows employees to set goals and figure out what they need to do to achieve them using benchmarks. It lets them chat with their managers about these goals and work together on making sure they are met. Employees can also see team goals and determine how they can best spend their time to better contribute to the team and organization as a whole.

3) Provide mentorship and feedback for millennials

Millennials need and want guidance in the workplace. According to a 2015 study by Atenga, 67 percent more millennials than Baby Boomers say that having a great mentor at work is crucial. A performance management system gives employees the chance to be in constant conversation with their managers, asking them questions and learning from them. They can gain feedback right on the platform and ensure that they are on track to achieve personal and company wide objectives.

4) Increase millennial engagement

Feedback, mentorship, goal setting and development opportunities all contribute to employee engagement. At a time when 44 percent of millennials are going to leave their jobs in the next two years, it is critical that engagement is high. It will increase productivity, appeal to the top millennial talent on the market and help retain employees, who are always costly to replace.

“About 30 percent of millennials will leave a job if their goals are not in line with their employers’, according to Millennial Branding.”
How Software Can Improve Memory Retention at Work

Today, you can look up almost any fact or question in under a minute—a convenience that might actually be decreasing our memory retention. A theory called the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve hypothesizes that memory retention decreases overtime if humans do not attempt to retrieve it.

In fact, people usually halve their memory of new knowledge within days or weeks of learning it. This is a cause for concern in the workplace. According to a recent survey, 45 percent of employees spend a minimum of 15 minutes per week looking up information they learned in an employee training meeting. In a company with hundreds or thousands of employees, that translates to a massive amount of lost time and productivity.

While you can’t expect employees to remember everything, successful employee training and development is dependent upon the employee’s ability to retain certain pieces of knowledge. With online training software and learning management tools, workers can accurately recall information during the initial learning sessions and utilize effective methods for retention.

Here are a few ways online training software can improve memory.

**Help retention with repetition**

The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve, according to Examined Existence, teaches us that after you initially learn information, you need to revisit it a few times in order to properly remember it. If the information is not revisited, more of it will inevitably be forgotten.

“According to a recent survey, 45 percent of employees spend a minimum of 15 minutes per week looking up information they learned in an employee training meeting.”
According to that same survey, 46 percent of employees will use sticky notes to retain information and 47 percent will utilize a calendar. The problem? Calendars and sticky notes can get lost—not to mention the employee may not remember information correctly when transcribing it.

In contrast, learning software allows employees to go back and reexamine what they learned, which is effective in helping them remember key knowledge. Online training software is accurate, accessible at any point and contains all the training knowledge employees need to review to ensure they are properly doing their jobs.

**Spread out learning periods**

The forgetting curve theory also concludes that spacing out learning and repetition helps people with their memory. Spaced repetition and learning involves spreading out the initial learning and repetitive learning over a period of a few days or weeks—instead of cramming information in over the course of a day or two.

In a traditional setting, employees may be required to attend a training session in-person and take notes or watch a video. They are not given access to their training materials and must learn it all at once. Online training software, however, allows and can encourage employees to learn at their own pace. They are not pressured to complete learning in a certain amount of time. Employees are able to learn information slowly, and retain it for much longer.

**Prompt the learner**

On a survey that tested students’ **ability to retain information**, questions following learning were found to increase retention. The survey participants read essays on science topics—afterwards, half were given the chance to reread the essays, and half were asked a series of questions about what they initially read. Several days later, all the students were given an exam on what they had read. The ones who had answered the questions did significantly better.

The forgetting curve can be managed with follow-up questioning on online training softwares, such as exams and quizzes that employees need to complete and answer. This helps them memorize the information accurately and for longer periods of time.
Kickstart a Learning Culture with a Performance Management System

Millennials and Generation Z have grown up with knowledge at their fingertips. With a quick Google search or YouTube video, they can find out how to solve a Rubik’s Cube, start coding or even master a new language. In other words, these generations are made up of natural lifelong learners.

As we covered earlier in this guide, 87 percent of millennials say that professional development opportunities are imperative to their career. Companies that don’t properly train and develop their talent are risking both the departure of millennial workers and a lot of money spent replacing them. According to a study by the Center for American Progress, losing a salaried employee making $60,000 per year can cost an organization $30,000 to $45,000 to find and train a new worker.

The good news is that with advances in technology, HR execs and recruiting experts have a wealth of tools available to them that make creating a culture of learning and development easier than it ever has been. One such tool is a performance management system.

