Unlocking Potential
Releasing the potential of the business and its people through learning

2016-17 Learning Benchmark Report
November 2016
Towards Maturity Research

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognised longitudinal study on the effective implementation of learning innovation based on the input of 5,000+ participants and 25,000 learners gathered since 2003. Towards Maturity continuously surveys and studies how people learn at work and the impact this has on organisational performance. By turning data into insights and insights into action, this research is used to help L&D leaders assess and improve the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their learning provision.

Insights specifically gathered during 2016 have been published in a suite of reports that can be downloaded at: www.towardsmaturity.org/2016benchmark

Previous studies in this series can be downloaded at: www.towardsmaturity.org/static/towards-maturity-benchmark-reports.

Additional sector specific and In-Focus reports will also be available over the coming months. Please visit the Towards Maturity Shop for more details: www.towardsmaturity.org/shop

Acknowledgements

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See page 92 for details of the Towards Maturity Ambassadors.

Find out more about our Ambassadors at: towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors

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# Contents

Towards Maturity Research 2  
Foreword by Jane Hart 4  

1. Introduction 8  
   Unleashing the power of your people 9  
   The new learning organisation 10  
   Report aim – Make It Happen 12  
   Research methodology 12  

2. Learning today 14  
   Resourcing 14  
   Technologies 16  
   Delivering formal learning 20  
   Learning outcomes 22  
   Barriers to change 26  
   Unlocking potential 27  

3. **Outcome 1 – Improve efficiency** 28  
   The efficiency achievers 29  
   Tools to improve efficiency 30  
   Tactics to help improve efficiency 32  
   The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Improve efficiency 34  

4. **Outcome 2 – Fine-tune processes** 36  
   The process improvement achievers 37  
   Tools to fine-tune processes 38  
   Tactics to fine-tune processes 40  
   The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Fine-tuning processes 42  

5. **Outcome 3 – Boost performance** 45  
   The performance achievers 46  
   Tools to boost performance 47  
   Tactics to boost performance 48  
   The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Boost performance 50  

6. **Outcome 4 – Cultivate agility** 52  
   The agility achievers 53  
   Tools to cultivate agility 54  
   Tactics to cultivate agility 55  
   The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Cultivate agility 57  

7. **Outcome 5 – Influence Culture** 59  
   The culture achievers 59  
   Tools to influence culture 60  
   Tactics to influence culture 62  
   The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Influence culture 63  

8. **Unlocking potential in L&D** 65  
   Priority skills for today’s L&D professionals 65  
   The achievers 67  
   Tools of top performers 69  
   Tactics of top performers 70  

9. **Next steps – preparing for the future of work** 73  
   Appendix A. Study design 78  
   Appendix B. Organisations involved 85  
   Appendix C. The Towards Maturity Model 87  
   Appendix D. Towards Maturity Ambassadors 91  
   About Towards Maturity 95  

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Foreword by Jane Hart

In 2016 the world of work is changing rapidly and the learning professionals that support today’s organisations are slowly waking up to the fact that we can’t just train colleagues once and then retain them for life. Their work needs to move away from ‘pushing’ programmes and ‘organising’ initiatives for people to thinking about how people are really learning in the modern world and how to support them on a continuous basis.

Helping organisations to do just that has been the focus of my work for 25 years and for the last 10 of those, I have been an active supporter of the Towards Maturity Benchmark as it has tracked the extent to which organisations have been successful in achieving this goal. It is encouraging that people professionals have become painfully aware that learning is no longer about the course, but about cultivating a continuous learning mindset. However, it is also alarming that, for many, this awareness is not leading to action, let alone results.

That is why I welcome this year’s Towards Maturity 2016 Learning Benchmark – Unlocking Potential – and its use of detailed analytics to identify the step by step actions that L&D professionals need to take to support the agile workforce needed in the future. Their new analysis this year has identified a number of actions that, in my experience, all L&D leaders need to be aware of in order to support modern workplace learning.

It pinpoints the critical role of managers and the extent to which successful organisations are working with the wider enterprise to support learning at work. It also highlights the importance of understanding how staff actually learn in the workplace with Top Deck learning teams three times more likely than the rest of their peers to be proactive in this area.

What’s more, Unlocking Potential is peppered with real insights from 5,000 workers challenging the perceptions of the readers to think differently about workplace learning.

The fact that almost two-thirds of learning leaders report that staff lack skills to manage their own learning and line managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning confirms that change is needed to tackle these important issues.

Unlocking Potential shows whilst L&D teams are using more technology than ever before, it is not enough. Most are just using the tools to tweak and modify their original approaches. Cutting courses into tiny pieces does not equal performance support. Social learning is much more than adding a discussion forum into a course.

It is clear that the high performing learning organisations are challenging the status quo head on.

They are prepared to go the extra mile, they are constantly listening to and trusting their workers. It is encouraging to see that they are predominantly led by true learning leaders who also have a passion for learning, for experimenting and taking risks to support business and individual performance.
Unlocking Potential highlights that those leaders who are taking action are also making the biggest impact on what matters most to their business leaders – improved agility, customer loyalty and retention.

Learning professionals today are hungry for change but many are overwhelmed. This report helps break down the vision for truly integrating learning and work into practical steps. However, there are no cookie cutter solutions! The data presented provides readers with a confidence and security to identify what needs to happen next. Whilst the Top Deck may use evidence to guide their thinking, they show us that their results come because they trust their gut and trial out new ideas. This report will help you unlock your potential as a learning leader but your success will result from not rigidly replicating what others have done but by being bold and courageous and doing things differently for yourself!

Those leaders who are taking action are also making the biggest impact on what matters most to their business leaders – improved agility, customer loyalty and retention

Jane Hart is a well-regarded international speaker and writer on modern approaches to workplace learning. Jane is also the Founder of the Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies (C4LPT), one of the world’s most visited learning sites on the Web and author of the Social Learning Handbook and Modern Workplace Learning.

www.c4lpt.co.uk/
www.janehart.com/writing-2/writing/
www.janehart.com/speaking/

Twitter: @C4LPT
Fast Facts

Today’s successful workplaces are fast moving, global and digital. Learning innovation, done well, delivers results that can support sustainable, agile workplaces. Business and learning leaders alike need to expect more.

Learning professionals aspiring to build a dynamic learning organisation

- 93% want to integrate learning and work (up from 80% in 2015)
- 95% want to respond faster to the speed of business
- 98% want to support the sharing of good practice
- 90% want to play an active role in supporting business innovation (up from 80% in 2015)

However, learning provision today has not changed much in 5 years

- 56% is delivered face-to-face
- 19% of budget is allocated to learning technologies
- 22% is delivered via blended solutions

What’s more, the use of technology in learning is focused on online course delivery rather than performance support

- 9 in 10 are using live online learning and e-learning content
- 3 in 4 are using Learning Management Systems
- 7 in 10 are using video and mobile

The Top Deck are at least twice as likely to report that they are achieving the five outcomes investigated in this report

- Improving efficiency – 42% on average vs 77% Top Deck
- Fine-tuning processes – 33% vs 64%
- Boosting performance – 26% vs 62%
- Cultivating agility – 20% vs 54%
- Influencing culture – 17% vs 46%

Barriers to achieving desired outcomes include:

- Staff lack skills to manage own learning (reported by 62%)
- L&D lack the skills to implement and manage e-learning (59%)
- Line managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning (58%)

Expect more:

- 14% ↑ productivity
- 15% ↓ time to competency
- 18% ↓ cost

7 in 10 staff learn online in order to do their job better and faster

Data from 600 Learning professionals and 5,000 learners

Top Deck organisations are those in the top 10% of the Towards Maturity Index

Towards Maturity 2016 Benchmark
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark

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Unlocking potential – unleashing the power of your people

This study explores the tactics most likely to correlate with successful outcomes. Here are some examples of tactics that can unlock potential:

Comparing the achievers with the non-achievers for each outcome we find that:

Those successful at **improving efficiency:**

- Integrate technology into face-to-face training (45% vs 21%)
- Regularly review programmes to maintain relevance (66% vs 35%)

Those successful at **fine-tuning processes:**

- Analyse the business problem before recommending a solution (76% vs 50%)
- Use stakeholder steering groups to support design (66% vs 37%)

Those successful at **boosting performance:**

- Deliver learning in time to meet business needs (71% vs 43%)
- Use activities to practice learning outcomes (66% vs 41%)

Those successful at **cultivating agility:**

- Proactively understand how staff learn (43% vs 28%)
- Have a culture that supports learning from mistakes (60% vs 35%)

Those successful at **influencing culture:**

- Actively provide new work experiences as an opportunity to learn (63% vs 35%)
- Communicate success to line managers (67% vs 36%)

**Top Deck** organisations consistently deliver more across all these outcomes. What is more, 3 in 4 practice all the tactics above

**Top Deck** teams are most likely to be led by those with an L&D or business background who invest in their own learning and skills.

**Top Deck** leaders are also building the skills and networks of their L&D teams today, to deliver the learning organisation of tomorrow:

- 82% invest in CPD for L&D staff (52% in the rest of the sample)
- 74% L&D staff join internal networks to learn for themselves (53%)
- 63% agree that staff spend time in other operational areas of business to learn (43%)
- 87% have good links/relationships with the IT department (46%)
- 90% formalise working with subject matter experts (47%)
1. Introduction

Why we need to unleash the power of our people

All of the current research with business leaders shows that they are under immense and increasing pressure to adapt, grow and deliver in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

In our recent review of the ‘C-suite’\(^1\) research we identified a number of key risks that business leaders are having to deal with [see figure 1]. Their pressure to deliver presents a prime opportunity for people professionals as they step up to the plate. Unleashing the power of their people through innovative processes will be key to future success but business leaders continue to fail to adapt.

Towards Maturity’s longitudinal research has highlighted that, done well, digitally enabled learning innovation can deliver an impact that helps the C-suite reduce risk and drive their organisation forward. The potential for change is considerable:

- Improve agility – implement change faster
- Increase revenue and customer satisfaction
- Attract and keep the best people
- Maximise resources

And yet the C-suite research does not consider that their people professionals are able to deliver or are equipped to deliver – limiting their expectations of help. For example, only \(57\%\) of C-suite believe that their academies are “very or fully aligned” with corporate priorities.\(^2\)

It is time for business leaders and learning leaders to expect more. It is time for change.

Organisations need a new learning agenda that will equip them for the future – one that is driven by business needs and supports the journey of the internal customer.\(^3\) The changes that are taking place in L&D are seismic. These are exciting times to be in L&D as we shift from delivering course transactions to delivering bottom line value. However, how to effect those changes still remains a daunting prospect for many.

In last year’s study\(^4\) we identified that L&D professionals are not the only ones finding it hard to change their mindset. Business leaders need to change their perception of L&D and their relationship with L&D, as current perceptions are a major obstacle to change. Our research provided L&D with a persuasive, evidence-based business case for change to stimulate new commitment from business leaders.

What remains clear is that both business leaders and people professionals need to take action to make progress.

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\(^1\) www.towardsmaturity.org/c-suite2016
\(^3\) See New Learning Agenda www.towardsmaturity.org/2013benchmark
\(^4\) Embracing Change www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark
Risks in the C-suite – it’s time to unleash the power of your people

Figure 1: Review of recent research with the C-suite highlights a number of significant risk areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation risks</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth in a complex world – 72% of CEOs believe the next three years will be more critical for their industry than the last 50 years</td>
<td>• Driving digital – 80% of businesses cite digital transformation as a priority. Only 35% have a ‘clearly defined’ strategy to achieve this</td>
<td>• Intelligent data analytics – 72% believe technology and 71% market factors are by far the biggest of the various external forces buffeting their organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the demands of overregulation – 78% of CEOs are concerned about overregulation</td>
<td>• Continually innovating and exceeding customer experience – over half of CEOs (53%) define their organisation by the value that’s created for customers</td>
<td>• Leveraging value from more demanding employees – 94% say that workforce development requires continuous investment and improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People risks</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continually innovating and exceeding customer experience – over half of CEOs (53%) define their organisation by the value that’s created for customers</td>
<td>• Addressing major ‘talent and capability gaps’ – 72% of CEOs are concerned about the availability of key skills, especially with 48% planning to increase headcount in the coming year</td>
<td>• Unleashing the power of your people – over 50% report skills gaps in key business functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Learning innovation done well can reduce risks and deliver significant impact on business results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation risks</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase organisational revenue by 10%</td>
<td>Increase organisational productivity by 14%</td>
<td>Reduce costs by 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed up pace of change to procedures or products by 24%</td>
<td>Speed up the rollout of new IT applications by 25%</td>
<td>Reduce learning delivery time by 27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People risks</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve customer satisfaction by 18%</td>
<td>Reduce staff turnover by 7%</td>
<td>Reduce learning study time (off job) by 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase employee satisfaction/engagement by 18%</td>
<td>Improve speed to competency by 15%</td>
<td>Increase qualifications gained by employees by 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.towardsmaturity.org/c-suite2016
The new learning organisation

Peter Senge first talked about the learning organisation in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. In a subsequent interview he stated that a learning organisation is a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capacities to create results they really care about.

Over the years Towards Maturity has been tracking outcomes that organisations really care about – indicators of staff and customer commitment, measures of growth, innovation and the ability to respond with speed.

Since 2003, we have been investigating what learning-related activities are most likely to deliver those outcomes. Following research with over 5,000 people practitioners and 25,000 learners, we see a number of characteristics and traits of an active learning organisation emerging from the evidence gathered.

### 6 Characteristics of the new learning organisation

- **Clarity of purpose** – a shared vision of outcomes that matter
- **Holistic staff experience** – a trusted brand that expects and facilitates continuous learning from start to finish
- **Thriving ecosystem** – individuals, managers and the extended enterprise working towards common goals
- **Agile, digitally enabled infrastructure** – supporting and enabling a fluid exchange of ideas and skills
- **Continual engagement** – self directed, connected, accumulating collective understanding
- **Intelligent decision making** – using performance analytics to inform and adapt
We define the Top Deck as those in the top 10% of the TMI. These organisations report the best business results, staff engagement and responsiveness to business change whilst citing fewer barriers to implementation. They are also the organisations who are closest to becoming new learning organisations working hand in hand with business leaders to deliver agility and competitive advantage.

Note: Facts and figures relating to the Top Deck are highlighted in pink in this report.

