

Learning Agility:

Five Ways Learning Will Change

2020



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Introduction

As the workforce begins to emerge on the other side of the coronavirus pandemic, organizations will grapple with what learning looks like in the world of the “new/next normal.” If anything, the shutdown has crystalized the need for agility. Those whose learning strategy was agile were able to pivot; those that weren’t have been struggling.

One thing is clear, things will not go back to the way they were. Even though the number of remote workers won’t remain as high as they have been during the pandemic, they will not be returning to 2019 levels. A recent Brandon Hall Group COVID-19 survey found that more than one-third of companies expect half or more of their workforce to remain remote.

Remote Work

- Half to three-quarters of workforce
- More than three-quarters of workforce

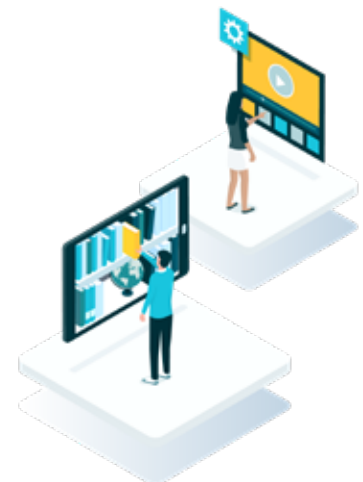
10% Before
6%

26% During
stay-at-home
lockdown
51%

23% Future
projection as
lockdown eases
12%

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

While it might be the biggest, most visible one, remote work is not the only change. Businesses face multiple challenges as pandemic restrictions begin to subside. Brandon Hall Group’s survey *Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience* found that things such as upskilling and determining new roles have greatly increased in importance.



Most Important Business Transitions

(Rating of 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

	5/26 - 6/25	6/25 - 7/24	
Managing change	25%	57%	+128%
Sustaining strong communications across the enterprise	58%	76%	+31%
Generating sales and revenue	20%	38%	+28%
Creating policies related to employees who are afraid to come back to on-site work	62%	79%	+27%
Determining upskilling/reskilling priorities related to changing business conditions	55%	67%	+22%
Determining who to bring back from furloughs and layoffs and who will be terminated	52%	58%	+12%
Determining whether employees will come back to same jobs/roles or whether their jobs will change due to business conditions	43%	48%	+12%
Training employees on remote work technology and other topics related to business continuation during COVID-19	60%	58%	-3%

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

Upskilling people and training them to create new roles in a remote work environment is a must, which means a much heavier reliance on digital learning modalities. Nearly two-thirds of companies believe their use of digital learning will either stay the same as it has been at the peak of stay-at-home orders or even increase post-pandemic. About the same amount of companies say that their employees are prepared to make greater use of digital learning.



Role of Digital Learning as Pandemic Eases

Use of digital learning will remain the same or perhaps increase



ILT will be used even more than before the pandemic

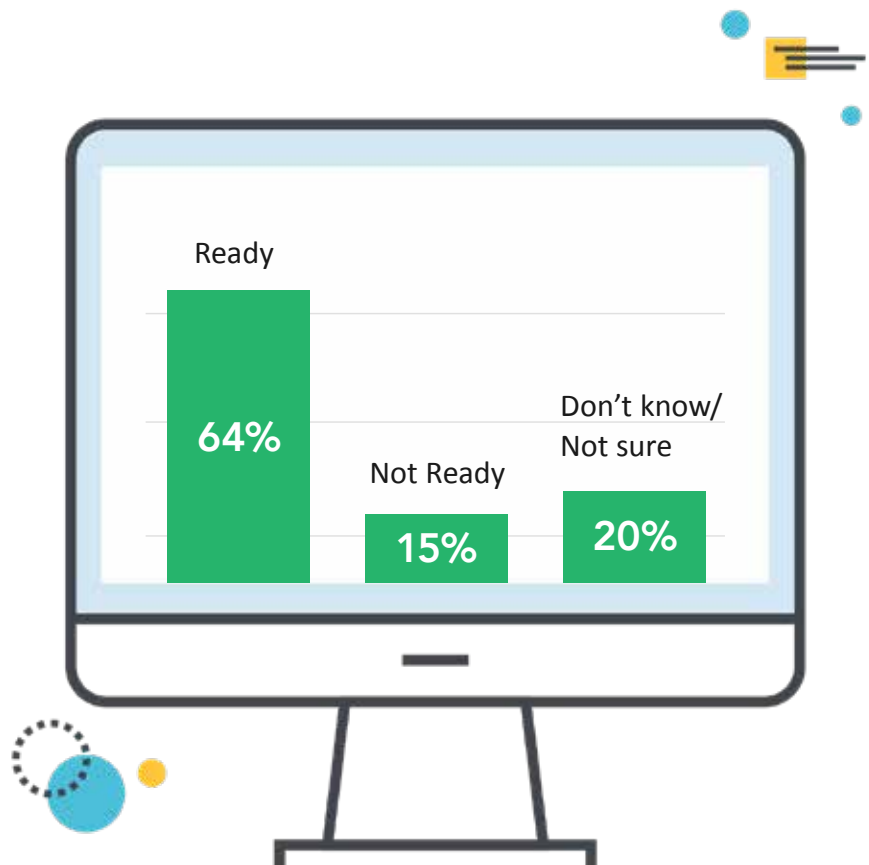
Use of digital learning will return to about the same levels as before the pandemic

