GoSpotCheck

Learning in the Flow of Work:

How training for tomorrow boosts productivity, reduces attrition, and protects customers.

A new era of learning & development

Over the last 20 years, corporate learning and development philosophy has undergone a radical transformation. With millennials and Gen Z workers more prevalent in the workforce than ever before, and with more hard skills required even in entry-level positions, organizations must keep up in order to retain talent and bolster profit. Josh Bersin analyzes the shifts that have taken place since 1998, comparing the introduction of online learning and course catalogs in the 1990s with the mobile formats of today: micro-learning, real-time video courses, and user access to learning materials from everywhere.[1] One can track this shift in the education system as well: Since 2006, with the launch of one of the first online education programs available, Kahn Academy, education programs from K-12 to high school have transitioned to offer online courses for students. Even universities and graduate studies have taken the leap: Babson Survey Research Group revealed that more than 6.3 million students enrolled in online courses in 2018, a 5.6% increase from the previous year -- and the 14th consecutive year that Babson has reported growth in online enrollment.[2] In January, Harvard Business School announced its rebrand from HBX to Harvard Business School Online, proving just how successful its e-learning programs have been to over 40,000 of its Ivy League students.[3] Whether in the classroom or in the workplace, learning methods will continue to change as a result of technological revolutions and lower costs of implementation.

Additionally, traditional learning methods, particularly those applied to executive leadership development, have been found to be increasingly ineffective and expensive. According to a 2017 industry report, U.S. training expenditures totaled $90.6 billion, increasing 32.5% from the previous year[4]-- and even with spending this high, Harvard Business Review reports "50% of senior leaders believe that their talent development efforts don't adequately build critical skills and organizational capabilities."[5] Since 2017, training expenses have grown considerably, and companies remain disappointed with results.

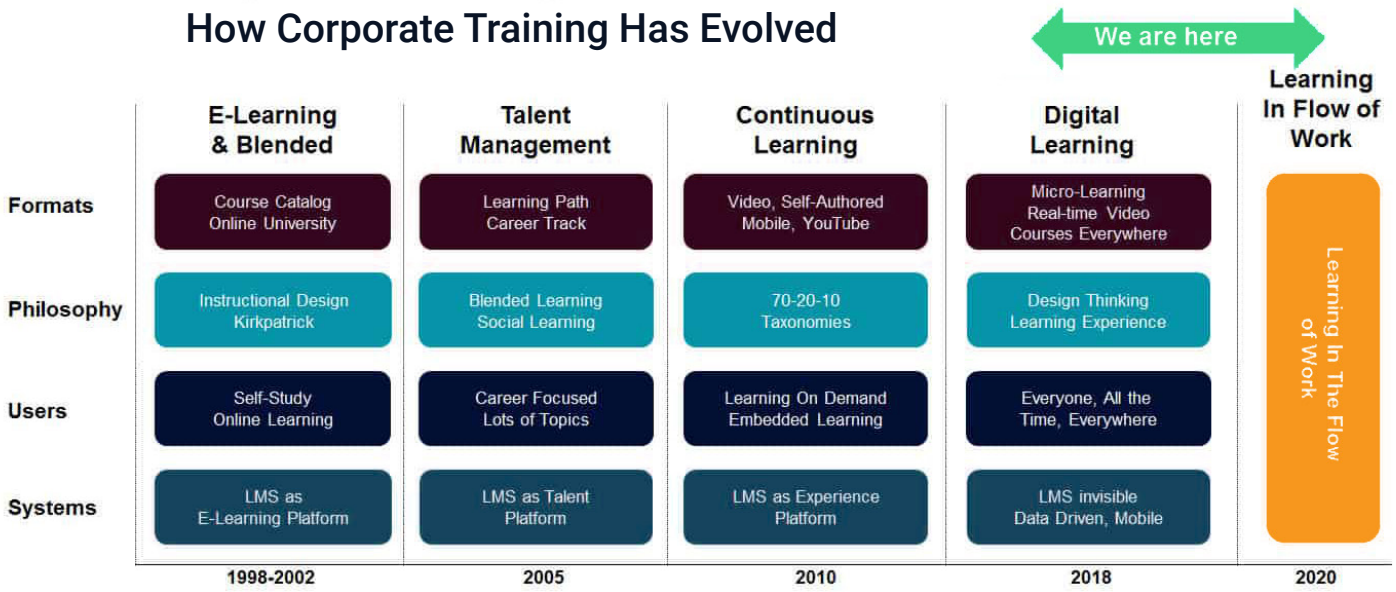


Fig. 1: Josh Bersin's tracking of learning trends by format, philosophy, users, and systems.