The continually evolving Towards Maturity Model provides the framework for mapping an organisation’s journey as they adapt to the changing work and learning landscape. The six workstreams of implementation behaviours directly relate to improved business performance (see Appendix B for full details).

The Towards Maturity Index™ (TMI) based on this model, gives a single, unique measure that organisations can use to benchmark against their peers.
The aim of this year’s report – Make It Happen

In *Embracing Change*, the Top Deck organisations provided inspiration for what a new learning organisation can look like.

What stands out as we take an objective look at the development in technology-enabled workplace learning over the 13 years since we started this research programme, is that the performance gap is widening between those that are achieving the best results and the rest.

Whilst our top performing learning organisations are achieving greater reach, efficiency and business impact, and establishing a positive approach towards learning that is evident at every level in the organisation, too many learning and development professionals are struggling to change attitudes and engage with their various stakeholders.

This year’s annual Towards Maturity Benchmark digs deeper into the data to help organisations understand what action they need to take, at any stage of their journey, to make it happen.

We explore the factors that link to successful achievement of critical business outcomes. If you are a people professional, whether you are just starting out on your career, or have shedloads of experience, this report will help you to take the next step on the learning modernisation journey.

Research methodology

There are three main sources of data for this report:

1. The Towards Maturity 2016 Benchmark Review with over 600 participants taking part between September 2015 and August 2016, summarised in Figure 5

2. A sample of over 4,700 learners that took part in a learning landscape survey during the same period, described in detail in Learner Voice 3

3. Secondary research referencing senior business leaders from the C-suite

Further information on this year’s benchmark study and data analysis is given in Appendix A.
Research demographics

Figure 5: Study participants

About the businesses

- Public sector: 16%
- Not-for-profit sector: 17%
- Private sector: 67%

- Single location: 15%
- Multinational: 40%
- Multiple locations - one nation: 45%

About the people

- 76% to HR/L&D central
- 15% to HR/L&D within a line of business
- 9% to a line of business outside HR/L&D

About the learners in Learner Voice 3

Over 4,700 learners:

- 23% have been in their current role for over five years
- 43% have worked for their company for over five years
- 45% with a management responsibility

- 32% under 30
- 25% 31-40
- 22% 41-50
- 21% over 50

- 35% North America
- 26% UK & NI
- 25% India and Sub-Saharan Africa
- 11% Asia Pacific
- 3% Europe
- <1% Middle East/GCC/North Africa

Can we trust the benchmark?

Longitudinal study over 13 years - started in 2003

Scale: Over 5,000 professionals and 25,000 learners have taken part to date

Over 3,000 organisations have received Personalised Benchmark Reports™ to help them with strategic planning

360° review of learning in the workplace: L&D and their staff views both considered

International reach: 32 countries represented in this year’s study

Dynamic annual review: The question-set is informed by input from top thought leaders and practitioners

Freely available: Supported by Ambassadors from the learning technologies and training industry

Recognised by academics as a leading authority on benchmarking in learning and development

Statistically speaking, only variables with a Pearson Correlation coefficient of 0.3 and above are taken into account in model calculations; significant at p<0.01.
2. Learning Today

Today’s learning leaders are optimistic that budgets will grow (or at least remain static), and have high expectations of what they want to achieve. However, barriers to change remain equally high. Overall, progress has remained static and in some cases started to reverse whilst Top Deck organisations continue to forge ahead.

Resourcing

For some years, people professionals have remained optimistic that training budgets will hold steady despite the economic uncertainty facing most organisations. Fewer than one in four (23%) have predicted that budgets would decrease, although 28% have experienced a cut in their budget in the last year. Back in 2014, 35% were predicting that their budget would have increased, but only 31% have seen them rise.

The greatest increases have been in the professional services, small companies with fewer than 500 staff and non-European countries.

Organisations in the public sector have been hardest hit, with 44% experiencing a cut in training budget in the last two years.

The greatest cost for most training budgets is staffing. Despite a continued optimism for the last five years that L&D teams will increase or at least stay the same size, one in four organisations have had to cut their L&D team size. Those in the voluntary sector, education and professional services have faced the smallest cuts.

Again, cuts in the public sector have been highest, with 34% experiencing a cut in team size since 2014 compared to just 16% in the not-for-profit sector. Large organisations report the most severe cuts in team size with those with over 20,000 employees faced with a staffing cut of 38%.

“Uncertain economies mean few L&D departments will expand.”

Training Manager, Financial Services

“Budget and finance strategy will impact on the capability of the organisation to respond to technological changes.”

L&D Manager, Local Government

Figure 6: L&D Team changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Team size cut since 2014</th>
<th>Team size predicted to decrease in the next two years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 500</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-4,999</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-19,999</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000+</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pressure is on these teams to become ever more efficient and deliver more for less.

Moving to a technology-enabled modern learning strategy would appear to offer the solution and for some years; over two-thirds have predicted that the proportion of budget spent on technology would increase. In reality, there has been no change in the last six years despite massive advances in learning technologies and in the reliability and connectivity of the IT infrastructure. With technology spend proportionately still at 2011 levels, our data leads us to be somewhat sceptical that the balance of budget will swing further away from staffing towards technology in the immediate future.

**Table 1: Budget changes in the next two years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Stay the same</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall training budget</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion spent on technology</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual size of the budget varies widely, but the average reported spend per employee on technology-enabled learning varies from £87 in the private sector, to £47 in the public sector, to just £27 in the not-for-profit sector.

**Top Deck** companies do not have the biggest budgets or L&D staff relative to the organisation size, but they do allocate more of their budget to learning technologies (28%).

---

**Vice President of Learning & Organisational Development, Financial Services**

*"With budgets either stagnating or decreasing, use of learning technologies that deliver greater ROI will be key to maintain a learning culture."*
Top ten technologies in 2016

Figure 8: Increase in the number of learning technologies

1. Live online learning: 89%
2. E-learning objects: 88%
3. Surveys and questionnaires to help understand learning transfer: 80%
4. Internal/Enterprise-wide information services (such as SharePoint): 79%
5. Learning Management Systems: 75%
6. Communication tools (chat, IM, SMS, newsletter, forum): 74%
7. Online assessment (eg to support certification/qualifications): 71%
8. Job aids (e.g. PDF checklists, infographics): 70%
9. Video: 69%
10. Mobile devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet): 67%

How do you see your organisation’s use of learning technologies changing in the next two years?

- “More engaging, more social, more gamified, more realistic/relevant.”
- “More blended learning, more user content creation, more collaboration.”
- “More use of video and gamification.”
- “More use of smartphones via apps”
- “Increasing sophistication, integration with competency assessment and more personalisation.”
- “Introduction of apps and greater use of iPad in the classroom.”
- “More use of support resource hubs and webinar technologies/virtual classroom.”
- “More focus on mobile for just in time and just in need.”
- “Increasingly mobile; much more attention to learning analytics.”
- “Making more use of online courses, MOOCs and video.”
- “Integration with HR portal for talent management and competency framework.”
- “Increase in performance management and tracking of staff training.”
- “We are planning to enable a new LMS cloud based solution.”
Even though we have reported that the proportion of budget spent on technology is declining, the number of different technologies in use is increasing. 21 tools out of a reference list of 45 different learning technologies are used by over 50% of respondents in 2016 – more than double the usage in 2011.

Figure 9: Number of different technologies in use by over half of the sample, 2011-2016

The choice of free courseware and cloud-based file-sharing services available has increased markedly. L&D leaders have a keen eye for products in the public domain that they can adapt for their local situation. 64% are now using open education resources (such as YouTube videos and TED talks), rather than developing their own in-house videos (58%) or blogs (29%). They are also more likely to develop their own e-learning courseware in-house (72%) rather than investing in external custom-made solutions (57%).

The rate of increase however, is slower than predicted and for some technologies has plateaued. For example, live online learning (using webinars, virtual classrooms, videoconferencing etc.) jumped to use in more than 4 out of 5 organisations as VOIP tools such as Google Hangouts and Skype were widely adopted by L&D four years ago, but further increase is not evident.
What's going up?/What's going down?

The level of use of specific technologies fluctuates from year to year, but over a longer period trends become more apparent.

File and presentation sharing applications such as Googledocs, Dropbox, Slideshare (up by 183%)
Mobile devices (up by 72%)
In-house social networks (up by 55%)
VOIP conferencing (up by 40%)
Course authoring tools (up by 36%)
Enterprise-wide information systems (up by 36%)
Electronic performance support systems (up by 33%)
Open education resources (up by 19%)

e-portfolios (down by 45%)
Podcasts (down by 32%)
Serious games and simulations (down by 27%)
In-house wikis (down by 27%)
Skills diagnostic tools (down by 28%)
Virtual classrooms (down by 18%)
In the last three years, there has also been a significant and steady increase in the number of organisations using:

> MOOCs (currently in use by 32% of organisations)
> Single sign on processes (51%)
> Software as a Service (31%)

Changing the technology in use takes longer than most L&D professionals predict. At a time when budgets are tight, any new infrastructure project demands a strong business case for investment. The predicted implementation of Learning Record Stores, wearables, augmented reality, achievement badges and other emerging technologies has not occurred. Indeed, many of the current users of these technologies are only beginning to experiment with them.

### Table 2: Technologies being tested out for their potential impact on learning and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>All using now</th>
<th>&quot;Just experimenting&quot; as a proportion of those using the technology</th>
<th>Planning to use in next two years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hot right now</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmented and virtual reality</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial intelligence tools (e.g. Intelligent Tutoring Systems, virtual assistants)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearables</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stuff that’s been around a while</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeds, curation and social bookmarking</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile app development tools</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement goals, badges or leaderboards</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time the choice of free courseware and cloud-based file-sharing services available has increased markedly. L&D leaders have a keen eye for products in the public domain that they can adapt for their local situation. 64% are now using open education resources (such as YouTube videos and TED talks), rather than developing their own in-house videos (58%) or blogs (29%). They are also more likely to develop their own e-learning courseware in-house (72%), rather than investing in external custom-made solutions (57%).

Last year we reported the greatest planned increases in communities of practice (to 78%), virtual classrooms (to 72%), and online evaluation of business impact (to 57%), but the rate of increase has been much slower than expected.
Delivering formal learning – shifting expectations

Compliance training is the mainstay of technology-enabled learning, with 68% of participants using technology to support mandated training programmes. Face-to-face classroom training is still the primary delivery mode for formal learning in most organisations. Courses in problem solving, team working, communication, customer handling and study skills are the most likely to be delivered in the classroom. However, most participants expect the balance of media to shift over the next two years.

Table 3: Technologies to watch out for in the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>All using now</th>
<th>Predicted level in two years' time (In order of predicted increase)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated mobile apps within an LMS</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual classrooms</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bespoke mobile apps for learning</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities of practice</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apps to specifically support performance at the point of need</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online evaluation of business impact</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that last year 74% of delegates expected face-to-face learning to decrease in favour of blended and online learning, the proportion of learning offered face-to-face remains high:

> 56% of programmes are offered by face-to-face alone (similar to 55% last year)
> 22% of programmes are offered online only (up from 19%)
> 22% are offered using a blend of face-to-face and online (slightly down from 26%)

Those in the private sector are slightly less dependent on face-to-face delivery (53% vs 61% in the public sector and in not-for-profits).
The balance shifts towards online or blended programmes are dependent on a number of factors:

- **Location** – multinational companies spread over multiple locations are **50%** more likely to use technology than those in one location. Face-to-face is more prevalent in the Middle-East/Africa/India; online in the USA.
- **Sector** – those in the private sector are using more technology in formal learning than not-for-profit or public sector organisations.

### Table 4: Variation in the blend across sectors and locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sample average</th>
<th>Multinationals</th>
<th>Companies based at a single location</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Middle-East/Africa/India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online only</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The courses that are most likely to be delivered either wholly online or with an element are:

- **66%** IT user skills
- **66%** Health and safety
- **60%** Industry-specific compliance training
- **56%** Induction
- **54%** IT professional skills

The business critical ‘soft’ skills of problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication, which are offered in over **80%** of organisations, are less likely to be e-enabled. However, those in the **Top Deck** are twice as likely to use technology for these skills than the rest of the sample. They are also much more likely to offer and to e-enable study skills programmes (e-enabled by **59%** vs **37%**).

Blended learning programmes are on the increase, with **81%** predicting an increase in the proportion of blended learning in the next two years. Only **6%** expect the level of face-to-face training to increase.

"We are moving away from face-to-face training to the provision of a range of flexible learning resources. This needs a shift in mindset not just for L&D professionals but for our customers too, who need to recognise their own responsibility to access the learning."

**Senior HD Manager, Public Sector**
What outcomes are L&D leaders expecting?

The benchmarking process takes companies through a review of their current practice, beginning with a consideration of the goals and outcomes they have set for the learning and development function.

L&D professionals aim high.

They are optimistic that their modernised learning strategy will deliver tangible benefits to the business and result in a comprehensive change in the organisational learning culture. Presented with a list of potential benefits, respondents cite ever increasing numbers of drivers for investment.

It is clear in a changing economic climate, L&D leaders around the globe want learning innovation to improve business agility and success

> 95% want to respond faster to business demand (94% in 20156)
> 90% want to play an active role in improving business innovation (significantly up from 80% last year)
> 99% want to increase flexibility and access to their services (98% in 2015) – the same number want to improve the quality of their offering (98% in 2016 and 2015)

We want to use technology to help us move learning nearer to the heart of the business

> 98% want to play a part in increasing the sharing of good practice (96% in 2015)
> 93% are looking to integrate learning into the workflow (up from 80% last year)
> 97% want to speed up the application of learning in the workplace (remaining high, 96% last year)

Overall, the desire for introducing behavioural change is greater than the desire to reduce cost (although that is still important)

> 96% want to use technology to improve organisational performance (significantly up so far, from 85% last year)
> 87% want to focus on building compliant behaviours – moving beyond the tick in the box experiences (up from 78% last year)
> 87% want to reduce cost (down slightly from 88% last year)

See appendix pages 87-89 for full list of outcomes expected.

6 In Embracing Change

"We want L&D to help us embed significant organisational growth and change."

Senior Manager, Food Manufacturing

"We want to move from being a supplier of training to the organisation toward being a partner in the business with a focus on performance improvement."