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

Organizations need to figure out how they are going to address the types of training they are going to need in this new environment. There is going to be the need for classic organizational training like in onboarding, compliance, etc., but done in new ways. But there is also going to need to be more fast-paced, operational learning as people's day-to-day jobs change.

Employee Readiness to Make Greater Use of Digital Learning

Source: Brandon Hall Group
Responding to Longer-Term HR
Challenges from COVID-19, 4/29/20



Operational Learning Rising in Importance

{ **56%** Said Adjusting Business Operations is Toughest Challenge }

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING



- HR/Organizational Dev.
- Personal Development
- Foundational Skills
- Classroom, Virtual Classroom, eLearning
- Medium to Long Content Shelf Life

OPERATIONAL LEARNING



- Line of Business/Ops
- Business Execution
- Operational Knowledge
- Mobile, Augmented Reality, Games, Simulations
- Short to Medium Content Shelf Life

Source: Inkling

To meet these new and evolving needs, learning is going to need to change — and faster than ever before. To get this done in an impactful and sustainable way, we are going to need more of these five things from learning:



TRUST



ACCESS



SPEED



REVELATION



ADOPTION

TRUST

We live in a time where there simply is no “not knowing.” If someone lacks the answer to a question, the information is seconds away with the click of a mouse or a touch of a screen. If information is not readily available from a trusted source, employees will seek it out elsewhere.

A single source of truth ensures learners trust the knowledge and information delivered. Confidence is critical in an agile learning environment. Without confidence in the

learning, people are hesitant to develop, adapt and move forward.

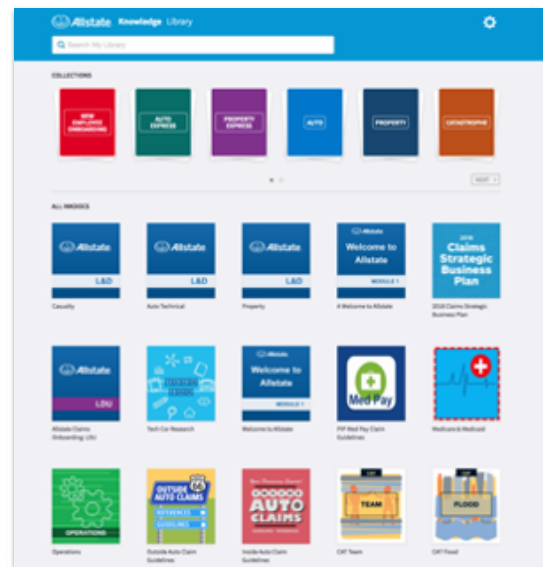
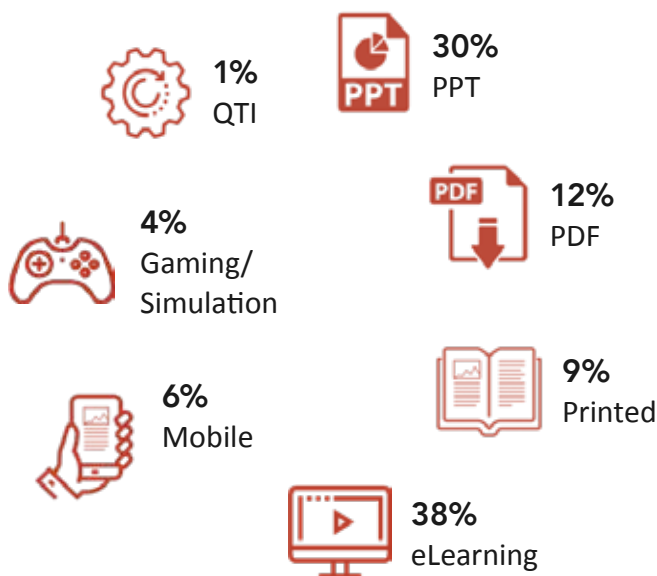
In an environment where content and information are scattered about the organization, in multiple formats and multiple locations, this is especially challenging. To reduce the chaos, organizations must be able to organize learning content using technology platforms that connect people to pertinent, relevant information in a familiar, easy-to-use environment.

