

2024 Global L&D Leaders Forecast:

AI: BUILDING A FUTURE READY WORKFORCE

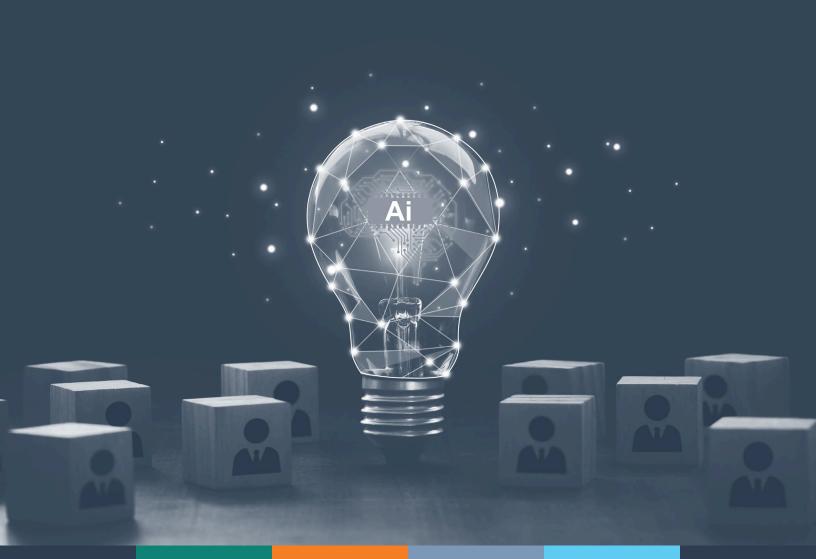
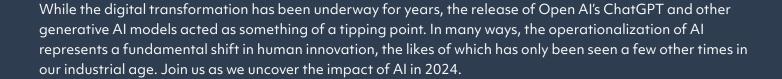


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FORECAST OVERVIEW

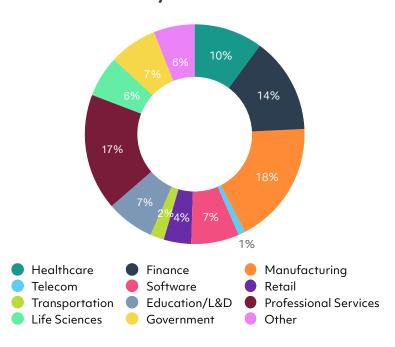
Much has been written about how AI will change the workplace and no small amount has focused on what AI will do to the world of learning and development. In fact, at this point it can be hard to find your way through all the breathless predictions and get to the real, tangible ways to use AI to improve the learning experience.

So, we surveyed hundreds of Global L&D Leaders about this year's trends, challenges, and priorities to find out specifically where and how AI will impact the ways people learn. We distilled four key topics from their responses:

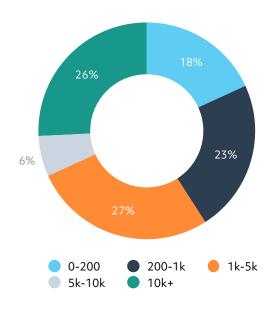
- 1. The Pace of Change: L&D leaders are chiefly concerned with how their workforce is adapting to and gaining the skills to take advantage of new technology
- 2. **Addressing Skill Gaps:** Leadership skills, adaptability, and technology skills top the list as the most pressing skill gaps
- 3. Enhancing Human Performance: Al will be the great enabler, empowering teams to take on more complex, nuanced, and challenging work while improving their skills
- 4. AI Is Only as Good as Its Dataset: L&D leaders must gather high-quality data to make the best use of AI models and generate meaningful insights

This report examines the resulting data and offers practical advice based on our expertise to help you leverage these insights to your advantage.

Surveyed Industries



Surveyed Company Sizes







In an era where artificial intelligence is actively reshaping the corporate landscape, skill development has evolved from an employee benefit to a critical driver of organizational advancement.

Many of the mundane tasks of the workplace are ripe for automation, meaning that highly skilled and knowledgeable workers who can manage and optimize those automations will become increasingly valuable to organizations. Reflecting this shift, the largest portion of L&D leaders (24%) cited "closing skill gaps amidst the change and innovation of the workplace" as their single biggest anticipated challenge for 2024.