L&D Designer, Automotive Services
However, experience over the 13 years of this study has shown that many fail to achieve the goals that they have set. For some goals, particularly those that relate to increasing the agility of the organisation or shifting the culture, remain out of reach for most. Indeed, the level of benefits reported is actually lower than in previous years.

Overall, despite the investment in a growing range of technology tools, organisations are reporting fewer achievements against the same aspirations now than five years ago.

Figure 13: Level of benefits achieved

- Average proportion citing a core list of 27 drivers
- Average level of benefit achieved of these same drivers

Clearly some outcomes are easier to achieve than others. Figure 15 shows that those outcomes linked to improving efficiency and reach of learning delivery are more likely to be achieved than those linked to improving the overall process of learning. Making an impact on wider business issues such as productivity or agility is just as important but is tougher still. The holy grail of all, but achieved by only 1 in 5 organisations, is a set of outcomes that indicate a widespread learning culture within the business.

Each organisation will prioritise a different set of outcomes but we have grouped them so that we can begin to isolate the factors that contribute to success for each outcome category.
What factors influence results?

Over the last eight years, we have consistently seen that, as an organisation’s Towards Maturity Index increases, so does the level of benefit reported. Figure 15 shows that those in the top quartile for TMI are having more success than most with the hard-to-reach benefits, but still report that they have a long way to go to achieve their aims.
When compared to those in the bottom quartile, those in the Top Deck are:

**Over 11x** more likely to report that their modernised learning strategy is delivering:
- Improved capability of the organisation to solve problems

**Over 7x** more likely to report:
- Ability to respond faster to changing business conditions
- Increased ongoing sharing of good practice
- Integration of learning into the workflow

**Over 6x** more likely to report they have:
- Facilitated new ways of working
- Increased in self-directed learning
- Reduced time to competency
- Driven business innovation

### Who is in the Top Deck?

**Top Deck** organisations are from a wide range of backgrounds across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors

- **18%** have under 500 people, **33%** over 20,000 people
- Just **41%** of those in the Top Deck have been working with learning technologies for over 10 years and **24%** have less than three years’ experience

The stories of some Top Deck organisations are told in a series of case studies to be found at www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/top-deck/. Whilst individuals contribute confidentially to this study, some award-winning programmes give real evidence for change and they have given permission to release their names with their stories.
Barriers to change

While the Top Deck storms ahead, the majority report a number of significant barriers to change. Two-thirds of organisations cite the cost of development, set-up and maintenance as a barrier to implementation of digital learning, making this the most important barrier for the third year running.

Top barriers across the sample as a whole

> 66% cost of development, set-up and maintenance
> 62% lack of skills amongst employees to manage own learning
> 59% Lack of skills amongst L&D staff to implement and manage e-learning
> 58% Reluctance by line managers to encourage new ways of learning
> 57% Unreliable ICT infrastructure/low bandwidth/technical restrictions firewall
> 54% L&D staff lack knowledge about the potential use and implementation of technology

The level of barriers reported changes little from one year to the next. Across the sample as a whole, 47% recorded barriers from a core list of 15 barriers that have been included in the study for each of the last five years, varying only 2% since 2011. In the Top Deck, this falls to 39%.

One in six or more report problems that are simply not an issue for those in the Top Deck:

> L&D staff lack confidence in having business conversations with business leaders (3% vs 19% average)
> L&D are too remote from their learners/internal customers (5% vs 14%)
> L&D are not sufficiently customer-focused (8% vs 15%)
> L&D staff do not feel they have permission to experiment or try new approaches (5% vs 16%)

Those with lower scores for their TMI are more likely to cite barriers relating to the level of management support, learner ICT skills and the knowledge and skills of the L&D staff. However, the overall proportions reporting these barriers has remained remarkably constant for several years. Despite the wealth of evidence that L&D staff are very aware of the external challenges they face in such a fast-changing business environment, little progress has been made to address the internal challenges which they can potentially bring under control.
Unlocking potential

Top learning companies are overcoming barriers to change and delivering results. However, few organisations are achieving across the full range of benefits they seek. Can our analysis teach us something new about unlocking the potential in each area?

We found that across the whole sample:

- 31% were achieving five or more benefits related to efficiency and compliance
- 18% were achieving five or more benefits related to processes and programmes
- 18% were achieving five or more benefits relating to productivity and performance
- 12% were achieving four or more benefits relating to agility and talent
- 8% were achieving four or benefits relating to culture and innovation

What’s more, 61% of the sample were not achieving five or four benefits in ANY area – we have much to learn from each other.

To address this challenge, we consider each area in turn in the subsequent chapters, to understand how to unlock potential. We look at the technologies used by those that are realising some success in each area and highlight one or two features that have the strongest correlation with results. We also explore what the Top Deck can teach us and what we can learn from learners themselves.

In Chapter 8 we consider how to unlock potential within the L&D team itself – a starting point for all leaders regardless of their journey.

We're going to help you Make It Happen one step at a time on your journey towards maturity.

Look out for the 'Make It Happen' box at the end of each chapter to turn the ideas in this report into action.

**MAKE IT HAPPEN - MAKING THE MOST OF THIS REPORT**

- Identify the outcomes that you are going to prioritise for the short-, medium- and long-term
- Look for specific actions that can help you where you are right now in your organisation
- Use the findings to stimulate new conversations with stakeholders
- Compare the report findings with your own Personalised Benchmark report

In the next chapter we consider how to unlock the potential around building greater efficiency in learning programmes and demonstrating compliance to industry or legal requirements.
3. Outcome 1 – Improve efficiency

Learning technologies increase programme efficiency and ability to prove compliance, but those seeking to increase these benefits need to look critically at how they blend technology into face-to-face learning. Good learning design and engaging classroom trainers play a vital role.

Delivering ‘more for less’ has been a primary focus for people professionals using technology for the last 30+ years. As budgets are squeezed and demand increases, L&D staff are turning to technology in order to improve efficiency across core training programmes whilst maintaining the quality of programme delivery.

Figure 16 below shows the full range of efficiency outcomes cited by 9 out of 10 organisations.

**Figure 16: What efficiency outputs are today’s L&D leaders expecting to achieve?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficiency Output</th>
<th>% of Organisations Achieving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase learning access and flexibility</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of learning delivered</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve induction/onboarding process</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase volume of learning – reaching more people</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce training cost</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply with new regulations</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This year we have seen that learning innovation, done well, can deliver real improvements in efficiency so we can and should expect more from our investment.

“Nearly all our programmes contain an element of learning technology now and we have reduced the actual classroom time required for nearly all roles.”

L&D Design Leader, Automotive Industry
The efficiency achievers

So what can we learn from those that are most successful in this area paving the way to real learning transformation?

To isolate the behaviours of organisations who are specifically achieving efficiency outcomes we focused on organisations who reported success in five or more outcome areas - a total of 31% of the full sample - the efficiency achievers!

Table 7 highlights what types of organisations are efficiency achievers. Those in mid-sized companies, in North America and in certain industries, such as IT and Finance, report efficiencies well above average and have a significantly higher proportion of organisations achieving efficiency outcomes.

Table 7: Who are the achievers of outcomes related to efficiency and compliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>APAC</th>
<th>Not-for-profit sector</th>
<th>IT sector</th>
<th>Mid-sized 1-5,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion achieving five or more benefits in efficiency and compliance</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What contributes to improving efficiency success?

What differentiates the 'efficiency achievers' with the 'non achievers' – those who are looking for benefits in this area but, despite investment in new tools and approaches, are not having the same levels of success?

To find out we compare the tools and approaches most likely to be used by the ‘efficiency achievers’ with the non-achievers. We also reveal the tactics that show the strongest correlation with the efficiency outcomes and explore the extent to which the ‘efficiency achievers’ are using those tactics.

By identifying specific tools and tactics we can provide shortcuts for others to accelerate performance and achievement in this area.

“Particularly in relation to e-learning we wish to get to a position where all staff are engaged in our LMS and see it as a feasible alternative to classroom learning, providing a reduction to existing training costs and time out of the office.”

Senior OD Adviser, Local Government
Tools to improve efficiency

Compared to the non-achievers, the efficiency achievers are spending 30% more of their training budget on technology and using a much wider range of technologies with over 9 out of 10 using both e-learning content and live online learning tools to support learning delivery. Video is also an important tool for improving efficiency with 80% using the medium to capture effective practices from within the organisation.

Figure 17: Technology for delivery, application and influence

For the 31% achieving five or more benefits in efficiency and compliance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use e-learning objects</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use surveys and questionnaires</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use live online learning</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use online assessment</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use best practice video</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Learning Management System</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst these tools clearly contribute to improving efficiency, learners themselves provide a word of warning about how they should be used in the box overleaf.

“We are providing online learning as an option and trying to demonstrate the business benefit – cost savings, reduce time away from business etc.”

Learning Technologist, Housing Association

\(^{8}\) Towards Maturity Benchmarks are based on three-year rolling averages to smooth out year-on-year variation.
The learner perspective: Don’t just use technology to deliver efficiency

e-learning content has been the stock answer to moving learning online for ten years or more. It has also been a constant complaint from learners that learning content is uninspiring (35%) or irrelevant to their needs (26%). Learners are looking for quick answers, online support and a blended approach to learning. Contrary to popular opinion, our research would suggest that many also really like e-learning!

- 47% find self-paced e-learning courses essential or very useful to help them learn what they need to do their job
- 69% of learners are able to quickly put into practice what they learn online
- 36% are using Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- 26% have used online learning outside work in the last 12 months for non-work-related learning

What do learners find contributes most to a smooth and successful online learning experience?

Ranked in their top three factors by:

- 79% the overall quality of the learning design
- 78% online elements are easy to use and navigate
- 77% relevant and timely for my work situation

However, one in four learners report that they cannot find what they need

When they are hard-pressed for time, time wasted on unfruitful searches leaves learners reluctant to engage with digital learning. When 95% of the overall sample are using their Learning Management System to store, track and deliver e-learning courses, system success might be better measured from the learner perspective in terms of how easy it is for them to find the learning they need.
Tactics to improve efficiency

The Towards Maturity Model illustrates that actions across a number of work streams combine to deliver results and help build the learning organisation. Whilst it is important not to ignore the bigger picture, we have identified certain actions within the model that have the strongest correlation with efficiency success for the efficiency achievers, these include:

**Providing appropriate and timely content**

- > 82% agree that they support the skills the business needs through their learning initiatives (vs 57% non-achievers)
- > 74% allow learners to access their online provision at any time (53%)

**Basic design – harnessing technology appropriately**

Those successful at improving efficiency are working with technology to improve the learner experience and are leveraging the learning opportunities across their whole IT infrastructure.

- > 73% use video, audio, images and animation appropriately, as well as text in their e-learning content (vs 40% non-achievers)
- > 67% know what technology-enabled learning their general IT systems can support (41%)

**Keeping it clean**

Clutter can slow down efficiency gains resulting in disengaged learners. Regular reviews and culling makes a real difference at this stage.

- > 66% regularly review programmes and check that they support and enhance organisational goals (vs. 35% non-achievers)
- > 68% clear out all the irrelevant content that is slowing down the search process (47%)

**Supporting face-to-face training with online learning**

- > 45% of the efficiency achievers agree that their face-to-face training actively integrates technologies within the programme (vs. 21% non-achievers)
- > 45% also agree that their face-to-face training actively builds on knowledge gained through online learning (24%)

The last two points highlight how classroom and online learning need to be considered hand-in-hand when looking to achieve efficiencies that training lead to improved quality. The classroom trainer plays a critical role in achieving success at this stage.
"We have content that we use in our current classroom based courses. It is mostly PowerPoint presentation and pdf booklets. We need help to make this content more engaging and also allow colleagues to access this on demand via PC, tablet and mobile."

Engineering Trainer, Utilities Industry

Spotlight on the classroom trainer

94% of organisations want to use technology to increase the effectiveness of face-to-face learning, but only 39% are achieving this benefit.

When classroom training still accounts for at least 56% of learning for the organisations in this study, we can’t ignore the role of the classroom trainer in improving the overall efficiency of learning delivery. They play a critical role in promoting and implementing digital learning to support delivery and in thinking through how technology can enhance the learning design. They are often the people working most closely with learners and can support and facilitate change. Yet one in three organisations report that their classroom trainers are reluctant to adopt new technology.

The first challenge for L&D leaders is to address how to involve classroom trainers in engaging learners with digital programmes and in gaining confidence in using it themselves.

Top Deck organisations consistently prioritise working with their classroom trainers:

> 85% involve classroom trainers in the design process for e-learning (compared with 49% across the rest of the sample of 600 organisations)

> 87% integrate technology into face-to-face learning (24%)

> 82% ensure that their face-to-face training actively builds on knowledge gained through e-learning courses (26%)
The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: efficiency

Compared to both the efficiency achievers and to the rest of the sample overall, Top Deck organisations are almost twice as likely to agree that they have:

- increased the proportion of staff now on learning programmes (72% vs 39% rest of sample)
- increased the volume of learning that they deliver (73% vs 35%)

Whilst the Top Deck organisations consistently apply tactics across the full Towards Maturity Model, it is clear that there are a number of the priority areas within the model that specifically help improve efficiency. These include providing staff with relevant content in places that support where and when they need to learn, harnessing technology appropriately within the mix and working with classroom trainers as agents of change.

Figure 18 highlights the focus areas within the Towards Maturity Model that will help organisations to unlock potential efficiency outcomes.
The bigger picture

Improving efficiency is just one outcome, but even highly efficient L&D teams can struggle to embed new ways of learning into their organisation and deliver across a range of outcomes.

**Top Deck** organisations proactively address the challenges of limited budget and tired-looking e-learning content to provide learners with workarounds that can help improve learning access and flexibility and better meet their needs.

### Table 8: Addressing barriers holding back process improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Reported by Efficiency achievers</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of set-up, development and maintenance</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online learning too generic and not sufficiently tailored to our needs</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MAKE IT HAPPEN – TIPS FOR UNLOCKING EFFICIENCY

- Take a critical look at current classroom training practice and brainstorm with your trainers how technology might improve engagement - as well as efficiency
- Examine your course catalogue and don’t be afraid to let go of things that are past their sell-by date - however good they were
- Ask your learners how easy it is to find what they need - and act on their advice
- Refresh your video collection with short internal best practice examples that can act as job aids or skills refreshers

In the next chapter we will explore how those that are achieving outcomes related to processes and value have reduced line manager reluctance by a factor of over 11%. 
4. **Outcome 2 – Fine-tune processes**

Organisations that are successfully improving business processes and delivering value are using technology to modernise formal learning and integrate talent management. Involving leaders and other stakeholders in learning and development are key to implementing change effectively.