The Need for a Single Source of Learning Truth

PRE-PANDEMIC — TRAPPED LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE

POST-PANDEMIC — SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

Legacy Content is Not Designed for the Modern Experience

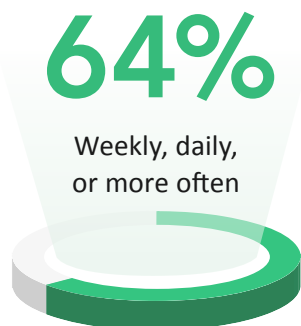


Source: Inking

ACCESS

Ultimately, what people require is access to information. In an environment where people have to connect to learning resources weekly, daily or multiple times a day, a static, event-based learning strategy will not suffice. People are accustomed to quickly finding information and answering questions via platforms such as Google and YouTube, so learning must provide similar experiences when possible.

How often would you expect your individual contributor population, on average, to need to connect with learning resources to effectively perform their job?



Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group, Learning Strategy Survey

Companies able to create and deliver learning that fits well into the flow of

work are achieving better results than those that are not. In Brandon Hall Group research, we have been able to identify those companies that say their learning efforts had a positive impact on these outcomes:

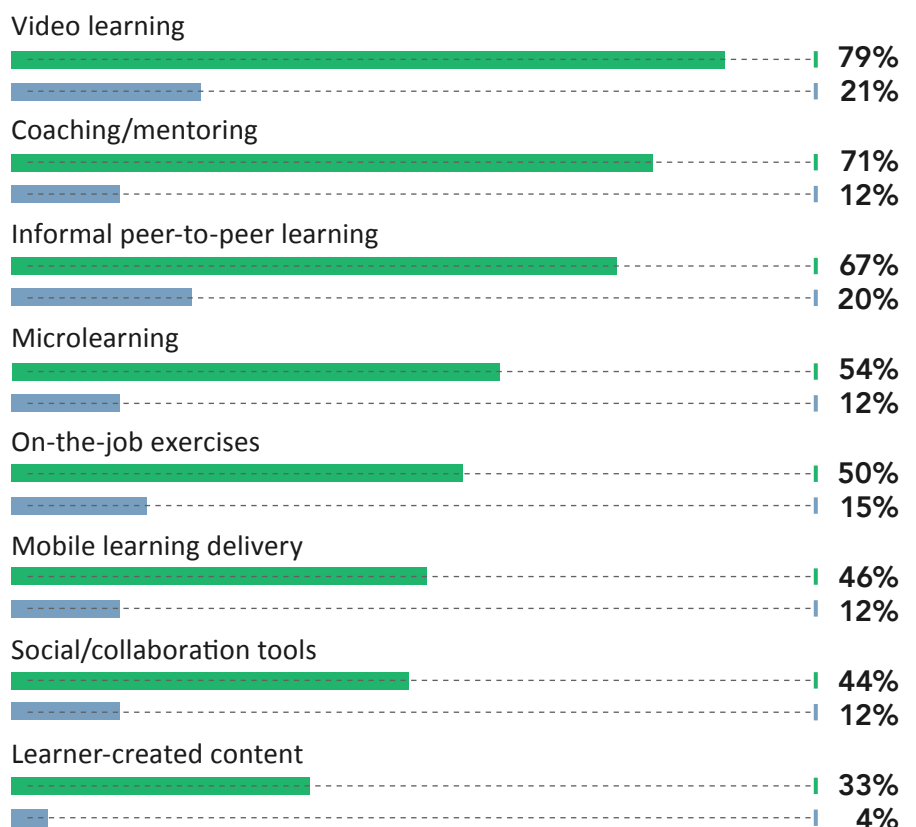
- Time to productivity/ effectiveness
- Voluntary turnover/ employee retention rates