1 https://joshbersin.com/2018/06/a-new-paradigm-for-corporate-training-learning-in-the-flow-of-work/
2 https://www.usnews.com/higher-education/online-education/articles/2018-01-11/study-more-students-are-enrolling-in-online-courses
3 https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/01/08/harvard-business-school-finally-puts-its-stamp-online-learning
4 https://trainingmag.com/trgmag-article/2017-training-industry-report/

For large-scale retailers such as Walmart, training is a significant pain-point for the business. After spending $3 billion to create 200 employee training centers across the country, it's unclear whether students attending "Walmart Academy" truly benefited from the company's investment, or even became "better Walmart employees."[6] In the restaurant industry, worker retention is highly dependent upon the amount of training an employee receives -- initially and throughout his or her career with the company. In a study performed by QSR Magazine and 7Shifts, "at-risk" employees were identified by ranking reasons that would lead them to quit, including hands-on training from managers (67%), shadowing senior employees (40%), and receiving ongoing training and external courses (23%).[7]

> ***"Anecdotal evidence on skills transfer suggests that barely 10% of the $200 billion annual outlay for corporate training and development in the United States delivers concrete results."***
>
> - Harvard Business Review

Part of the issue lies in an outdated approach to learning, which focuses on discipline-based skill-sets rather than those acquired collaboratively and applied on-the-job. In recent years, organizations have improved training and internal processes through online learning and interactive platforms. On the other hand, those who haven't adopted new technology and mobile-based platforms have -- or will -- experience negative consequences in their organizations, specifically when it comes to retaining Gen Y and the largest generation in history: Gen Z. In a recent report by CompTIA surveying 700 U.S. respondents who work in an office environment and use some sort of technology, 67% of Millennials revealed they judge their employer by its technological knowledge.[8] Dan Schawbel, author of Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success, addresses the importance of adapting to the needs of a new generation. "The workplace can't survive without embracing new technologies," he says. "Millennials won't work for a company that bans access to social networks and doesn't give them the freedom to use the mobile devices they want." In short, an organization cannot expect to attract -- much less conserve -- Gen Y and Gen Z workers if it isn't willing to change its approach to technology. This means moving away from pen and paper processes, taking an active interest in digital trends, and collaborating internally with younger workers to uncover new opportunities for technological development. However, while adopting digital learning is a step in the right direction, it simply won't be enough to drive true organizational change and business impact.

5 https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2015-01-26-gartner-says-by-2020-a-quarter-billion-connected-vehicles-will-enable-new-in-vehicle-services-and-automated-driving-capabilities

6 https://pos.toasttab.com/customers/odd-duck

7 https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/advanced-iot-solutions-expected-to-serve-up-millions-in-energy-savings-for-pizza-hut-franchisee-300698566.html

8 https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/technology/pages/millennials-expect-to-use-latest-tech-tools-at-work.aspx

Gen Z Retention: success lies in building relationships, not just recruiting talent

Adapting to generational learning habits is one of the most common challenges organizations currently face. Having learned nearly entirely on mobile and computer-based platforms, Gen Z workers come into entry-level roles with a more robust and tech-forward knowledge base, higher expectations, powerful capabilities, and an eagerness to learn -- making it progressively difficult for hiring teams to fulfill and satisfy Gen Z employees at work, even with digital learning programs. Harvard Business Review describes a motivational gap between learning and real-world application as one of the key issues with learning courses of today. While organizations invest billions of dollars annually in training materials and courses, workers often approach these learning opportunities from a point of personal development -- not necessarily a focus on development within the company. As a result, organizations lose talent and money without a solution for effectively reducing turnover. This challenge rings all too true for talent developers and HR teams of today, whose jobs have greatly evolved to support varying needs from all angles. LinkedIn's 2018 Workforce Learning Report refers to this new challenge as a "balance" only reached when looking deeper into the needs of today's workforce, primarily when it comes to Gen Z, whose satisfaction at work depends heavily on engagement and team relationships.