**The potential opportunity**

Learning professionals are continually being asked to support the rollout of projects, engage with customers and adapt learning solutions to meet the demands of an increasingly flexible and agile workforce. They are looking to technology to help fine-tune the formal learning process, increasing consistency, value for money and qualifications.

Figure 19 shows the full extent of potential opportunity wanted by the overall sample of participants.

**Figure 19: how are L&D looking to fine-tune processes?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve management &amp; administration of learning</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver greater value for money</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a better qualified workforce</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce time away from the job</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed up the implementation of new internal processes or IT systems</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform customers/suppliers of new products/services</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, we have seen that only **33%** are achieving their goals compared to **64%** of the Top Deck companies.

**Expect more fine-tuned processes**

The potential for using learning innovation to fine-tune the formal processes of learning and deliver results is exceptional:

- **25%** reduction in speed of rollout of new IT applications
- **21%** reduction in study time
- **16%** increase in staff qualifications

This means that implementation projects that once might have taken five days now take four. Staff spend less time away from their day job and L&D can deliver greater value back to the business.
The process improvement achievers

When it comes to fine-tuning formal learning processes, 18% of the total sample reported that they were achieving five or more of their goals (our ‘process improvement achievers’). This group are not only demonstrating a step-change in the percentage achieving each particular benefit compared to ‘non-achievers’ in this category, but they are also tackling the issue of line manager reluctance head on.

Those most likely to be achieving benefits at this stage include:

- Large companies of over 20,000 staff (24%)
- Those reporting to a line of business outside HR (22%)
- Those in the IT sector (30%)
- Those in Asia/Pacific (7%); single site companies (10%); very small companies under 500 staff (11%) and those in the public sector (11%) are lagging behind in this category

We analysed the tools and tactics of the process improvement achievers compared with those looking for these outcomes but not reporting the same level of results (the non-achievers) to identify opportunities to accelerate results in this area.

It is important to note that high achievers in business improvement were also strong in improving efficiency so the tactics and tools are likely to build on rather than replace the practices that deliver efficiency.

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**Table 9: Who are the achievers of outcomes related to processes and value?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>APAC</th>
<th>Public sector</th>
<th>IT Sector</th>
<th>Large businesses 20,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion achieving five or more benefits in processes and value</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"We are still working to convince leaders that they have joint ownership for talent development along with their employees."

HR Manager, Utilities (Electricity and Gas)
Tools to fine-tune processes

Compared to the non-achievers, those achieving five or more process and value benefits are using a wider variety of technologies in their learning programmes. In fact over 50% more.

The process improvement achievers are more likely to be sourcing learning content externally:

- 62% use external best practice video (41% for non-achievers)
- 82% use free open education resources (60%)
- 69% use learning portals with paid-for content (45%)

They are also using more internal information systems and services to share company documents and provide quick and easy access to useful resources as required:

- 84% use enterprise-wide information systems (70%)
- 83% use job aids (66%)
- 71% use internal learning portals to bring together related content (44%)

Learning administration is more automated, with 67% using a single sign on process (47%) to make life simpler for learners to get to what they need, 48% using competency management systems (31%) and 89% using online assessment (66%). There is also a clear shift to integrating management information systems across learning and other HR business processes.

Figure 20: Integration of LMS within HR systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Process improvement achievers</th>
<th>Non-achievers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All LMS</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated LMS with HR systems</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We need to embrace and create a diverse range of technology to support a much more agile learning environment and culture.”

Director, Health and Social Care (Not-for-profit)

The active use of technology to support not just individual formal learning programmes but the overall journey of the individual as they progress through their career will not go unnoticed by learners in the workplace.
The learner perspective: Learners will invest time to advance their careers

Learning for work is too often pushed out of the busy day as work deadlines take priority. Learning is frequently crammed into breaks (28% of learners) or done during lunchtime (26%). However, many are willing to invest their own time during travel to and from work (28%), in the evening or at weekends (43%) to learn what they need to do their job.

However, 26% are learning online outside work for their own purposes.

What motivates staff to learn online?

Continuing Professional Development is the most common topic for learners studying online outside work (9% of learners).

Motivators for learning outside work

- 29% I just like to keep learning
- 21% To keep up with my Professional Development
- 19% For personal interest
- 16% For general career progression
- 14% To progress my career within my organisation
- 11% There is no motivation for me to learn outside of work
- 2% To progress my career as an external agent/contractor

As people move from one job to the next every few years, particularly in the early years of their career, they are building a portfolio of skills and experience to demonstrate their potential value to any new organisation.

High on the agenda of staff is the ability to build formal recognition through certification and qualifications

60% of learners strongly agree that recognition that they have completed online programmes is important to them. 20% find having a completion certificate an essential feature of the online experience.

They report that formal certification is a great motivator for learning:

- 53% find the fact that learning contributes to a certificate/qualification is in their top three factors that contribute to a smooth and successful online learning experience
- 45% are motivated by the wish to obtain professional certification
- 45% are motivated by the thought of promotion
- 40% are motivated by wanting to maintain or achieve a higher certification level
- 20% are motivated by the inclusion of assessment
Tactics to fine-tune processes

A number of tactics within the Towards Maturity Model showed a high correlation with the results associated with fine-tuning formal learning processes. The ‘process improvement achievers’ were stronger than their peers in the following tactics:

Closely aligning to the needs of the business – and to those of the individual

When it comes to fine-tuning processes the critical starting point is asking the right questions to help understanding the requirements of a programme. Order taking must be a thing of the past for success at this level.

> 76% agreed that they analyse the business problem before recommending a solution (vs 50% of non-achievers looking for process improvement)

Knowing that formal learning is part of a seamless bigger picture

Staff members do not work in the same silos as traditional HR and learning - they want to be able to do their job and progress their career. Those successful at fine-tuning process recognise this:

> 38% support career aspirations (or personal job goals) with technology-enabled learning (20%)
> 37% agree that learning technologies reinforce the way they recruit, onboard and develop people (15%)

Communicating continually with stakeholders

Successful organisations draw on insights from a wide range of stakeholders as part of fine-tuning learning processes and actively communicate the benefits of change.

> 66% pull key stakeholders together into a steering group to support programme design and implementation (vs 37% of non-achievers)
> 63% ensure there is a communication plan in place for all key stakeholders (35%)

Actively engaging line managers

See boxout overleaf.
**Line managers – the secret sauce for transforming formal learning processes**

58% of participants cite that line managers are reluctant to encourage new ways of learning and yet they are critical to a transformed formal learning process.

Learners are in no doubt. They listen to their line managers and look for advice and support regarding their learning. A good manager is the key to good engagement and a productive team. No wonder 78% of learners find support from their manager essential or very useful and 48% say that it is their manager or director that would most influence them to learn online.

- 41% of learners report that it is their line manager who is most likely to influence them to learn online
- 64% say that direct pre- and post-learning support from their line manager is one of their top three factors for a smooth and successful online learning experience
- 78% think that support from their manager is essential or very useful in helping them learn what they need for their job

From the perspective of managers as learners (taking part in the Learning Landscape), those with a management responsibility are using more self-paced e-learning, live online learning and networking online, and feel that they can quickly put what they learn online into practice.

Building a rapport with line managers can help to equip them to support their staff and be more prepared to take a greater responsibility for skills development.

- 80% of ‘process improvement achievers’ agree that their organisation expects managers to take responsibility for developing the skills of their staff (60% non achievers)
- 47% equip line managers with resources so their teams get the most out of learning (22%)
- 30% agree that managers provide active support in the application of learning in the workflow (11%)

‘Learning by doing’ starts with looking at the programmes that are offered to the leaders and managers in the organisation and how technology is used to support their own learning. When the managers’ own experience of digital learning is positive, they are more likely to promote and encourage their teams.

Although 95% of organisations have offered leadership and management skills training in the past year, less than half (44%) of this is offered as online or blended programmes (rising to 73% in the Top Deck).

In the **Top Deck**:

- 82% agree that learning technologies are used to support the way we develop our managers and leaders (29% others) (65% achievers vs. 26% non-achievers) (0.42 Correlation)

"We have found that line managers are the most effective people to communicate to their teams about the key messages. Media can be email, f2f briefings, social media, pulse checks."

Managing Director, Professional and Technical Services
The Towards Maturity Key for unlocking potential: Fine-tuning processes

Overall, the Top Deck organisations (who score highly across the whole Towards Maturity Model) are at least twice as likely to agree that improving efficiency and process is having an effect on staff engagement:

- **87%** agree that staff can access learning relevant to their job (vs **45%** rest of sample)
- **49%** agree that staff are likely to recommend technology to colleagues to improve performance (17%)

Top Deck organisations are defined by their the results that overall activity across the Towards Maturity Model help to deliver. The specific focus of analysis in this chapter has highlighted a number of activity areas within the Model that are most likely to support the fine-tuning of learning processes.

Figure 21 illustrates the priority areas that are most likely to influence these outcomes. These include establishing a stronger relationship between the goals of the programme and longer term aspirations of the learners, working more proactively with leaders and managers to support the design and transfer of learning and a strong focus on managing and communicating changes.
The bigger picture

The ‘process improvement achievers’ are, by definition, strong in delivering outcomes at this level.

However, we have seen that Top Deck organisations are not only more likely to be achieving goals in these additional areas, they are also less likely to report a number of barriers that are holding back their progress, for example:

Table 10: Barriers holding back further progress in improving productivity and performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Reported by Process improvement achievers</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;D lack confidence in having business conversations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile learning is perceived as being too complex to support</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 See page 90 Appendix
MAKE IT HAPPEN – TIPS FOR UNLOCKING PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

✓ Identify and engage with stakeholders early on when planning any new learning initiative
✓ Line managers in particular need to become your greatest ally, so make sure their own programmes are the very best examples of technology-enabled learning
✓ Think about what motivates your learners and how this will influence the way you approach learning design. Short, sharp pieces of content; tests with helpful feedback; certificates - find out what works for them
✓ Can learning systems be integrated with other HR or management information systems to provide a more streamlined and joined-up approach?

In the next chapter we will explore how those that are achieving outcomes related to increased business performance and productivity are more confident in having business conversations and more confident in embracing mobile technology as part of their solution.
5. Outcome 3 – Boost performance

The old order in which 'learning' was somehow separate from the everyday job is being replaced by integrated approaches in which learning is part of what happens naturally in the workplace. Mobile devices are transforming the way in which people are engaging with learning to improve their performance at the point of need.

The potential opportunity

The majority of today’s L&D leaders not only want to improve the traditional training transactions of the function, they are also hungry to have a wider impact on organisational productivity, performance and even external customer service. The connection is clear. Learning programmes that help individuals to do their job faster or better, increase accuracy or quality, or reach technical competence more quickly, will not only have an impact on their individual performance, but as the effect is scaled up to organisational level, will begin to have a tangible impact on the business bottom line.

Figure 22 below shows the full range of performance goals cited across the sample:

Figure 22: What performance related outcomes are today’s L&D leaders expecting to achieve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve organisational performance</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase self-directed learning</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase on the job productivity</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce time to competence</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve external customer satisfaction</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate new ways of working</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expect a boost in performance

- Expect to reduce the time to competence by up to 15%
- Expect to increase productivity by 14%
- Expect to improve organisational revenue by 10%
The performance achievers

18% of the sample stand out in terms of achievement of the goals outlined in Figure 22 as they are achieving five or more from that list. Although the proportion is the same as reported in the last chapter, the individuals concerned are from different organisations with only 50% overlap.

By comparing these ‘performance achievers’ with the non-achievers for this outcome we have identified a number of tools and tactics that show the strongest correlation with productivity improvement.

Table 12 highlights the types of organisations most likely to be ‘performance achievers’. The proportion is highest in retail (27%), in professional services (28%) and in education (33%). Scale of operations does not appear to be a major consideration – there is no significant difference between those in single locations and multinationals/multiple locations.

However, e-maturity is hugely important, with those that have embedded technology in every programme realising the most benefits (46%), and experience also comes into its own as those with over 10 years’ experience of using learning technologies are also getting the best results (29%).

Table 12: Who are the achievers of outcomes related to productivity and performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>APAC</th>
<th>Charity sector</th>
<th>Retail sector</th>
<th>Under 500 Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion achieving five or more benefits in productivity and performance</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We want L&D to help us embed significant organisational growth and change, and while we have made some progress in the last 18 months, there is still some way to go.”

Learning and Development Manager, Food Manufacturing and Processing

“Managers are engaged with our performance management technology because they can see the benefits. I think if we can sell the benefits and then demonstrate this in practice, managers will buy in.”

Employee Development, Housing Sector

The average achievement of goals related to productivity and performance outcomes is just 26%, compared with 62% of Top Deck organisations.

The potential bottom line impact of learning innovation, done well, on performance and productivity is extensive.

Having a competent workforce is critical for success in every sector, and to be able to reduce the time to competency by 15% will have a massive impact, especially in larger organisations where finding skilled and/or specialist staff is a particular challenge and recruitment is an ongoing issue.

Over 700 organisations that have measured performance increase as a direct result of learning modernisation, have recorded an average 14% rise in organisational productivity and 10% increase in organisational revenue.

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Over 700 organisations that have measured performance increase as a direct result of learning modernisation, have recorded an average 14% rise in organisational productivity and 10% increase in organisational revenue.
Tools to boost performance

Achievers in this area are using a wider range of technologies and are more than twice as likely to blend their use of several different learning technologies in comparison to the non-achievers (38% of performance achievers vs 16% non-achievers).

One aspect of technology use stands out for the achievers in this category. They are embracing mobile technologies and supporting learning with bespoke apps, using the technology to support productivity at the point of need.

- 40% use bespoke mobile apps (20% of non-achievers)
- 82% use mobile devices (64%)
- 87% use job aids such as pdf’s or checklists (65%)

These tools are more closely aligned to the tools that staff themselves are using to boost performance (see below). They are also more likely to be using skills diagnostic tools (52% vs 24%) to identify requirements and tailor learning to individuals.