- Employee engagement
- Individual performance
- Manager/supervisor observations
- Team effectiveness

These “high-impact learning” companies are more likely to be using a wider variety of learning modalities, especially those that expand access to learning.

Learning Tools and Technology (Use Often or Always)

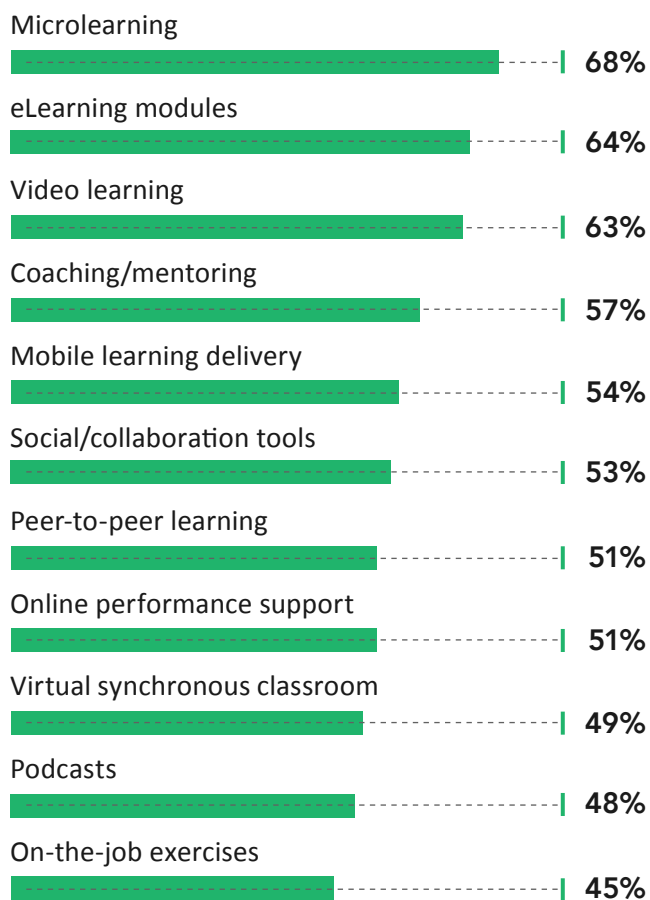
- High Impact
- Low Impact



Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Learning Strategy Survey

Overall, as companies continue to transition out of the pandemic mode, we will see a lot more of this type of learning increase, as most companies plan to increase their use.

There Will be More Options



Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group
Learner Experience Survey

Now that companies are forced to suspend or eliminate in-person learning events, it is an opportune time to reimagine the learning experience. Rather than creating digital replicas of the in-person events, organizations should be focused on placing that learning into the flow of work. Instead of in-person or desktop eLearning, we should be looking at anywhere-anytime learning opportunities.

Case in Point

A 24-hour Gasoline and Convenience Store

BEFORE

Limited
Backroom
Access



AFTER

Access
Where
Learning
is Needed

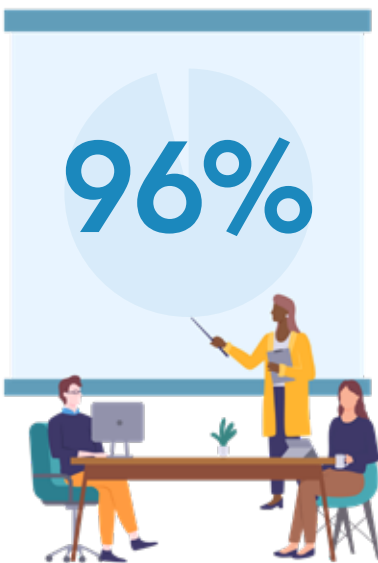
Source: Inkling

A 24-hour Gasoline and Convenience Store has to deliver training to a widely dispersed audience on a variety of different operational topics. They do everything from food service to operating franchise restaurants, to gas station operations and more. Previously, much of their training took place on a computer in the manager's office. This severely limited employees' access to the training, especially in moments of need. By partnering with Inkling, They were able to provide access to training on tablets and mobile phones used throughout the workspace. As one learning leader put it: "The barrier to learning in my environment is the manager's office door. Inkling is our way to be able to communicate directly to those frontline employees, on an iPad, on the sales floor, in front of the equipment instead of in the manager's office trying to flip/flop back and forth between learning and doing."