“Replacing a salaried employee making $60,000 per year can cost an organization $30,000 to $45,000.”
Here are three ways a performance management system can foster an environment conducive to talent development at your company:

1) **Track progress and set benchmarks for employees**

Employees, or anyone for that matter, do better when they know where they are going and how to get there. Using a performance management system, you can create benchmarks for each employee’s talent development journey. This not only allows you to track everyone’s progress—it also lets employees see exactly what steps they need to take to reach their development goals. By aligning benchmarks with your organization’s business strategy, you ensure that everyone stays focused on the overall goals and mission of the company.

2) **Offer continuous feedback**

Millennials grew up giving and receiving both instantaneous and constant feedback through their social media channels, and they expect the same at work. According to Forbes, 65 percent of employees would **like more feedback** than they currently receive. Feedback from managers lets employees know what they are doing right and wrong, as well as how to improve their work the next time around. It keeps the line of communication open between employees and managers and strengthens relationships in the workplace.

3) **Provide strategic goal-setting and development plans**

The most successful employees don’t set out everyday hoping for the best. They set goals for themselves and then work every day to achieve them. There are countless benefits to goal setting—it builds character, improves focus and increases productivity.

Using a performance management system, employees can work with their managers to set goals for themselves and create a development plan to achieve them. With the system’s data and analysis functions, managers can identify both the employee competencies and skills gaps on their teams to focus development efforts and training on areas where they are needed most.

A performance management system lets managers give their employees feedback on their work and how to improve it within seconds.

“65 percent of employees would like more feedback than they currently receive.”
Power Duo: When Employee and Organizational Goals Align, the Future Is Bright

If you work at a company that has hundreds or even thousands of employees, organized into many diverse departments, you know how difficult it is to keep everyone on the same page. While you want employees to develop and hone their individual and team goals, you also want to ensure they don’t lose sight of the organization’s objectives on their learning journey.

Aligning individual development with overall company mission can help employees investing in both their future and the organization’s future. In the end, this will lead to stronger employee loyalty and better performance. At a time when the workplace is constantly evolving, however, many companies find that achieving true business alignment in learning can be elusive.

“At a time when the workplace is constantly evolving, however, many companies find that achieving true business alignment in learning can be elusive.”
The Difficulty of Business Alignment

What obstacles do companies face in achieving and sustaining business alignment? In Harvard Business Review, Jonathan Trevor and Barry Varcoe write, “Complexity usually arises as the result of four primary factors: number of employees, variety of business lines, variety and expectations of differing customer groups and geographical dispersal.”

According to a study by Fierce, Inc., organizations realize the importance of alignment, as tough as it is to achieve. Ninety-seven percent of the employees and managers surveyed said they believed that a scarcity of alignment within a team directly impacted the results of a given project or task.

“How technology can promote alignment

A performance management system is not only crucial for employee training and development, but it offers an opportunity to integrate training strategies with other business objectives. A few key features enable everyone to stay on the same page, including:

- **Performance Reviews and Goal-Setting.** On the platform, employees can set goals that are tied to organizational objectives and review those goals at any time. Managers and executives can easily track the progress of these goals and ensure they are being met.

- **Competencies and Skills Matrix.** Managers can use the system to gain insight into workers’ skills and close any skill gaps that may exist. They can also match the right employees to certain tasks and align talent to the organization.
• **Continuous Feedback.** Through the platform, organizations can promote an environment of continuous feedback and coaching of employees by their manager. Managers can communicate with employees about their performance and goals and offer real-time feedback, forging stronger relationships.

• **Observation Checklist.** With this tool, employees’ skills are automatically recorded in real time and their competency is assessed. This process eliminates the need for paper-based evaluations, which only add to the complexity within an organization.

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**Getting Started with a Performance Management System**

As the modern workplace evolves, with new technology emerging rapidly and complexity increasing daily, organizations need to work harder than ever to achieve alignment. A performance management system is a powerful tool to ensure that employees’ learning and development aligns with your organization’s vision—and that everyone is working toward fulfilling the same business mission.
Why Microlearning Promises Major Impact

Constant employee training and development are critical to an organization’s success. But in an age where workers are faced with information overload, identifying effective opportunities for training that don’t simply add to the noise is critical.

Enter: microlearning, a relatively new trend in workplace learning and development that delivers information to learners in digestible pieces over time (usually under 5 minutes). Microlearning enables employees to learn on-the-go and on their own time—and when workers are more engaged with learning, it means better results for the company.

Information overload

Companies know they need to work on employee training and development. The problem? Employees are often too distracted and overwhelmed by work responsibilities that they don’t feel they have time to learn. On average, Bersin by Deloitte found that people only have 1 percent of their workweek to focus on learning, and employees are now interrupted as frequently as every five minutes.