The learner perspective: Staff are motivated to succeed

People naturally want to do their jobs well.

- 69% are motivated by wanting to do their job better or faster
- 57% are motivated by wanting to increase their productivity
- 90% are clear how their job is helping the organisation to achieve its objectives
- 83% are seeking out the opportunity to gain new skills in the workplace

Channelling this energy into using digital learning to increase productivity and engagement demands a range of different solutions tailored to the needs of the learner.

And staff are learning on the move

61% of learners like to be able to learn on the go and 38% of learners are using their own mobile phone or tablet to access the resources they need to do their job better – with a further 12% happy to do so if they only knew what resources were available.

Interestingly, 40% of performance achievers of these outcomes use bespoke mobile apps for learning, a higher proportion than achievers in any other outcome categories. When we look at the Top Deck, almost 50% use bespoke mobile apps for learning compared with 21% across the rest of the sample.

Correspondingly, 28% of achievers also use mobile apps to specifically support performance at the point of need, suggesting that access to video content, e-learning objects, job aids and much more via mobile devices is increasingly important.

Achievers are also more likely to use their LMS to integrate a range of learning offers. Indeed, Top Deck organisations are more than twice as likely to integrate mobile apps within their LMS than the rest of the sample (36% vs 16%).
Tactics to boost performance

Whilst the ‘achievers’ are consistently more likely to adopt certain tactics than the ‘non-achievers’, there is still considerable opportunity for further improvement. The following tactics from within the Towards Maturity Model are the most highly correlated1 with success at this level.

Integrating learning and work

Across the whole benchmark sample of 600 L&D leaders around the globe, 93% are looking to integrate learning into the workflow (up from 80% last year). This significant jump shows the growing awareness that the focus of L&D professionals has to now moving beyond the course.

However only 50% on average agree that their approach to learning and development is shaped by models that support learning directly in the flow of work. Does this matter?

Not if your only focus is on delivering efficiency and improving the process of learning. Where it really starts to make a difference is at the stage of improving overall business productivity and organisational performance. At this level of output, 69% of achievers vs 46% of non-achievers have their approaches shaped by models such as 70:20:10.*

For Top Deck organisations, this shifts dramatically

85% of Top Deck organisations agree that their approach is shaped by models that support learning directly in the flow of work, compared to 46% of the rest.

The Towards Maturity Research has found that it is not the model used, or the percentage of activity in each area, but creating the right balance between learning in the workflow, social interaction and formal learning.

The tactics that correlate strongly at this stage highlight the foundational shift in thinking required from L&D professionals to move from delivering courses to having an acknowledged role to play in building business performance. They show that integrating learning and work starts with the basics:

> Listen and respond to business needs at a more strategic level
> Consider how to support performance beyond the course
  > How can course design be improved to transfer behaviour into the workplace?
  > How can we directly support individuals at their point of need?
> Get serious about setting and tracking business performance goals

---

1 Rank correlation efficient P>0.3 (p<0.001)

*In-Focus: 70+20+10=100: The Evidence Behind The Numbers. Towards Maturity, 2016.
www.towardsmaturity.org/702010
All stakeholders recognise L&D alignment with wider organisational goals

Business leaders offer both their support and resources when they see the ways that learning can impact their wider business performance goals:

> 80% of achievers agree that if something is important to the business, learning interventions will be resourced and managed correctly (vs 56% non-achievers)
> 68% agree their business leaders recognise that learning interventions are aligned with the overall business plan (37%)

Responsive to building performance support at the point of need

Timeliness is essential for boosting performance – offering support when and where it is needed is critical:

> 71% agree learning initiatives are delivered in time to meet the needs of the business (vs 43% non-achievers)
> 47% ensure staff have access to job aids online or via mobile devices (20%)

Ensuring digitally enabled programme design supports learning transfer

Performance improves when new skills are applied in the workplace. Active focus on activities that result in learning transfer during the formal learning process makes a big difference to results back at work:

> 66% include activities that help individuals to practice the desired outcomes (vs 41% non-achievers)
> 39% use highly interactive methods, such as games and simulations, in their learning solutions (18%)
> 22% apply techniques such as spaced learning to aid retention and application of learning (11%)

Evaluating progress and performance against business metrics

Workplace performance is boosted when business leaders and learning leaders work together to improve common performance metrics:

> 53% identify specific business metrics/KPIs they want to improve through learning in partnership with senior management (vs 26% non-achievers)
> 31% measure specific business metrics when evaluating the effectiveness of learning technologies (14%)

Of course some of their success comes back to the skills of the L&D professional themselves and, in the Top Deck, 82% agree that L&D staff are confident in incorporating new media in learning design (25% others). We explore this theme further in the final chapter.
The Towards Maturity key to unlocking potential: boosting performance

Top Deck organisations start to pull away from the pack when we explore improvements in productivity and performance. Compared to the rest of the sample, they are three times as likely to agree that learning innovation has:

- Contributed to productivity improvements (64% vs 19%)
- Contributed to revenue increase (62% vs 15%)

Whilst the broader actions of the Top Deck organisations across the Towards Maturity Model contribute to a wide range of learning outcomes, analysis of the performance achievers at this highlight a number of priority areas within the model that will specifically start to boost organisational performance.

The Towards Maturity key for unlocking performance potential includes aligning to the performance indicators of business up front and working with business leaders to track mutual goals throughout. It also highlights the importance of proactively designing learning interventions to support the transfer of and application of learning back in the workplace. (see Figure 23 below).

Figure 23: The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: boost performance

“The challenge of L&D is not only to improve the performance of existing employees but also help them envisage the future in order to develop competition.”

Operations & Admin Manager, Facilities Management

The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: boost performance

Top Deck organisations start to pull away from the pack when we explore improvements in productivity and performance. Compared to the rest of the sample, they are three times as likely to agree that learning innovation has:

- Contributed to productivity improvements (64% vs 19%)
- Contributed to revenue increase (62% vs 15%)

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The Towards Maturity key for unlocking performance potential includes aligning to the performance indicators of business up front and working with business leaders to track mutual goals throughout. It also highlights the importance of proactively designing learning interventions to support the transfer of and application of learning back in the workplace. (see Figure 23 below).
The bigger picture

The ‘performance achievers’ are, by definition, strong in delivering outcomes at this level, but too great a focus on a single outcome can limit the potential improvement across the board.

We have seen that Top Deck organisations are not only more likely to be achieving performance and productivity goals, they are also less likely to report a number of barriers that are holding back their progress:

Table 12: Addressing the barriers holding back progress in business responsiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Reported by Productivity achievers</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past experience of learning online has not met expectations</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;D staff do not feel they have permission to experiment with new ideas</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAKE IT HAPPEN – TIPS FOR UNLOCKING BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

✓ Use job aids to bring learning closer to the point of need, and integrated into the workflow
✓ Tap into the natural motivation and habits of your learners by facilitating the use of mobile learning
✓ Ensure course design enables transfer of desired behaviours into the workplace
✓ Focus on priorities - set and track business performance goals in partnership with senior managers

In the next chapter we will explore how those that are achieving outcomes related to business agility are reducing resistance to change. We investigate how those that are achieving outcomes related to agility and talent have reduced barriers relating to the lack of such outcomes by a factor of over 11%.
6. **Outcome 4 – Cultivate agility**

Organisations require responsive L&D functions to succeed in today's fast-moving economic and competitive environment. L&D need to step up to meet these demands and facilitate the use of tools to encourage conversation and sharing of best practice.

**The potential opportunity**

In the last chapter a pivotal contributor to building business performance was the alignment of learning provision to business needs responding to the rapidly changing technology environment is important, but from the point of view of senior business leaders, a responsive L&D team is one that is working with them to implement organisational change. Part of this is to react when new processes are introduced, new products and services are brought to market, or new customers or suppliers enter the business chain. Part is to be aware of more general change and to be proactive in helping to prepare staff to be receptive to new ideas.

When things go wrong, staff motivation and ultimately retention will suffer, with resulting cost to the business. Figure 24 shows the full range of agility related outcomes that the vast majority of today's L&D leaders are looking for.

**Figure 24: What agility outcomes are today's L&D leaders looking to achieve?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed up and improve the application of learning in workplace</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve employee engagement with learning</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a faster response to changing business conditions</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push updated information to employees at the point of need</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve staff motivation</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication and team work</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve staff retention</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These goals are not easy to achieve. On average only 20% of those looking for agility-related outcomes are achieving them. This rises to 54% of the Top Deck organisations.

**Expect to improve agility**

- Expect to change new products and procedures 24% faster
- Expect your measures of staff satisfaction and engagement to improve by 18%
- The average level of outputs related to agility and motivation is just 20%
The agility achievers

Despite high aspirations, agility is tough to achieve. Only 12% of the sample are achieving four or more of the outcomes in figure 18 – we will refer to these as the ‘agility achievers’. The Top Deck, are four times more likely to be reporting agility related benefits (51%).

Higher achievement is evident in Central Government (24%), Finance (15%) and those in the Middle East, Africa and India (17%) – all sectors and regions under intense pressure to respond quickly to the changing business environment.

### Table 13: Who are the achievers of outcomes related to agility and talent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>Middle-East/Africa/India</th>
<th>Central government</th>
<th>IT sector</th>
<th>Finance sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion achieving five or more benefits in agility and talent</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By comparing the tools and tactics of the agility achievers vs the non-achievers in this outcome area, we can start to prioritise the areas of focus for accelerating performance.

"L&D professionals need to become more business outcome focused and be agile in the way they work. Impact of learning needs to be fast, appropriate and create a tangible difference to the business."

Employee Development, Housing Sector

"We need the ability to deliver digital content quickly at the time when the business has identified the need. To be agile enough to arrange, script and direct digital learning content and support that with discussion and problem solving in communities of practice."

Training Manager, Professional Services
Tools to cultivate agility

The agility achievers are using a wide range of tools and strategy that have been previously discussed as contributors to success at improving transactional learning. What stands out for those successful at supporting agility is their use of social technologies that connect staff with one another.

Encouraging conversation

- 57% make use of learning communities (e.g. action learning) (vs 42% of non-achievers)
- 57% promote communities of practices (communities to support working practices/subject interest groups) (47%)
- 87% utilise communication tools (e.g. chat, IM, SMS, newsletter, forum) (71%)

Facilitating connection

The agility achievers not only promote increased connectivity between their colleagues but also make it easy for them through the technology they use:

- 77% maintain file and presentation sharing applications (e.g. GoogleDocs, Dropbox, Slideshare) (vs. 55% of non-achievers)

They are also more likely to use tools that engage individuals as they learn together on line:

- 26% have audience response tools (vs. 19% of non-achievers)

Tailoring learning to individual need and context

There are a number of software tools to support competency management, but they are not in widespread use apart from by the agility achievers:

- 46% are using a Competency Management System (vs 32% of non-achievers)
- 52% are using skills diagnostic tools (26%)
- 67% have personal development plans (49%)

“We use social learning such as hipchat to help us create continuous threads of discussion regardless of time zones.”

VP Client Strategy and Product Development, Professional and Technical Services
Tactics to cultivate agility

A significant number of Top Deck organisations are amongst the ‘agility achievers’, underlining the fact that it is important not to ignore the wider factors that come into play across the Towards Maturity Model. That said, analysis of the ‘agility achievers’ reveals the tactics that have the strongest relationship with being more responsive and encourage a more responsive work force. They are also more likely to gather and use evidence to inform their strategy and analyse success.

Developing a strong profile of their ‘customer’

High performing learning teams at this level have a ‘customer-activated’ learning strategy that is totally learner-centric. They are more likely to use data and diagnostics to understand and respond to individual need:

> 43% of ‘agility achievers’ agree they are proactive in understanding how staff currently learn what they need for their job (vs 28% non-achievers)
> 19% use electronic diagnostic tools to help tailor learning to individual needs (7%)

Using content to connect and engage staff

Connection with the user and speed is essential for cultivating agility:

> 62% apply storytelling techniques in our instructional design (vs 32% non-achievers)
> 42% provide micro-learning (i.e. under five minutes) where appropriate (18%)

Stronger feedback related to business outcomes

More in-depth data is likely to be gathered and analysed by those looking to support a more responsive and agile organisation:

> 38% collect information from line managers on the extent to which the learning points have been applied at work (vs 10% non-achievers)
> 31% collect financial data related to the programme benefits when learning technologies are involved (10%)

Recognise the importance of trial and error

The more open an organisation is to learning from mistakes, the more agile they become:

> 60% encourage staff to learn from their mistakes (vs 35% non-achievers)
The other factor that influences success at this stage is when staff are themselves proactive and understand how to identify the right information appropriate for their job (44% of agility achievers agree with this compared to 25% non-achievers).

Those L&D leaders that are achieving agility outcomes understand how their staff learn. They are using this information to adapt their programmes and plan the actions they need to take. They recognise that staff need opportunities to connect and to have experiences that stretch them - something that many learners are already seeking out for themselves.

The learner perspective: Learning is about experimenting and sharing

Learners are keen to share what they know and to learn from others in turn. 61% of learners are motivated to learn online by using technologies that enable them to network and work with others. In the 2016 Learning Landscape:

- >86% find working in collaboration with other team members essential or very useful
- >82% find general conversations and meeting people essential or very useful

One in two learners rank collaboration in their top three factors contributing to a smooth and successful online learning experience.

- >80% are willing to use technology to share their knowledge to help others learn
- >61% are downloading and using apps for social networking to their mobile

Learners are, however, slower or more reluctant to harness the benefits of social media to help them make choices about learning. Unsurprisingly, there are more followers than leaders where social media is concerned. Even those in L&D roles can learn something from their youngest recruits:

Figure 25: Use of social media in L&D

- I value the recommendations for courses from others that I see on social networks
- I use social media to collaborate and ask questions with my peers about courses
- I use social media to tell others what I think about a course
- I use social media to find out what others think about a course

[Bar chart showing usage of social media in L&D]
The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Agility

The Top Deck are more than twice as likely to report benefits related to agility than the rest of the sample.

- **62%** agree their learners put what they learn into practice quickly (compared to **25%** in the rest of the sample)

- **55%** agree that managers see additional business benefit from technology-enabled learning (27%)

Whilst the broader actions of the Top Deck organisations across the Towards Maturity Model contribute to a wide range of learning outcomes, analysis of the agility achievers highlights a number of priority areas within the model that will specifically start to unlock potential outcomes related to driving business agility.