> ***"To balance these competing demands, talent development leaders today are embracing the role of 'relationship builder'—cultivating the relationships that are the backbone of a learning culture that thrives in a workforce of constant change."***[9]

Although Gen Z relies predominantly on digital platforms for communication and training, more than 90% of Gen Z workers prefer to have human interaction within their teams.[10] Furthermore, Gen Z workers would prioritize supportive leadership (55%), positive relationships at work (53%), and a chance to learn real skills (56%) when considering job opportunities. Overall, employees are longing for a feeling of purpose and connection in their jobs -- but companies are doing little to satisfy these needs of their workers.

70% of employees are disengaged at work

Adapting to generational learning habits is one of the According to Gallup, the high majority of U.S. employees are left without a sense of inclusivity in their organizations.[11] Ultimately, these feelings

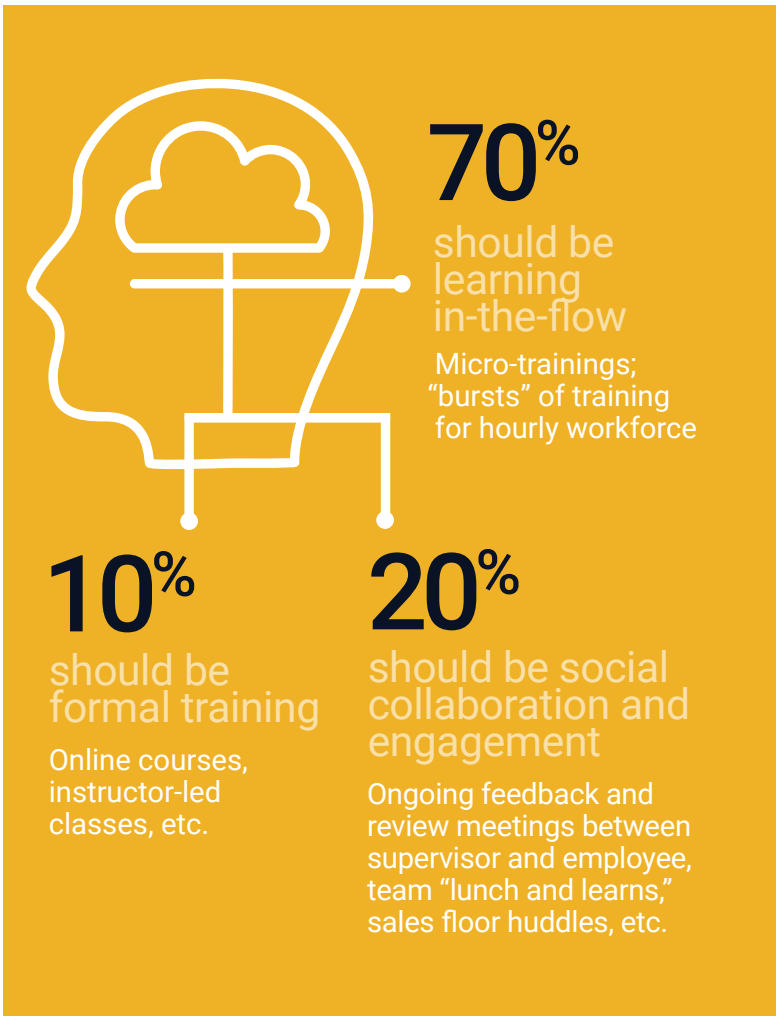
9 https://learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/learning/en-us/pdfs/linkedin-learning-workplace-learning-report-2018.pdf
10 https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/the-2019-workplace-7-ways-generation-z-will-shape-it.html
11 https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidsturt/2018/03/08/10-shocking-workplace-stats-you-need-to-know/#2226fadcf3af

of disengagement not only contribute to workers' stress and poor health, but also to the company's bottom line: Companies who make employee engagement central to their business strategy experience a 41% reduction in absenteeism, 59% less turnover, and 21% greater profitability.[12] In fact, a report published by The Engagement Institute found that disengaged employees cost U.S. companies up to $550 billion per year. Despite many studies linking employee disengagement to poor business performance and productivity, 70% of today's workforce continues to struggle -- perhaps because organizations aren't sure of where the road to improvement begins.