“People only have 1 percent of their workweek to focus on learning.”
In addition to distractions, workers are simply too busy and impatient to sit down and complete hours-long training. Most learners will not watch videos more than four minutes long, and 55 percent of people spend fewer than 15 seconds on a website.

What is microlearning?
Microlearning can consist of content and employee development tools like short articles, e-books and videos and classes that can be completed in just a few minutes.

Studies have proven that microlearning causes the transfer of learning to be 17 percent more efficient, not to mention cultivating 50 percent more engagement. Microlearning is also more compatible with the functioning of the human brain: People learn better in three to seven minute stretches as opposed to when they are required to focus for several minutes or even hours.

“People learn better in three to seven minute stretches as opposed to when they are required to focus for several minutes or even hours.”

The power of video
Not all microlearning tools are created equal. Video is the most popular format for microlearning: 72 hours of videos are uploaded to YouTube every 60 seconds and one-third of online activity is spent watching video. When employers produce videos, experts recommend making content under two minutes long, since people start to tune out after that two-minute mark.

Studies have revealed that the typical person’s attention span today is only five minutes. Even if classes, articles or e-books are mostly text-based, they should also include visuals, since visual cues help people remember information better.

“The total estimated loss to a company thanks to ineffective training is $13.5 million per year per 1,000 employees.”

Getting started with microlearning
Microlearning is going to transform how your employees learn and retain information, which has a direct impact on your bottom line. Today, the total estimated loss to a company thanks to ineffective training is $13.5 million per year per 1,000 employees. By increasing worker engagement and improving productivity, an investment in microlearning is an investment in the success of your organization.
Over the past 20 years, learning management systems (LMS) have evolved by leaps and bounds. Rapid advances in technology, changes in workplace habits and new learning trends have introduced a new era of eLearning driven by mobile technology and on-the-go work.

Today, LMS platforms have become an effective way for organizations to encourage the training and development of employees, as well as save money and boost productivity. According to one IBM study, companies using learning technology have seen a 16 percent increase in customer satisfaction. They have also reported an estimated 10 percent increase in productivity when teams are well trained.

The market is poised for remarkable growth: According to an IBIS Capital study, 41.7 percent of Global Fortune 500 companies currently use eLearning. Additionally, B2B research firm MarketsandMarkets reports that the LMS market is expected to nearly triple within five years, from $5.22 billion in 2016 to $15.72 billion by 2021.

How will learning technology transform over the next few years and beyond? In order to think about where LMS
technology will go from here—and how your organization can prepare for the future—it helps to remember where we’ve been.

**The early years of instructor-led training**

Companies began to use learning management systems to train employees about two decades ago, according to Everwise. Early LMS offerings were modeled on higher education eLearning platforms, with instructor-led courses and defined class modules.

Originally, training and HR professionals used eLearning to track their employees’ training and compliance. Employees learned from CD-ROMs and online classes during this initial period, filling out brief feedback forms on completion of their courses. When they began, eLearning systems were called “talent platforms.” Over time, they adapted more and more to the increasingly digital world.

**A growing learning database**

In the early 2000s, learning management systems were built on the Sharable Content Object Reference Model, or SCORM, which was used to track the completion of eLearning courses.

In 2013, the X-API specification emerged, and eLearning began to adopt X-API as well. It enabled learning and development professionals to produce detailed pictures of the tools employees were utilizing in their learning and allowed many learning systems to communicate at once. It also kept track of employee learning both online and offline. For example, it could collect data on in-person workshops as well as courses taken on mobile devices.

**The mobile learner**

Today, the learning management system has continued to adapt to technology and employees’ needs by going mobile.

According to one survey by CareerBuilder, more than eight in 10 workers have smartphones, and 82 percent of smartphone users keep their devices in view while at work. Sixty-six percent of employees use their phones at least several times per day while at work.

Since LMS products have gone mobile, employees can complete courses at their leisure on their smartphones both at work and out of the office. The whole learning experience is mobile-friendly and keeps employees engaged even while they are away from the office.

“More than eight in 10 workers have smartphones.”
The future of the LMS

In the latest L&D Global Sentiment Survey for 2017, employee management professionals around the world report that the biggest trend in L&D is personalization and adaptive learning.

More and more, learning management systems are collecting data on users and delivering them personalized content and courses—so they can not only learn on their own time, but curate their learning experience to fit their specific skills gaps. Providers are using machine learning to improve suggestions and adapt to employees’ individual needs. The goal is to augment employee performance by delivering training in a way that is tailored specifically to them.

The learning management system has become smarter over the years, but its objective has always remained the same: to make sure workers are sufficiently trained for their jobs and encourage them to strive for more knowledge.