And we're not the only ones saying this...

PwC published findings that "**79**% of CEOs are concerned about the availability of key skills in their workforce."



60%

The World Economic Forum reports ...

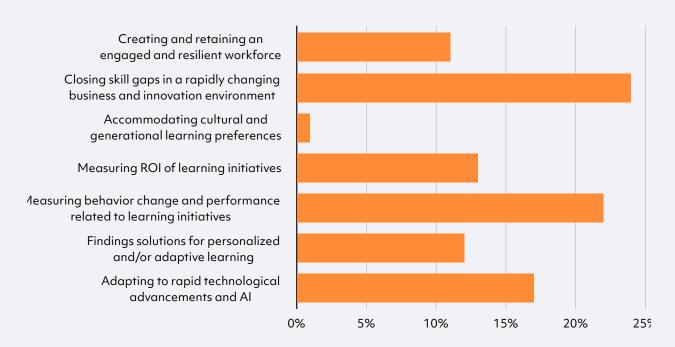
"60% of workers will require skill training in the next three years, but only half of workers have access to the training they need." Perhaps unsurprisingly, that same WEF report states that "the two most highly prized skills companies are looking for are AI competence and leadership."²

Fostering these new skills will be essential for organizations to succeed and thrive. And so, the question remains:

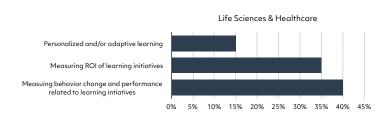
How can organizations effectively build these new skills without disruption or massive new investments into learning and development?

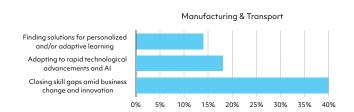


What are the greatest challenges your L&D function is facing in 2024?



Greatest challenge by industry











How do you develop skills at the pace of change?

To address this gap, organizations must cultivate Skill Agility®, or the ability to rapidly develop skills at the pace of business change. In fact, research underscores the importance of agile organizations, which consistently outperform their peers across key business metrics.

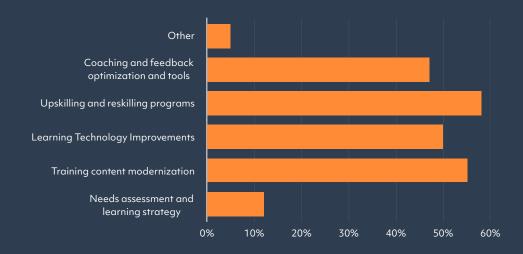
"Agile organizations have a **70 percent chance** of being in the top quartile of organizational health, the best indicator of long-term performance."

According to psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, there is a "scientific approach to developing expertise; consistently and overwhelmingly, the evidence showed that experts are always made, not born."

So, if Skill Agility® is a developed ability, that means it can be taught, enhanced, and refined through deliberate training and action.

All of these efforts must be supported by an organization steeped in a growth mindset with a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. An organization where leaders not only value but actively encourage learning, understanding its essential role in the success of their organization. An organization where teams are driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to broaden their horizons and enhance their skill sets.

What initiatives are you prioritizing to solve these challenges?







The landscape of corporate learning and development (L&D) is witnessing a pivotal shift, underscored by the increasing presence of L&D executives in C-suite discussions. This trend highlights a growing recognition among company leaders of the critical importance of integrating learning into core business strategies.

Despite this promising development, there exists a notable gap in AI literacy training within organizations.

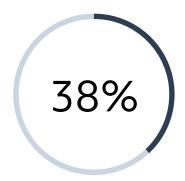


C-Suite Advocacy

"82% of leaders acknowledge the necessity for their workforce to acquire new skills for AI collaboration."