SPEED

The biggest challenge the COVID-19 pandemic presented to learning is that for most companies, the vast majority of learning has been taking place in-person within instructor-led classrooms. Almost overnight, in-person ILT was no longer an option.

Most organizations use ILT to some degree to deliver learning:



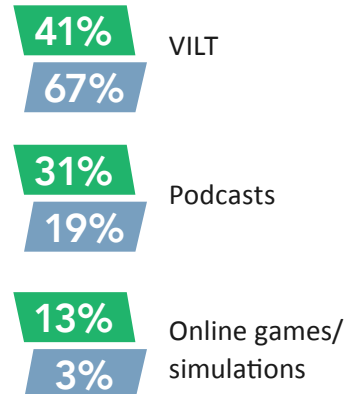
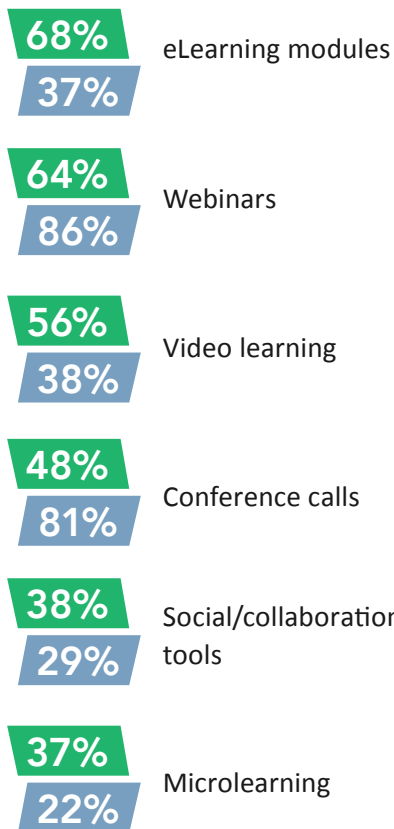
Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

In the wake of stay-at-home orders, companies rushed to find ways to replace their ILT. Typically, the first response was to take the content created for the classroom and put it into a webinar or meeting platform and have the instructor deliver in that

medium. Unfortunately, ILT content does not always translate to digital and in-person instructor skills do not always translate for virtual instruction. Over time, companies recognized this and started to reduce their reliance on webinars and conference calls, and began replacing ILT with multiple learning modalities.

'Go-To' Tools for Converting Live-ILT Learning

● July vs. ● April



Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

Creating content in a timely fashion ranks high on a list of people-related priorities, and many companies need fresh or improved technology to help them do it.

What Challenges Can Technology Address?

60%

Say creating learning content in a timely fashion is an important/critical people function during the post-pandemic transition

44%

Believe better technology will help them create learning content in a timely fashion

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

Learning Agility: Five Ways Learning Will Change

While there will be a return to ILT in a post-pandemic world, similar to remote work, it will not go back to the same levels. Organizations should adjust their learning strategies to focus on more rapid, collaborative content authoring to create experiences that can change with the business.

Intuitive, Fast Collaborative Authoring

PRE-PANDEMIC — POWERFUL, EXPERTISE, SLOW

POST-PANDEMIC — SIMPLE, COLLABORATIVE, FAST



Slow



Fast



Complicated



Simple

Source: Inkling

It will become critical for organizations to have authoring tools that put more power into the hands of subject matter experts rather than instructional designers. These tools allow people to create many of the modern learning experiences companies need without having a lot of development or programming expertise.

RELEVANCE

One of the key characteristics learning must exhibit is relevance. Learners want to know what is in it if for them. They want to know how the learning relates to them and their role, and how it will help them do their job better and help the organization. When companies think about relevance and personalization for learning, it's important to remember that it is about two things:

1

The process of providing learning experiences based on the employee's professional and personal needs/interests

2

Being able to access that learning in a venue and time frame that is best for the employee

62%

of High Performers use personalized learning as part of their learning strategy.