These include an emphasis on empowering staff (focusing on their needs and maximising their opportunities to learn in the most natural way) designing learning in smaller engaging chunks and gathering feedback and data to inform ongoing decision making.

![Figure 26: Cultivate Agility - the Towards Maturity key to unlocking potential](image)
The bigger picture

The ‘process improvement achievers’ are, by definition strong in delivering outcomes at this level, they are also still looking to improve outcomes across a number of additional areas that are important to them.

**Top Deck** organisations are not only more likely to be achieving goals in these and other outcomes, they are also less likely to report that barriers related to the level of management involvement and buy-in where learning innovation is concerned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 14: Addressing the barriers that are restricting culture change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barrier</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance by line managers to encourage new ways of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of management priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAKE IT HAPPEN – TIPS FOR UNLOCKING BUSINESS AGILITY**

- Use new and emerging social and collaborative technologies to break down the barriers of communication
- Consider skills diagnostics and competency management to help tailor learning to need
- Involve learners in the learning design process - they know what they need and what works best in their busy schedule
- Break long and complex learning interventions into short, sharp resources that embed active and collaborative learning

In the next chapter we will explore how those that are achieving outcomes related to enriching culture have reduced line manager reluctance by a factor of over 17%.
7. Outcome 5 – Influencing culture

The elusive ‘organisational learning culture’ is difficult to achieve, even for those with technology-embedded programmes. Innovation and experimentation with technology can both help and hinder progress. Culture change begins with the L&D team itself.

The potential opportunity

Today’s learning professionals are looking to not only provide active interventions that improve responsiveness and performance. 9 out of 10 are also looking to support the way that the organisation continues to learn for itself.

Figure 27. What culture-related outcomes are sought by L&D leaders?

- Increase the ongoing sharing of good practice 98%
- Increase ability to personalise programme to individual need/context 97%
- Improve talent strategies to keep the best people 94%
- Integrate learning into the workflow 93%
- Drive business innovation 90%
- Increase ability to attract talent 87%
- Build capability of organisation to solve problems 77%

On average only 17% of those looking for agility related outcomes are achieving them. This rises to 46% of the Top Deck organisations.

The culture achievers

The proportion of those achieving four or more goals in influencing culture drop significantly at this stage with only 8% across the whole sample achieving this – this rises to 36% in Top Deck organisations.

Specifically organisations in the financial services (16%) and professional services (16%) sectors are more likely to report achievement of benefits relating to their organisational learning culture, as are those with over 10 years’ experience of using learning technologies (15%). However, even those who have embedded technology in every aspect of learning and in every programme and department, still find difficulty in achieving these goals (29%).

“We want to release learning from a culture which is currently centralised (learning is led by L&D ... to learning is owned by the individual).”

Head of L&D, Recruitment Services
Comparing outcomes of the ‘culture achievers’ (the 8% achieving four or more culture related outcomes) and the rest allows us to identify the tools and tactics most useful to influence culture.

### Tools to influence culture

Those reporting an improved learning culture within the business are twice as likely to be creating an environment in which users can contribute to the learning of others.

- **66%** are supporting user-generated content (vs **29%** non achievers)
- **49%** are supporting podcasting (**25%**)

They are helping individuals access useful resources and are more likely to be analysing what resources are being used:

- **27%** are using feeds, curation and social bookmarking (**13%**).
- **27%** are using learning record stores to track progress through a wider variety of content (**16%**)

General learning activity within the organisation is also more likely to be recognised using tools like achievement goals and badges:

- **32%** are using achievement goals (vs **15%** of the non-achievers)

They are also more likely to be willing to take risks with new approaches, and are experimenting with the latest opportunities that technology provides:

> "Our #BeMore culture change campaign, using video, user-generated content, speaker series, development challenge, all ran on our social collaboration platform."

---

### Table 15: Who are the achievers of outcomes related to culture and innovation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>APAC</th>
<th>Not-for-profit sector</th>
<th>Finance sector</th>
<th>Mid-sized 1,000-5,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion achieving four or more benefits in culture and innovation</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it comes to enhancing culture, many L&D leaders working with knowledge workers will find that they are pushing at an open door.
The learner perspective: Staff are taking control of their own learning

89% of staff consider that they are responsible for managing their own learning and development, rising to 93% for those working from home, and 94% of those educated to postgraduate level.

60% learn more by finding things out for themselves than from formal courses:

- 82% know what learning they need (68% know how to access it)
- 79% know what on-the-job support they need (64% know how to access it)

91% like being able to learn at their own pace and they are generally resourceful and more than capable at searching for the information they need:

- 70% find Google or other search for web resources essential or very useful, rising to 81% for those in senior management roles
- 55% find internal company documents essential or very useful

Traditional e-learning courses are valued by nearly half, with 47% finding self-paced e-learning courses essential or very useful (rising to 69% for those who are under 20).

Staff are more likely to know how to organise their personal learning strategies than many L&D professionals give them credit for:

- 72% have a clear personal plan about what they want to learn and why
- 63% know how to build a personal network to help them learn
- 70% curate topics that interest them and file for future reference but only 39% publish curated content to share with others
- 73% make time to reflect on what they have learned
Tactics to influence culture

A number of tactics are highly correlated with influencing culture. Tactics for success amongst the achievers include:

**Proactively encouraging ownership of learning**
- 81% of culture achievers agree that their people understand how their work is linked to the organisation's performance (vs 51% non-achievers)
- 49% agree that staff know how to productively connect and share (15%)

**Making content easier to find**
Successful organisations ensure that useful resources can be accessed and found faster by leveraging technology and support processes surrounding the individual:
- 35% have curation strategies in place to help staff make sense of the resources available to them (vs 11% non-achievers)
- 47% use tags and meta data to make it simpler for people to find what they need (24%)

**Identifying opportunities to support learning in the workflow**
- 68% develop challenging and stretch tasks to embed learning in behaviour (vs 22% non-achievers)
- 63% actively encourage staff to take on new work experiences as an opportunity to learn (35%)

**Begin and end formal learning in the workplace**
Formal learning continues to play a part in establishing a learning culture but at this level culture is enhanced by interventions pre and post course:
- 70% agree that objectives and aims of learning are discussed with individuals before they start learning (vs 35% non-achievers)
- 69% routinely collect information on the extent to which the learning points have been understood (25%) and 50% collect information on the extent to which the learning points have been applied (16%)

**Actively celebrating and sharing successes**
- 46% agree that individuals are rewarded or given some recognition for their achievement (vs 20% non-achievers)
- 67% regularly communicate learning successes to line managers and supervisors (36%)

"I share ideas and case studies of other organisations who have changed their learning culture to highlight the benefits."

L&D Manager,
Manufacturing

"We use technology to drive the new strategic direction of our business and embed a new culture worldwide."

e-Learning Manager,
Travel and Tourism
The Towards Maturity key for unlocking potential: Learning culture

**Top deck** organisations are more likely to report that their staff can determine their own paths through the learning opportunities available in an organisation (49% of **Top Deck** vs 29% of the rest), and are contributing their own learning resources to share with others (23% vs 7%). Indeed, 67% of the **Top Deck** have noticed positive changes in staff behaviour as a result of their learning engagement (17%).

Whilst the broader actions of the **Top Deck** organisations across the Towards Maturity Model contribute to a wide range of learning outcomes, analysis of the culture achievers highlight a number of priority areas within the model that will specifically start to unlock potential outcomes related to enhancing learning culture.

Figure 29: TM key to unlocking potential in learning culture

- **Defining need**
  - Strategic alignment
  - Business alignment

- **Understanding learners**
  - Learner choices
  - Learner motivation

- **Work context**
  - Business environment
  - Talent management
  - Work culture

- **Building capability**
  - L&D essentials
  - Designing learning
  - Transferring learning
  - Supporting performance
  - Facilitating collaboration

- **Ensuring engagement**
  - Implementing change
  - Empowering learners
  - Engaging leaders
  - Involving trainers

- **Demonstrating value**
  - Gathering feedback
  - Measuring impact
  - Communicating success
The bigger picture

We have identified tactics from the top performing organisations within each category of outcome. However, over two out of every three organisations are not achieving the majority of their goals in any of the outcome categories. What is more, over half of the sample continue to report barriers in the core skills of the L&D team to embrace digital change.

### Table 16: Addressing the barriers relating to L&D staff skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Reported by culture achievers</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L&amp;D staff lack knowledge about the potential use and implementation of technology</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills amongst L&amp;D staff to implement and manage e-learning</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61% of organisations are non-achievers in all five outcome categories

MAKE IT HAPPEN – TIPS FOR UNLOCKING A TRUE LEARNING CULTURE

- ✓ Ask how you are empowering your learners to take control of their own learning
- ✓ Make sure that information on learning opportunities and learning resources is readily available, clear and easy to find
- ✓ Don't be afraid to experiment with new technologies - this will help build team confidence and encourage greater collaboration
- ✓ Read widely and network widely - to feed your hunger for new ideas and to discover what is working well elsewhere
- ✓ And celebrate success!

"We want to change the culture of the organisation so that learning happens at the speed of need, is supported by line managers and makes a demonstrable difference in the workplace.”

Head of Learning & Organisational Development, Higher Education

We have seen that Top Deck organisations are not only more likely to be achieving goals across all categories, they have invested in the skills and capabilities of their own teams. What can we learn from the most successful organisations about unlocking potential within L&D itself?
8. Unlocking potential in L&D

Unlocking potential of today’s people professionals is essential if they are to support the rapidly changing workplace of the future. This chapter looks at the skills today’s learning teams need and provides insights into how the Top Deck organisations are addressing the challenge.

The potential opportunity – priority skills for today’s learning professionals

This year’s participants are very clear about how the L&D team needs to develop to ensure success of their modernised learning strategy. They have identified and prioritised a wide range of skills to help them unlock potential within their team as they seek to understand the business needs more effectively, design learning interventions across all media and support performance in the heart of the workplace. They are looking to manage the learning function more effectively and use data analytics to evaluate and adapt.

However, despite recognising the need for collective team competence over a range of skills, many learning leaders find themselves with worrying skills gaps and shortages.

When we compare the skills that are considered a priority today with those that are currently in existing teams, there are shortages, in performance consulting, business acumen, evaluation and data analytics, marketing and communications. Practical digital skills, too, are in short supply, with only 30% having in-house skills for webinar delivery, 34% having in-house skills for digital content development and 41% having technology/infrastructure skills.

Evidence would suggest that understanding and then addressing skills gaps and shortages is very important for those in the C-suite, but only 32% of the L&D leaders in this study have even done an audit of the skills they actually have in their L&D team against those that are required.

Nearly 30% of executives said a lack of skills, resources and experience with analytics within the HR function was diluting HR's effectiveness inside an organisation.
Figure 30: Skills of today’s L&D teams

- **Priority skills (average)**
- **Skills already in place (Top Deck)**
- **Skills already in place (rest)**
The achievers

Top Deck organisations are three times more likely to agree that L&D staff are confident in incorporating the use of new media in learning design and that their L&D staff have the right skills to design solutions that exploit learning technologies to business advantage.

When it comes to specific skills, the Top Deck is twice as likely to have the core skills in place for harnessing technology. These include basic instructional design, digital content development, delivery via virtual classroom and blended learning.

Figure 31: Who has digital skills in-house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>Rest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital content development</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing blended learning</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional design</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/infrastructure</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Top Deck are also twice as likely to have the capability to integrate learning and work. They are thinking beyond the course to the business issue and more able to understand the impact of learning. They are also more equipped to support collaborative sharing amongst staff, essential for influencing a wider learning culture.

Figure 32: Skills in integrating learning and work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
<th>Rest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance consulting</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating social and collaborative learning</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and communications</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analytics</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme evaluation</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisations in the USA/Canada (42%), Professional services (35%), Education sector (50%), and those with over 10 years’ experience of using learning technologies (39%) are the most likely to have these design skills in house.
There is an urgency by organisations to build social and collaborative learning with over half (53%) highlighting that they need to develop this skill immediately, while one in five say they need to develop this in the next two years.

Figure 33: The top skills priorities for immediate development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance consulting</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital content development</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual classroom/webinar delivery</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting ongoing workplace performance</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme evaluation</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analytics</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating social and collaborative learning</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tools of top performers

*Top Deck* organisations are proactive in applying the strategies they use to support business to themselves. Table 17 illustrates that they are more active in providing formal learning opportunities for their own teams. They are also more active in encouraging learning through social networks both internally and externally. Stretch assignments and reflection regarding lessons learned in the workplace also play a significantly role in keeping skills fresh and current.

### Table 17: Building L&D capability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rest</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>They join internal groups to learn from each other</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We encourage them to join external networks or professional bodies</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Learning</td>
<td>We encourage them to undertake professional HR/L&amp;D qualifications</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our organisation provides continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to support use of technology for learning</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>L&amp;D staff spend time in operational areas of business</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We encourage L&amp;D staff to keep a reflective CPD log/blog</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disturbingly, **31%** of the sample overall don’t know how their L&D professionals develop their own skills and either expect them to keep up-to-date (**17%**) or leave it up to them whether they wish to do so (**14%**). What’s more, compared with last year’s figure this proportion has increased by **20%** (**31%** vs. **26%**).
Tactics of top performers

Personal responsibility and background

It appears that the personal experiences of individuals leading the L&D teams may play a part in their success. This year we explored the backgrounds of the participants in the study and how they kept up to date.

Almost all of those leading Top Deck teams actively sought out new opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace. They are active online learners, and 71% of them are likely to recommend online learning to others as a result of their own experience using it (vs 59% across the rest of the sample).

Table 18: Learning strategies that L&D leaders use for their own learning L&D leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Rest</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a clear personal plan about what I want to learn and why</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to build a personal network to help me learn</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out new opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do online learning</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend online learning to others as a result of my own experience using it</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three quarters of those leading Top Deck teams have a clear personal plan about what they need to learn and why (compared to just 50% of the rest). They invest time in themselves and seek opportunities to continue to grow.

This focus may account for the fact that the majority of those leading high performing teams come from an L&D background rather than a business or HR perspective. Typically those who come from an HR background are half as likely to be leading Top Deck teams.