94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career

When designing transformation initiatives, companies should examine current learning and development programs in-place to identify areas for improvement. While traditional, instructor-led courses offered outside of work can prove beneficial to employees, these methods should only comprise a small portion of a worker's time spent learning. Learning in the flow of work -- acquiring knowledge in the act of performing a task -- not only allows an employee to learn more effectively, but also benefits his or her wellbeing and likelihood to stay at an organization. In fact, according to LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report, 68% of employees prefer to learn at work, while 94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career. Depending on the industry, these learning opportunities could range from micro-trainings to leadership development courses -- but implementing a learning strategy to arrange specific methods may help guide companies toward a solution. One such solution is abiding by the 70-20-10 method, which divides the three primary learning methods employed within organizations (learning in-the-flow, collaborative learning, and formal training) into a comprehensive scale.

Fig. 2: Infographic outlining 70-20-10 breakdown of learning methods:



When the majority of learning is on-the-job and through collaboration with a team, employees feel valued within their organizations, and ultimately become more motivated to perform.

> ***"In the research we just completed, we found that employees who spend time at work learning are 47% less likely to be stressed, 39% more likely to feel productive and successful, 23% more ready to take on additional responsibilities, and 21% more likely to feel confident and happy. And the more you learn, the happier you become."***
>
> - Josh Bersin[13]

12 https://www.forbes.com/sites/nazbeheshti/2019/01/16/10-timely-statistics-about-the-connection-between-employee-engagement-and-wellness/#4b6b0b8522a0

13 https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/want-happy-work-spend-time-learning-josh-bersin/

Through promoting a culture of learning, an organization is simultaneously supporting a culture of employee engagement -- and this contributes to improved employee wellbeing, productivity, and a sense of value within his or her role. This continues with management embracing transparency company-wide, and makes feedback and recognition a "two-way street": Employees should not only receive feedback and suggestions for improvement, but they should also feel comfortable -- and empowered -- to provide the same to the company as a whole.

One inspired employee produces as much as 2.25 satisfied employees

Harvard Business Review speaks to the power of an "inspired employee," who is 125% more productive than a "merely satisfied employee"[14] -- and who greatly contributes to the bottom line. With better performance and more productive workdays, inspired employees aren't just keeping themselves healthy; they're also contributing to the financial health of their company.

Fig. 3: Tracking the connection between a culture of transparency, employee happiness, and how these factors impact business profit.

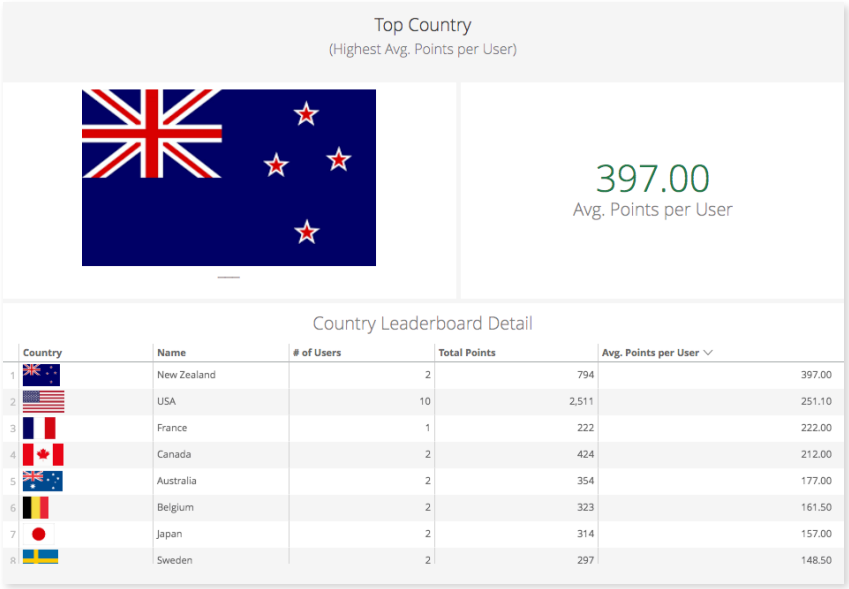
14 https://hbr.org/2017/03/great-companies-obsess-over-productivity-not-efficiency