35%

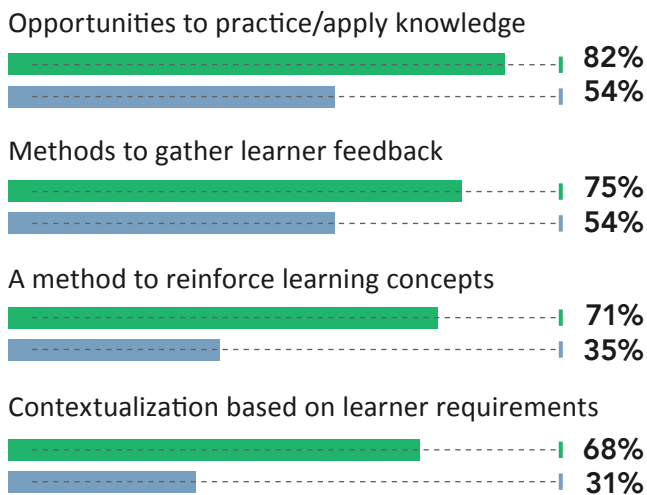
of Low Performers use personalized learning as part of their learning strategy.

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

We covered the second item in the section on access, so let's focus on relevance. Looking again at high-impact learning organizations, we found that these companies are far more likely to offer various levels of relevance and personalization than other companies. They are providing recommendations based on what they know about the learners, as well as linking the learning to the goals and objectives.

Creating Relevancy

● High Impact ● Low Impact

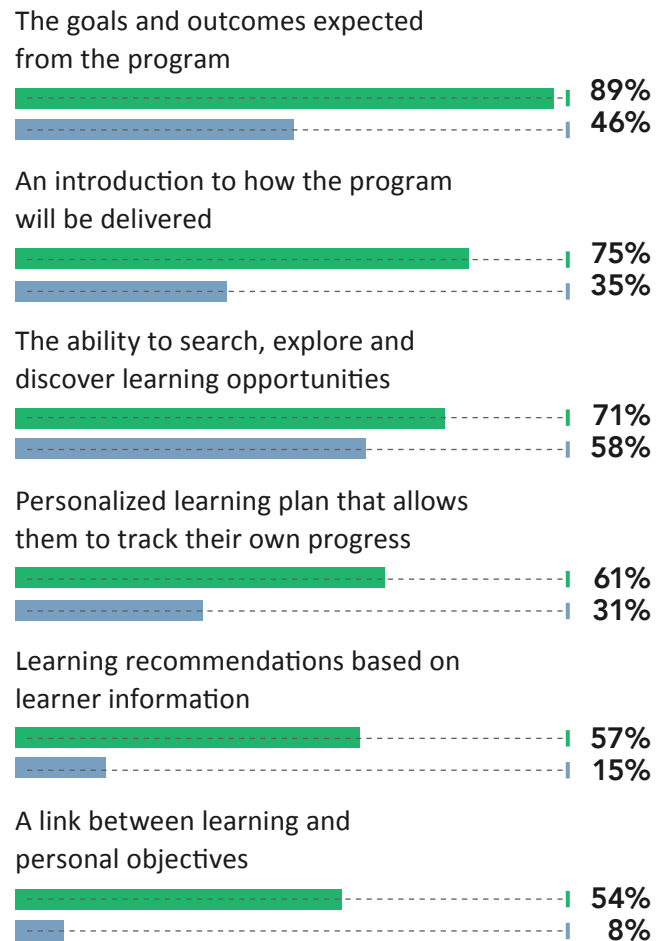


Source: Brandon Hall Group Learner Experience Survey

Relevancy to career is not just about what you are doing right now, but also about how to advance. As you gain mastery of a skill, a job or a role, the need for core learning in traditional models decreases as the need for more reinforcement and microlearning increases. Sustaining relevancy requires a shift from a "teach, study, learn" model to a "find, learn, do" model.