Table 19: Background of L&D leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Rest</th>
<th>Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning and development</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HR role</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and marketing</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business support (Finance, Quality, Procurement, etc.)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology specialist</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/subject expert in business</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extended network

**Top Deck** teams not only build their own skills but they also rely heavily on the skills of those around them.

Figure 34 shows how the **Top Deck** teams are twice as likely as the rest of the sample to work with a wide range of stakeholders in the learning design phase, including subject matter experts, stakeholder steering groups, classroom trainers, as well as the learners themselves and their managers.

When it comes to evaluation, they are three times as likely to work with managers to identify performance objectives and nine times as likely to work with line managers to understand the impact. Demonstrating return on investment for **Top Deck** teams is a joint responsibility that starts and finishes in partnership with business stakeholders.

They leverage good relationships with departments who have the skills and insights that they lack in their own team (for example, marketing, data analytics and IT).

The **Top Deck** also bring in skills from outside of the business to ensure that they continue to provide a great service. They are three times as likely to benchmark externally with peers or seek external feedback on the quality of programmes (e.g. through awards).

---

**Which other skills do you bring in from other internal teams or outsource externally?**

- "Specialist knowledge"
- "Technical skills"
- "Some soft skills"
- "External qualifications"
- "Video production"
- "Negotiation"
- "Graphic design"
- "Apprenticeship"
- "Professional printing"
### Internally

#### Learning Design
- Use stakeholder steering groups to support programme design and implementation: 92% (Top Deck) vs. 39% (Rest)  
- Involve managers in the design of the most appropriate solution: 69% (Top Deck) vs. 34% (Rest)  
- Involve classroom trainers in the design: 85% (Top Deck) vs. 49% (Rest)  
- Involve users in the design of the most appropriate learning approach: 77% (Top Deck) vs. 34% (Rest)  
- Formalise approach to working with internal subject matter experts: 90% (Top Deck) vs. 47% (Rest)  

#### Learning Evaluation
- Identify specific business metrics/KPIs to improve in partnership with senior management: 79% (Top Deck) vs. 25% (Rest)  
- Encourage peer-to-peer feedback about the impact of learning: 64% (Top Deck) vs. 36% (Rest)  
- Collect information from line managers on the extent to which the learning points have been applied at work: 49% (Top Deck) vs. 9% (Rest)  

#### Working with other professionals
- Have good links/relationships with the IT department: 87% (Top Deck) vs. 46% (Rest)  
- Draw on business expertise in our organisation to support (e.g. Marketing, Data Analytic experts): 60% (Top Deck) vs. 32% (Rest)  

### Externally

#### Learning Development
- Understand the critical questions that we need to ask of external providers: 90% (Top Deck) vs. 56% (Rest)  

#### Learning Evaluation
- We seek external feedback on learning quality: 67% (Top Deck) vs. 22% (Rest)  
- We benchmark our learning strategy and practices against other companies in our industry: 51% (Top Deck) vs. 16% (Rest)  

---

*Figure 34: Building communications with stakeholders*
9. Next steps – preparing for the future of work

The world of work is changing and today’s learning professionals play an essential role in equipping staff for constant change. However, a fundamental shift is required to unlock potential in today’s organisations. Learning professionals must move from a sole focus on supporting organisational learning to the wider remit of underpinning the very fabric of the learning organisation. Towards Maturity’s analysis of the data from 5,000 learning professionals shows you how.

Top Deck organisations are unleashing the power of their people.

The C-suite have identified a number of risks that will need to be tackled for today’s organisations to be sustainable and successful in the future. At the start of this report, we saw that external risks of accelerating customer demands and global growth are balanced with internal risks linked to technology and talent. The C-suite today is faced with challenges that offer both uncertainty and opportunity but they recognise that the answers lie not in the process but in the people.

Peter Cheese, the CEO of the CIPD, highlights that the future of work is human. Times of great uncertainly provide profound opportunities for today’s people professionals. But we need to step up to the challenge.

This is a challenge recognised by the learning professionals participating in the Towards Maturity 2016 Benchmark. They see their role, enabled by technology, shifting from delivering courses to supporting innovation, agility and productivity at a fundamentally different level.

Over the years, the Towards Maturity Learning Benchmark has taken an active role in analysing the data to identify key actions that influence that change.

The results are not just a new model or hypothesis. Top Deck organisations are making active progress across all of the key actions and, as a result, reporting more impact. Figure 35 shows the typical characteristics, the DNA, shared by 75% or more of the Top Deck teams that contribute to them improving efficiency, fine-tuning processes, boosting performance, cultivating agility and influencing culture.

As a result, Top Deck organisations are unleashing the power of their people.

"The future of work is human."

Peter Cheese, CIPD

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Figure 35: Shared tactics of Top Deck learning organisations

### Top Deck

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...that improve efficiency</td>
<td><strong>Efficiency achievers</strong></td>
<td>62%, 82%, 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning supports the skills</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the business needs</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate technology into</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>face-to-face training</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly review programmes to</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure relevance</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Process achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...that fine-tune processes</td>
<td><strong>Process achievers</strong></td>
<td>53%, 76%, 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse the business problem</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before recommending a solution</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers expected to take</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility for staff</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design supported by steering</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group of key stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...that boost performance</td>
<td><strong>Performance achievers</strong></td>
<td>37%, 68%, 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders recognise</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alignment</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning delivered in time to</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet business needs</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use activities to practice</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outcomes</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agility achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...that cultivate agility</td>
<td><strong>Agility achievers</strong></td>
<td>25%, 43%, 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-actively understand how</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff learn</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of learning from</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mistakes</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement through stories</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Culture achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...that influence culture</td>
<td><strong>Culture achievers</strong></td>
<td>54%, 81%, 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff understand link between</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their work and org performance</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New work experiences actively</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used as an opportunity to learn</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success regularly communicated</td>
<td>Top Deck</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to line managers</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Deck organisations, defined by their activities across the Towards Maturity Model, help us identify how to make the shift from delivering organisational learning to becoming the learning organisation that we discussed at the beginning of this report.
Six Characteristics of the new learning organisation:

- **Clarity of purpose** – a shared vision of outcomes that matter
- **Holistic staff experience** – a trusted brand that expects and facilitates continuous learning from start to finish
- **Thriving ecosystem** – individuals, managers and the extended enterprise working towards common goals
- **Agile, digitally enabled infrastructure** – supporting and enabling a fluid exchange of ideas and skills
- **Continual engagement** – self-directed, connected, accumulating collective understanding
- **Intelligent decision-making** – using performance analytics to inform and adapt

This research has analysed over 1.3m data items to isolate specific tactics that help deliver the outcomes that today’s learning professionals are looking to achieve.

In doing so, we have identified three key areas of action and used data analytics to clarify the actions that are required to unlock potential.

**Transforming the transactional**

*Top Deck* organisations have not ignored the traditional learning and development role in providing active support through programmes and initiatives. Instead they have combined technology, new liaisons with business and new models of learning to transform the transactional. They are active in improving efficiency and fine-tuning process by establishing clear purpose and goals, working in collaboration with line managers and traditional classroom trainers to deliver a learning experience that does not start and end in the course.

**Integrating learning and work**

The *Top Deck* do not stop there. They move beyond the transactional to identify how they can fully integrate learning and work. They are turning Harold Jarche’s statement that ‘work is learning and learning becomes work’ into a reality. They are actively considering how to use a digitally enabled infrastructure to boost performance through providing support at the point of need. They are leveraging thriving ecosystems of connected motivated workers to cultivate agility.

[www.jarche.com/2012/06/work-is-learning-and-learning-is-the-work/](http://www.jarche.com/2012/06/work-is-learning-and-learning-is-the-work/)
Preparing for an agile future

The only certainty about the future of work is the fact that organisations and the people within them will be facing constant and accelerating change. Top Deck organisations recognise this and are proactive in influencing culture by helping people to learn how to learn; encouraging and enabling continual engagement through a culture of sharing. They are also active in unlocking the potential of their own people, harnessing analytics, identifying opportunities and continually investing in the skills and capabilities of the people professionals to equip them for the future of change.

Unlocking the potential in your organisation – Make It Happen

This performance analysis of today’s L&D teams has highlighted evidence that can help learning professionals turn their aspirations into reality.

The shift to becoming a learning organisation does not happen by chance, it is understood and recognised by business leaders who work with smart people professionals to turn a vision into reality. The Top Deck are not perfect but they are already on the journey and are actively building new skills and supporting new approaches to unlock potential today.

What are you going to take from the evidence presented in this report to Make It Happen in your organisation?
Appendices
A: Study design

Data collection

Data for this report is drawn from three main sources

1. **Online Benchmark review through the Benchmark Centre**
   Individuals who have taken part in previous studies with Towards Maturity were invited to review their learning and development strategy using an online Benchmark Centre. The review is a seven-stage in-depth process which the L&D leader can revisit repeatedly to check and update their answers as their circumstances and approaches change. All data used in this report was updated after September 2015.

2. **Online Benchmark review through an online survey tool**
   Individuals with responsibility for modernising learning strategy in the workplace were invited to participate in a two-part online review between May and July 2016. The online review mirrored the questions in the Benchmark Centre such that data could later be uploaded for participants to revisit and refresh their data. The questions followed the sequence shown below:

3. **Learning Landscape Audit**
   This report also references data from a sample of responses from over 4,700 learners that took part in a Towards Maturity Learning Landscape Audit between September 2015 and July 2016

The Benchmark question set

The Towards Maturity Benchmark questions have been developed following extensive industry collaboration to reflect current trends and thinking. We are particularly grateful to Nigel Harrison, Jane Hart, Charles Jennings, Cathy Moore, Bob Mosher, Clark Quinn, Clive Shepherd, Don Taylor, Emma Webber and others who have provided input into the 2016 question set. Many questions have remained consistent with earlier studies to enable a longitudinal analysis over time.
The questions are of four main types:

- **Factual questions**: Details of the benefits and barriers, skills and technologies, users and locations for learning – continuing a longitudinal study first reported in 2010

- **Forecasts**: Participants were asked to forecast the changes in budgets, L&D teams and technologies expected by 2018 and comment on their challenges and vision for the future

- **Quantitative questions**: Development costs, training costs, study time, delivery time and time to competency resulting from implementing learning technologies. Responses were used to derive Key Performance Indicators in each of these areas

- **Benchmark review**: Consisting of 132 action statements that respondents were asked to agree or disagree with on a nine-point scale. Questions were largely opinion-based and used to derive the Towards Maturity Index™ first introduced in 2010 and detailed in Appendix C

**Promotion and communications**

An extensive email campaign ran during June and July 2016. The study was promoted by our Ambassador network and supporting media and networking organisations.

As an incentive, all respondents were offered access to the Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre™ to revisit their responses and received a Personalised Benchmark Report™ to support performance improvement. This report provided benchmark data on both factual performance indicators, such as the Towards Maturity Index™, efficiency benefits, take up and business agility, together with a benchmark profile of their own implementation practice in order to highlight areas of strength and weakness.

**Data analysis**

In most cases the analysis and data presentation is a summary of the data, expressed in percentage terms. Since respondents could opt out of any section as they progressed through the study, the actual size of the sample varies from question to question. Responses are segmented on the basis of several factors:

- Quartile/Percentile in the Towards Maturity Index™. Those in the top quartile are referred to as ‘Top Learning Companies’. Those in the top decile are referred to as the ‘Top Deck’

- **Organisation location, size, industry, sector and length of time using learning technologies**

- **The job role and line of reporting of respondents**

Differences between groups are given only when there are over 30 data sets in the group and the difference is statistically significant.
Benchmark participant demographics

About the individuals taking part

Over 600 individuals provided detailed information for this study. 386 individuals completed every question, and a further 45 completed questions in at least three workstreams. 431 participants received their Personalised Benchmark Report™.

80% of participants were completing the TM Benchmark for the first time.

Dropout was greatest amongst those in very small companies, those not in L&D roles, or with limited experience of using learning technologies, and those reporting in the line of business – who either did not have the knowledge to hand to complete all the questions or felt that they were not the best suited to answer.

Over 83% of participants stated that simply taking part in the Benchmark review had provided food for thought and generated new ideas to aid implementation.

Nine out of ten were L&D leaders reporting either to HR/L&D central or within a line of business:

Figure 37: Location of participants within their organisation structure

- Reporting to HR/L&D central: 76%
- Reporting to HR/L&D within a line of business: 15%
- Working within the line of business: 9%

77% have a managerial responsibility, either as senior managers in HR (11%) or L&D (48%), or with specific responsibility for e-learning strategy and management (15%). 18% of the sample operated alone or in very small teams and had a multi-faceted job role embracing aspects of strategy, learning management, development and delivery.

The median L&D team size is five staff.

Each team member supports the learning and development of a median of 250 employees/learners.
Participants were evenly distributed between industries and all sectors were represented:

- **Private sector**: 67%
- **Not-for-profit sector**: 17%
- **Public sector**: 16%
- **Multiple locations – one nation**: 45%
- **Multinational**: 40%
- **Single location**: 15%

28% of participants have been in their job role for over five years:

- **Under 6 months**: 9%
- **6-12 months**: 10%
- **1-2 years**: 20%
- **2-5 years**: 33%
- **Over 5 years**: 19%
- **Over 10 years**: 9%
Organisation size varied, ranging from micro businesses with fewer than ten employees, to large multi-nationals operating globally from a number of locations worldwide.

The 2016 benchmark attracted respondents from around the world. 61% of participants were from the UK, with 15% from other European countries.
Figure 43: Countries represented in the study

- UK
- Australia
- USA
- Switzerland
- Germany
- India
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- South Africa
- Finland
- Hong Kong
- Ireland
- Abu Dhabi
- Belgium
- Canada
- Denmark
- France
- Ghana
- Greece
- Honduras
- Korea
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Monaco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nicaragua
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Philippines
- Portugal
- Qatar
- Romania
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Sweden
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Uzbekistan
- Vietnam
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Figure 44: Industry sectors of Benchmark participants

- Public sector
  - Central Government, Public Administration and Defence
  - Local Government
  - Science, Engineering and Manufacturing
  - Automotive service industries

- Financial and insurance
  - Cleaning; housing and properties; facilities management
  - Utilities (electricity and gas)
  - other service activities

- Charity/voluntary sector
  - Social care, early years, children and young peoples services
  - Exhibition and events

- Health
  - Hotel and catering, travel and tourism
  - Justice and legal services

- Chemical and pharmaceutical
  - Higher education
  - Food manufacture and processing

- Wholesale and retail trade
  - Justice and legal services

- Professional and technical services
  - Further Education (College, WBL, ACL)
Maturity of Benchmark participants

Participants reflected a similar pattern of perceived maturity to previous years. The majority (32%) still considered that they were starting to develop and coordinate their use of learning technologies. Just 7% describe their use of learning technologies as ‘embedded’ across their organisation.