Al Training Programs

"38% of companies currently offer training in Al literacy." 5





Employee Upskilling

****80%** of employees express a desire to enhance their Alrelated skills for their current roles.******

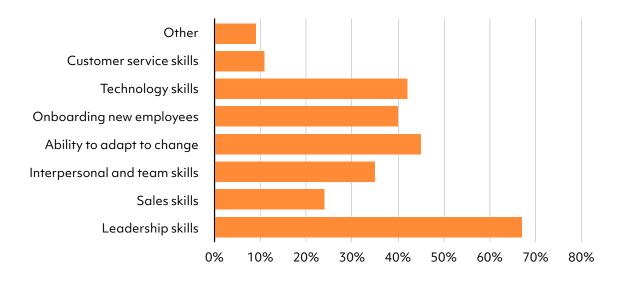




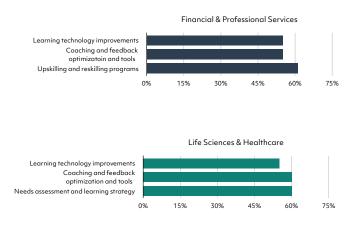
Most Common Skill Gaps

This year's research explores the specific skill gaps impacting organizations. Across all of our participants, more than two-thirds of survey participants (67%) identified leadership skills as a significant skill gap. It's clear that today's pace of change, particularly the non-stop advancements in AI, has only amplified the need for programs to build the core skills of leadership.

What are the most significant skill gaps currently impacting your organization?



Skill gaps by industry





Upskilling and reskilling programs



Manufacturing & Transport

50%

Effective leadership is critical to the success of any organization, and becoming a great leader takes time and practice.

It's not enough to promote individuals to managerial positions based solely on their technical skills or years of experience. Rather, leaders must possess a wide range of complex skills to effectively guide their team and drive the company's success.

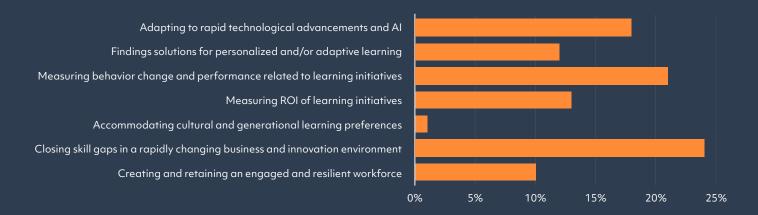
Furthermore, it is essential that employees develop skills that align with their specific managerial role. By personalizing the training experience to meet these different roles, companies ensure that managers at all levels have the skills they need to succeed.

Al has truly been a revolution. With its recent emergence, it has already shown tremendous implications in L&D. In fact, **75%** of organizations report⁷ that it will be critical to their future success with an expected growth of **\$3.68 billion** dollars. In just a year, Al has already become an expected part of every corporate toolkit, doing everything from reducing the time and complexity of content creation to writing that email response you've been putting off.

In fact, as we've met with clients and industry friends over the past year, "What are you all doing about AI?" has become a regular topic of conversation. So, it comes as no surprise that adapting to rapid technological advancements and AI was a noteworthy concern in this year's survey.

"What are you all doing about AI?"

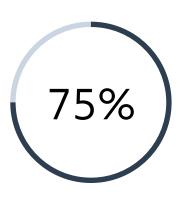
What are the greatest challenges your L&D function is facing in 2024?







All is rapidly reshaping the landscape across all industries, fundamentally altering how businesses operate and compete. By prioritizing All initiatives, L&D teams are not only adapting to the changing business environment but also positioning themselves as vital contributors to the broader success of their organizations.

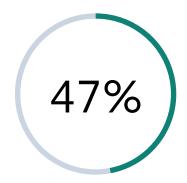


Al is Critical to Company Success

"75% of organizations report that Al will be critical to their success in the next 5 years."8

Growth in Al Investment

"By 2025, the Al market in education is expected to reach \$3.68 billion, growing at a CAGR of **47%**"9



38%

Revenue Increase with AI

"Organizations investing in AI and human-machine collaboration could boost revenues by **38%**"10



It's not just about standing out—it's about not getting left behind. The lesson from 2023 is clear: change is the only constant, and companies that can swiftly adapt to it will flourish, while those that can't will struggle.

Here's how to get started:

Empower AI: Building a Future-ready Workforce



Al Literacy and Awareness Campaigns

Start with creating awareness about AI, its potential, and its limitations.

Reduce the fear of job replacement.