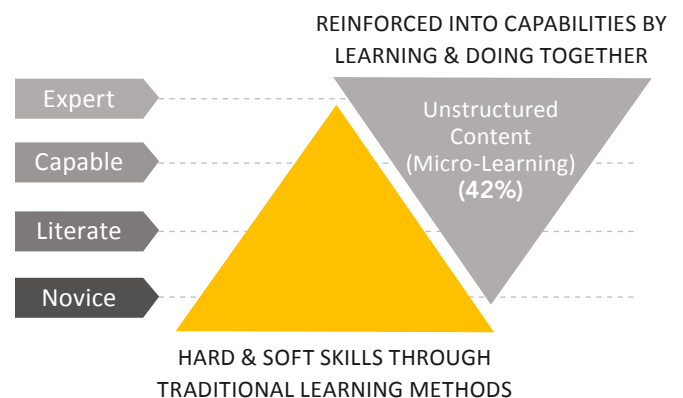
Creating Relevancy

● High Impact ● Low Impact



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learner Experience Survey

Creating Capabilities & Expertise



Source: Inking

A Major Fast Food Restaurant Company

Case in Point

Training for this Major Fast Food Retailer employees can be challenging on many fronts. The company operates in a high-turnover industry and employees are spread out across many locations; typically without access to a computer to engage in training. While this environment is not unique to this company, the chain is well-known for offering a revolving menu of limited-time items throughout the year, requiring employees to be upskilled quickly. In the past, the company would produce paper training forms and menu-item build cards, which were not always effective when employees needed them most. They moved to a digital platform powered by Inkling that made it possible for an employee to get the information they need for the job they are doing at the moment of need — since employees often move from one role to another. A cashier can quickly prep for explaining and ringing up the item and someone on the line can refer to a video on how to put the item together.

BEFORE — COMPLEXITIES AND PAPER

LTO Build Cards/Posters



Paper Training Forms



SOPs on Corporate Intranet

AFTER — SPEED, SIMPLICITY AND VIDEO

Digital, Mobile, On-the-Job Learning



Source: Inkling

ADOPTION

Adoption is when a majority of your intended audience participates in a learning event that you implemented. It may sound simple, but in practice it can present a big challenge. Many barriers can stand in the way:

- Employees are too busy for training, with too many other priorities.
- Employees think they already know the material, so they don't want to attend.
- Training has a bad reputation, so employees avoid it.
- Systems are hard to use.
- Nothing seems relevant.

Learners often become disillusioned with the way their organization's traditional LMS operates. They find it hard to use and often counterintuitive. They want technology that works the same way things work in their everyday lives. Many times, it is the user interface that keeps learners from engaging. Learning platforms need to be simple for the user, with quick access to small chunks of learning. Learners need to be able to easily search for and find relevant information and do it on their mobile devices.



Case in Point

A Major Construction Machinery and Equipment Company

BEFORE — STRUGGLE WITH ADOPTION OF ELEARNING



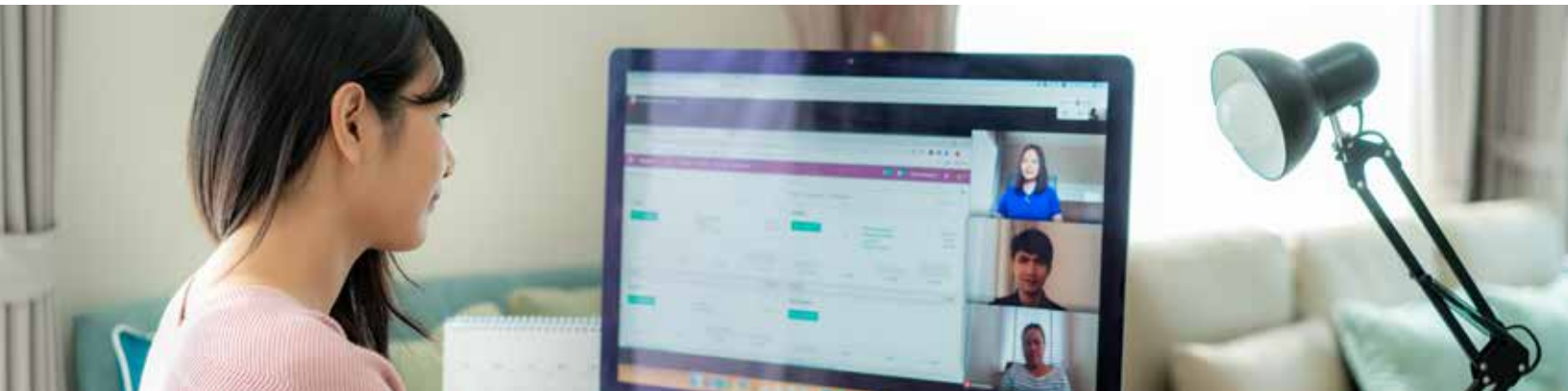
AFTER — MORE ADOPTION OF MODERN LEARNING