15 https://www.forbes.com/sites/nazbeheshti/2019/01/16/10-timely-statistics-about-the-connection-between-employee-engagement-and-wellness/#6a97dd8522a0

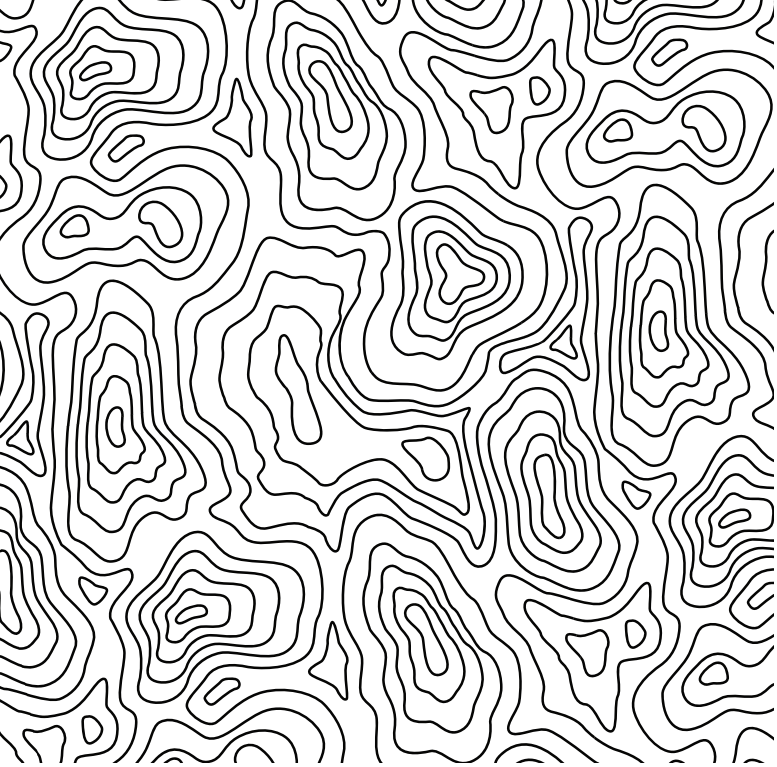
16 https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236366/right-culture-not-employee-satisfaction.aspx

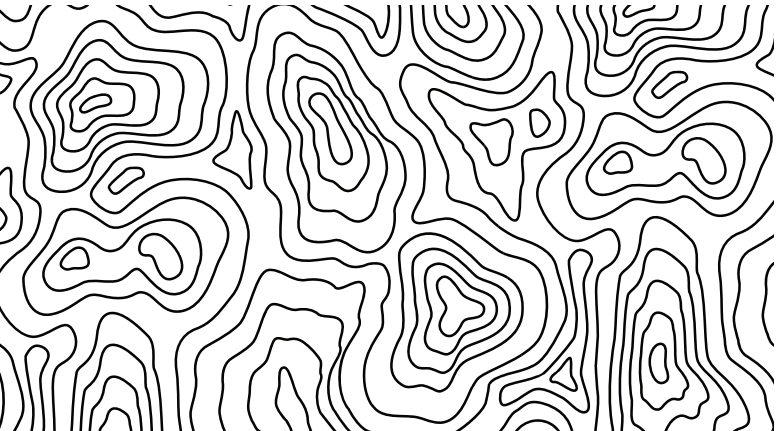
Achieving business growth through engagement and training in-the-flow