Top Learning Companies could be identified at all stages of experience of implementing a technology-enabled learning strategy. However, 41% of them were drawn from those with over 10 years’ experience (45% in 2015). 9% of those who had over 10 years’ experience were to be found in the bottom quartile. Only 30% of those who were just getting started were in the bottom quartile.

77% of Top Deck companies had four years or more of experience. 90% were organisations from the private sector and 72% had between 1,000 and 20,000 staff.

Figure 44: Variation in level of maturity with sector

Table 20: Level of experience with using learning technologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>% of Top Deck</th>
<th>% of Top Learning Companies</th>
<th>% of Bottom Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 years plus</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B: Organisations involved

In total, over 600 organisations provided data for this report. The following responded in full to the Benchmark review and did not withhold permission to use their name in this report:

Abbvie  
ABN Amro  
AGEAS  
AkzoNobel  
AL TRADE HOLDING  
Amici Procurement Solutions  
Angela Wood Design Ltd.  
ASOS  
ATOS  
Australian Financial Security Authority  
AXA  
Bard Pharmaceuticals  
BBT Pty Ltd  
BDO  
Bernicia  
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board  
Bidvest Foodservice  
Boots  
Brambles  
Bristol City Council  
BT PLC  
Carnival UK  
Central Queensland University  
Cerner Corporation  
Certitude  
Chemanol  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Citibank  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Coca Cola Amatil  
Credit Suisse  
Curo  
Deluxe Corporation  
Dimensions  
Dixons Carphone Warehouse  
East of England Co-op Society  
E.ON  
ERM  
Eurocell  
Fidessa  
Focus Birmingham  
Great Ormond St Hospital  
Guys and St Thomas NHS  
Health Services Executive  
Hospiscare  
Institute of Directors  
Kible Education and Care Centre  
Lavendon Group  
Lewisham Council  
LGSS – Northamptonshire County Council  
Lion Co  
Liverpool Mutual Homes  
Lloyds Bank  
London Borough of Croydon  
LV=  
Markel International  
McDonald's  
MOD, Defence Academy  
Molnlycke Healthcare  
Money Advice Trust  
National Trust  
Newport City Homes  
NOMS  
One Housing Group  
Ooredoo Qatar  
PA Consulting  
Paradigm Housing  
Ricoh UK  
River Island  
RMA Group  
RNLI of London
The business potential

The Key Performance Indicators below are average values from quantitative data provided by over 750 organisations that have measured the impact of modernisation for specific learning programmes. The average values have remained very consistent from year to year, but three-year rolling averages are presented to increase the sample size in each indicator and smooth out any annual variation.

Table 21: Key Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Impact Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to change procedures or products has improved by</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our measure of customer satisfaction has improved by</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our ability to speed up the rollout of new IT applications has improved by</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning interventions have increased organisational productivity by</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning interventions have increased organisational revenue by</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Impact Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our measure of staff satisfaction/engagement has improved by</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to competency has improved by</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications gained by staff have increased by</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff turnover has been reduced by</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Efficiency Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of training has reduced by</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach/Volume of learning has increased by</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery time has reduced by</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study time has reduced by</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are conservative views on the potential impact of learning innovation compared with traditions courses associated with the L&D function. If just a fraction could be achieved by your organisation it is worth considering a new conversation with your L&D team about how they could be achieved.
Through our previous research, we have been able to identify six workstreams of implementation behaviours that characterise maturity and directly link to the successful outcomes of learning strategy modernisation.

Now, with 13 years of Benchmarking data from over 5,000 participants, the reliability of the Towards Maturity Benchmark is established in the UK and across the world; many organisations are using the Towards Maturity Model as a strategic framework for change.

The Towards Maturity Index™ is a single benchmark of implementation maturity across all six of the workstreams in the Towards Maturity Model. Improving the TM Index will help organisations improve adoption and overall performance.

The results for the individual statements in the Benchmark Review are averaged into dimensions. The rating of the dimension is calculated from the average of the individual scores of each question in the dimension. We define good performers in any given dimension as those who ‘strongly agree’ and have scored 7 or above out of 9. Percentages listed in this report are the proportion of respondents that ‘strongly agree’ in each dimension.

The dimensions are grouped into the workstreams and action areas of the Towards Maturity Model using a method of Factor Analysis called Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Statements with the strongest correlation to the level of benefits achieved are then averaged across all workstreams to derive the Towards Maturity Index. A full explanation of the PCA technique used is available from the authors of the report.

Tables 22-26 show how those in the top 10% of the Towards Maturity Index are consistently reporting more benefits across the five stages than average.
Top performing organisations, mature in their use of learning technologies, are increasingly likely to:

**Defining Need**
Align implementation with strategic and tactical needs of the organisation. **Strategic alignment** supports long-term organisational goals with clearly defined vision (endorsed by business leaders), which is flexible enough to shift with changing business priorities. **Business alignment** ensures relevance, delivering short-term results.

**Understanding Learners**
Provide staff with the confidence, motivation and opportunity to learn in a way that suits them best. They consider **individual choices** for their staff (in terms of control, access and information available to them), as well as addressing issues of **individual motivation** (such as recognition, career development and supporting work life balance).

**Work Content**
Maximise opportunities to integrate learning into the wider working context. They consider the **business environment** (relationships with other departments and technology infrastructure), **work culture** (line management and workplace performance culture), and **talent management** (proactively supporting the wider talent strategy).

**Understanding Learners**
Build the skills and confidence of the L&D professionals who are supporting workplace learning and performance. This includes understanding current skills and attitudes (**L&D essentials**), **designing** and **transferring learning**, supporting **performance** and **facilitating collaboration**.

**Work Content**
Focus on change management and marketing activities to engage influential stakeholders. **Implementing change** effectively within the business includes **involving leaders** for top down support, **engaging trainers** providing critical integration with the classroom and **empowering individuals** to create engaged and confident learners.

**Demonstrating Value**
Understand and highlight business impact by **gathering feedback**, **measuring effectiveness**, in terms of business metrics and **communicating** benefits of learning programmes back to key stakeholders.

Organisations can use the Towards Maturity Model to benchmark their learning strategy with peers at [www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark).

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14 For a more in-depth article on the Towards Maturity Model – see Impact, the journal of applied research in workplace e-learning at: [www.towardsmaturity.org/article/2010/01/15/impact-journal-applied-research-workplace-e-learni/](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/article/2010/01/15/impact-journal-applied-research-workplace-e-learni/)
### Tables 22-26: Five categories of outcomes and the extent to which they are achieved

#### Table 22: Improving efficiency

| Average wanting outcome | Average reporting benefit | Top Deck reporting benefit | Overall reporting outcome Avg vs Top Deck
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase learning access and flexibility</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of learning delivered</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve induction/onboarding process</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply with new regulations</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase volume of learning – reaching more people</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce training costs</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Improvement in management & administration | 96% | 31% | 67% | 33% reporting benefits (62%) |
| Deliver greater value for money | 95% | 33% | 62% |
| Develop a better qualified workforce | 91% | 32% | 68% |
| Reduce time away from the job | 88% | 34% | 66% |
| Speed up the implementation of new internal processes or IT systems | 88% | 31% | 61% |
| Inform customers/suppliers of new products/services | 59% | 35% | 66% |

#### Table 23: Fine-tuning processes

| Average wanting outcome | Average reporting benefit | Top Deck reporting benefit | Overall reporting outcome Avg vs Top Deck
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve organisational performance</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve self-directed learning</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase on the job productivity</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce time to competence</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve external customer satisfaction</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate new ways of working</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25: Cultivating agility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Average wanting outcome</th>
<th>Average reporting benefit</th>
<th>Top Deck reporting benefit</th>
<th>Overall reporting outcome Avg vs Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed up and improve the application of learning in workplace</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20% reporting benefits <strong>(54%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve employee engagement with learning</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a faster response to changing business conditions</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push updated information to employees at the point of need</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve staff motivation</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication and team work</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve staff retention</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26: Influencing culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Average wanting outcome</th>
<th>Average reporting benefit</th>
<th>Top Deck reporting benefit</th>
<th>Overall reporting outcome Avg vs Top Deck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the ongoing sharing of good practice</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17% reporting benefits <strong>(46%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase ability to personalise programme to individual need/context</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve talent strategies to keep the best people</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate learning into the workflow</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive business innovation</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase ability to attract talent</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build capability of organisation to solve problems</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D: Towards Maturity Ambassadors

This report is free to download thanks to the support of Towards Maturity’s Ambassadors, who share our belief that independent research should be freely available to all.

We’re the CIPD — the professional body for HR and people development. We are the voice of a worldwide community of 140,000 members, committed to championing better work and working lives. We’ve been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. Through our expertise and independent research, we provide a valuable point of view on the rapidly changing world of work.

www.cipd.co.uk

Quality research, nurturing fresh thinking and delivering impact, are at the heart of our publishing philosophy. With this in mind, Towards Maturity’s highly respected Benchmark research is a perfect fit for us. By making the Benchmark available on the Emerald digital platform we will increase the impact it has upon organisations. We are also excited to make the Benchmark available across our academic networks, enhancing its global reach and positively influencing the research agenda itself.

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com

Learning Technologies, incorporating Learning & Skills, is Europe’s leading showcase of organisational learning and the technology used to support learning at work. And it continues to grow in importance, value and attendance year on year.

www.learningtechnologies.co.uk

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.

www.leolearning.com

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.

www.charitylearning.org
Acteon develops award-winning communication and learning solutions to empower growth, change and development. Acteon's solutions reflect the specific requirements of their clients – from bespoke blended programmes on induction, product knowledge and compliance training, to support with improving engagement and driving change. Whether the need is a single ‘course’ or a global corporate programme, Acteon creates learning interventions that align with individual and organisational goals.

www.acteoncommunication.com

CrossKnowledge is an engaging, forward-looking digital learning solution, driving business outcomes and the ability to transform individuals and entire organisations. We provide a customized, fully integrated learning solution and implement it at unmatched velocity. CrossKnowledge, a Wiley brand, serves over 10 million users in 130 countries.

www.crossknowledge.com

Developing People Globally (DPG) leads the way with flexible learning solutions that guarantee success in professional qualifications. With over 25 years' experience delivering innovative and credible quality programmes, we enable professionals to build their capability, drive the performance of their organisation and fast track their career unlike anyone else. Our philosophy is simple: Your success is our success.

www.dpgplc.co.uk

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www.docebo.com

Dossier is a point solution for enterprise competence management and learning compliance. Our customers operate in high consequence industries such as health, aviation and finance. We ensure capability where it matters for our more than 300 customers and 300,000 users.

www.dossiersolutions.com

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www.getabstract.com

GoodPractice provides toolkits, e-learning, consultancy and development assessments for a wide range of different organisations. These can be utilised as standalone resources or seamlessly integrated into a blended learning solution.

www.goodpractice.com
Kallidus is a leading provider of integrated learning and talent solutions, with 15 years’ experience in making learning and talent a success for over 200 clients. With a passion for delivering outstanding customer service, we work in partnership with many leading brands, including McDonald’s, O2, AstraZeneca, Transport for London and Eurostar, to help achieve business transformation and drive long-term performance success.

www.kallidus.com

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www.kineo.com

KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax, and Advisory services. Our clients choose us for our breadth and depth of knowledge coupled with our learning technology skills. We deliver the measurable skills capability an organisation needs to realise their strategic aims. We develop learning solutions that are designed with the learner experience at the heart. We develop bespoke learning solutions and have a wide range of simulations, bite-sized modules, and off-the-shelf resources across a diverse selection of content areas.

www.kpmglearningacademy.co.uk

Towards Maturity’s dedication to promoting good practice and innovation are values that Learning Pool shares. We hope that our contribution will help create an environment where real-world research informs organisational improvement.

We’re thrilled to extend the benefits of the programme to our customers, with Personalised Benchmark Reports to help make improvements to areas that are important to them.

www.learningpool.com

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www.lrmg.co.za

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www.lumesselearning.com
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www.raytheon.com/ourcompany/rps/regions/uk

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www.redware.co.uk

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www.saba.com

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www.skillsoft.com/emea

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www.speexx.com

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www.spongeuk.com

Find out more at: www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors
About Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity is an independent benchmarking practice that provides authoritative research and expert advisory services to help assess and improve the effectiveness and consistency of L&D performance within organisations. The Towards Maturity portfolio includes:

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study™
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognised longitudinal study on the effective implementation of learning innovation based on the input of 5,000 organisations and 25,000 learners over 12 years. Towards Maturity continuously surveys and studies how people learn at work. This data is used to help L&D leaders assess and improve the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their learning provision. Previous research papers and sector specific reports are available through the Towards Maturity Shop.

Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre™
www.mybenchmark.towardsmaturity.org

A dedicated centre to complete your Benchmark and apply everything we know about good practice to gain personal, practical time saving advice in one place. Follow the online three-step continuous improvement process and benchmark your current approach with your peers.

Towards Maturity Strategic Review™
www.towardsmaturity.org/strategicreview

The Towards Maturity Strategic Review is a deeper analysis and comparison of your Benchmark against those who are already utilising learning innovation to deliver bottom line results and success. It helps you analyse and interpret your personalised Benchmark Report to establish a base line and identify the next action steps for performance improvement leading to good practice within your organisation.

Towards Maturity Learning Landscape™
www.towardsmaturity.org/learner

The Towards Maturity Learning Landscape provides critical insights to help you understand the behaviours of your staff so you can design learning solutions that can be embedded more effectively into the workflow. It supports new learning technology strategies whilst mitigating risk when introducing new programmes or models of learning.

Towards Maturity Sector Benchmark Groups
www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmarkgroups

Join senior L&D leaders in your sector three times a year to use the Towards Maturity Benchmark to support performance improvement, prioritise action planning and accelerate progress. Attendance supports faster business results, strategic and tactical insights and an invaluable opportunity to network.

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