Source: Inkling

This Major Construction Machinery and Equipment Company has a wide array of voluntary learning programs available to employees. Its old platform provided access to the material, but it was not easy to find or navigate. They partnered with Inkling to create an environment that was clean, simple and mobile-friendly. The layout is much more intuitive and learners were finding topics of interest they may not have previously known were available. By making the training easier to find and use, they were able to drive higher adoption rates for their learning.

Key Takeaways



As companies transition from the COVID-19 disruptions, they will need to recover quickly. Learning plays a hugely critical role in this recovery and learning professionals need to be prepared for this. Here are the ways learning will help businesses address the top transition priorities:



Communicate. Learning provides a powerful knowledge sharing tool experience to keep people informed and connected.



Reboard. Bringing people back into the organization will require some level of training.



Reopen. For businesses that needed to scale back or close down, they will depend on the learning function to train people to operate in the new normal.



Reskill. The transition may require people to move to new roles or develop new skills, and learning will be necessary to get them there.



Revive. What are the new products and services companies can deliver to help us grow in the new environment?

Ultimately, organizations will have to address the five ways learning is going to change and need to start now.



Truth: Convert mission-critical content to digital content as a single source of truth.



Access: Anytime, anywhere, any device (easy access to training), less long-form eLearning or classroom training



Speed: Speed and simplicity of authoring and updates of learning content



Relevance: Learning that is just-in-time, just-for-me based on my role, my specific work situation at the moment, etc.



Adoption: Better user experience; a learning system people want to use

Authors and Contributors



David Wentworth (david.wentworth@brandonhall.com) wrote this report. He is Principal Learning Analyst at Brandon Hall Group, focusing on all aspects of learning and the technology that supports it. David has been in the human capital field since 2005 and joined Brandon Hall Group as senior learning analyst in early 2012.



Chris Tratar is the Director of Product Marketing and Strategy at Inkling. Chris has over 20 years of professional experience in the enterprise and cloud software industry as a marketing executive. He works with large, innovative companies such as McDonald's, Allstate and Abbott Laboratories, as well as top industry analysts in the learning space to understand market trends and how modern learning really drives impact.



Mike Cooke (mike.cooke@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is CEO and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Mike has more than 20 years' experience in human capital management and the research, software and technology industries. Before running Brandon Hall Group, Mike was co-founder of AC Growth, a research and consulting firm, and VP and General Manager of Field Operations at Bersin & Associates, a global analyst and consulting services firm in all areas of HCM.



Michael Rochelle (michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is Chief Strategy Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Michael leads a wide range of advisory support and strategic engagements for Fortune 1000 and small-to medium-sized organizations as well as leading and emerging solution providers across the HCM industry. Michael has more than 30 years' experience in HR, IT, sales, marketing, business development, and strategic and financial planning in Fortune 500 and venture-backed start-up organizations.



Richard Pachter (richard.pachter@brandonhall.com) edited this report. He is the Content Manager at Brandon Hall Group and is responsible for editing all types of content related to research. He has experience as a journalist, copywriter, editor, marketer, blogger and social media marketing manager. He also served as the business books columnist for the *Miami Herald* for more than a decade.



Emma Bui (emma.bui@brandonhall.com) is the Graphic Design Associate at Brandon Hall Group. She created the layout and graphics for this report.

About Inkling

Inkling is a leader in modern learning solutions that deliver knowledge at work speed. Powerful and easy-to-use, Inkling's platform facilitates real-time, impactful learning anytime, anywhere and on any device. Leading brands trust Inkling to create, distribute and measure effectiveness of learning to drive operational excellence and business results. Founded in 2009, Inkling is based in San Francisco.



For more information, please visit [inkling.com](https://www.inkling.com)



About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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