Without setting employee learning and engagement as priorities within its business strategy, an organization is losing opportunities to greatly reduce turnover, improve employee happiness and company culture, and increase profitability. Traditionally, organizations could address these goals by creating an "Employee of the Month" program, which encourages professional performance through an awards-based system. Stellar customer service, outstanding sales, out-of-the-box creativity -- no matter the role or the department, employees in all areas of the organization should be recognized and rewarded for their hard work -- whether the prize is a gift card or a publicly-framed photo on the wall of a retail store. With the rise of digital and mobile-based software, however, reward programs have evolved to become more efficient, versatile, manageable, and even more engaging for employees. Jeff Wrona, Vice President of Strategic Implementation at GoSpotCheck, addresses the value of tying incentivized, engagement-driven projects to reach business goals. He mentions Leaderboards -- a feature available within GoSpotCheck's mobile app -- which allow businesses to customize motivational "competitions" for their field teams. (Think of a leaderboard as a digitized, streamlined version of an employee of the month program.) "Interacting with something like a leaderboard gives employees a sense of motivation and meaning." Jeff says. ***"Optimal managers distribute engaging 'missions' for field teams to complete, and employees can acquire points and see where they sit in real-time. They get rewarded for completing tasks correctly and on-time."*** For example, consider a beer, wine & spirits brand managing myriad locations and displays across the country. In order to ensure display accuracy in each store and market, the brand relies on its field teams to routinely record and submit photos of branded displays. By using GoSpotCheck to document display status, field teams can efficiently submit data to management -- and if the display is correct, they'll acquire points to put toward rewards, like gift cards and extras. As a result, management can ensure the brand's in-store presence is meticulous, and field teams remain engaged and motivated to complete their work.



	Country	Name	# of Users	Total Points	Avg. Points per User
1		New Zealand	2	794	397.00
2		USA	10	2,511	251.10
3		France	1	222	222.00
4		Canada	2	424	212.00
5		Australia	2	354	177.00
6		Belgium	2	323	161.50
7		Japan	2	314	157.00
8		Sweden	2	297	148.50





For scenarios like this in which training and learning processes directly affect the customer experience, GoSpotCheck provides multiple solutions to ensure sufficient training for field employees. By equipping training teams and HR managers with improved onboarding processes and materials, and by promoting ongoing learning in the workplace, executives can take the first step toward reaching measurable results that truly benefit the business. With GoSpotCheck, leaders can improve communication and create transparency in all levels of the training process by using a multitude of in-app features to address specific training needs for employees:

Product Knowledge

Visual Resources

Train employees in the field using visual guides, sell sheets, program overviews, videos, schematics, and more--enabling productive learning and engagement on-the-job. This equips employees with information needed to inform and sell to customers.

New Merchandising Processes

Real-Time Communication

Provide huddle topics and best practices using in-app messaging to continue employee learning during and after training. Upload learning materials to ensure employees are kept up-to-date while working. Showcase and cross-pollinate best practices and build a success culture by rewarding standout performances publicly across locations.

Ongoing Engagement

Morale surveys

Measure employee health frequently, collect honest insights, and take action when required, allowing workers to continue their development with the company and to create an active feedback loop.

By deploying a training program that not only enables field teams to learn while performing tasks, but also keeps them motivated, engaged, and connected to an organization, companies can optimize training processes while maintaining employee happiness.

As learning methods continue to shift and Gen Z workers continue to enter the workforce, organizations will need to examine active training and learning programs available to all employees, from field teams to executives. Implementing digital courses and online training materials are positive movements toward improvement; however, creating a company culture that fosters employee engagement and encourages ongoing development is critical to achieving success. For training teams and HR managers of the future, becoming a "relationship builder" in addition to a talent officer will contribute to positive organizational change: By embracing transparency and empowering workers to learn in the flow of work, businesses can retain inspired, productive employees and increase profitability.

About GoSpotCheck

200+ brands in 70 countries across 6 continents power their teams with GoSpotCheck. Our easy-to-use mobile app helps increase sales, optimize labor, generate business insights, and improve profitability from the field. Named a 2019 Editor's Pick by Consumer Goods Technology with a 4.7 End-User Rating on G2-Crowd, GoSpotCheck has Salesforce integrations, deep linking, data encryption in transit and at rest, SCIM provisioning, and is GDPR compliant and SSO-enabled.

To speak to an expert, email **experts@gospotcheck.com**
For more details about GoSpotCheck, visit **www.gospotcheck.com**