Develop a Responsible AI Use Policy

Establish guidelines that outline ethical AI use, data protection standards, and compliance with relevant regulations.



Cross-departmental AI Integration Teams

Form teams comprising members from various departments to facilitate the integration of Al solutions.



Internal Training Initiatives

Organize training sessions tailored to different roles within the organization.



Measurement Strategies

Define clear metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of AI integration and training programs.



Training Sustainment Plan

Develop a plan for ongoing education and upskilling. Al and related technologies evolve rapidly.



We've all read about the promises of AI to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and automate mundane and repetitive tasks.

Understandably, there's some fear associated with those predictions around eliminating certain jobs to lowering the quality or value of materials that AI produces.

But considering the World Economic Forum's findings that one of the most highly sought-after skills is Al competence, we think that AI will be an empowering factor for workers. Rather than replacing employees, Al tools will become a way to augment and improve human performance. In the not-too-distant future, for example, leaders won't be considered effective unless they're using AI to supplement their job tasks.

Here's a quick list of ways for leaders to use AI to supplement some of the most important coaching skills:



Enhanced Feedback

Al can help leaders write more precise and constructive feedback by taking a leader's notes and restructuring them using an established feedback model like GROW or SBI.



Team Communication

Al can take the bullet points or notes from a meeting and turn them into an effective message to team members, reducing the time it takes to translate ideas into clear communication.



Coaching Assistant

Leaders can get instant feedback on their own coaching by using AI tools to make suggestions for improvements around skills like open-ended questions, delivering feedback, and creating action plans.



Automated Follow-up

The best coaching won't make any difference if there's no follow through. Al tools can automatically create follow-up tasks and reminders after a coaching session based on analysis of the conversation.



Check out some of the key ways in which AI-powered learning tools are revolutionizing business practices, allowing organizations to stay competitive.



Al-enabled Content Generation

Al tools can swiftly produce and update learning materials based on the latest information and trends.
This ensures that learners always have access to the most current and relevant content.



Personalized Learning Pathways

Through AI-powered assessments, technology can identify individual skill gaps and recommend courses tailored to each learner's needs. This personalized approach enhances the learning experience and ensures more effective skill development.



Al-powered Coaching Tools

Utilizing video simulations and AI, these tools provide immediate feedback on performance such as feedback on Emotion, Speech, Keywords and Transcripts.



Enhanced Feedback for Employee Development

Al can analyze performance data to generate insightful feedback for both managers and coaches. This enables a more informed approach to employee development, focusing on specific areas for improvement.



Insights on Feedback Effectiveness

By analyzing the structure and impact of feedback, AI can offer guidance on how to deliver more constructive and effective feedback. This leads to better communication between employees and supervisors, fostering a more supportive learning environment.



Adaptive Learning

Al-powered systems can transform how educational content is delivered, making learning more efficient, personalized, and responsive to the needs of each learner.



Of all the benefits previously listed, adaptive learning might be the one with the most potential. It can be difficult to imagine what truly adaptive learning could be, as it represents such a stark departure from the way we create and deliver training experiences today. At times, it can feel like it borders on science fiction. But this type of learning is not only possible, it's the direction we must go if we want to want to make the best use of the potential that AI holds.

"What do you mean by adaptive learning?"

Adaptive learning uses AI to personalize the experience of each learner, adjusting content and pacing in real time according to individual needs. By tailoring the experience to fit the learning preferences and abilities of each learner, the learning process becomes more effective and engaging. In fact, eLearning Industry estimates that adaptive learning can accelerate learning by up to 50%.



One of the most important uses of AI for L&D will be offering customized and individualized content at scale. Generative AI will allow us to develop training experiences that create truly individualized experiences without needing to invest the immense amount of resources it would have taken a developer to write all of that content. Given strict parameters, a model like ChatGPT or Gemini or Co-Pilot can provide a fully custom scenario and then provide feedback in real-time.

AI-powered adaptive learning offers a host of benefits including:

- **Enhanced Learning Paths:** Finds and focuses on what each learner needs to learn, offering custom paths to get better at those skills.
- Career Pathing: Matches training with what learners want to achieve in their careers, making skill-building more relevant.
- Customized Experiences: Changes the learning experience in real-time to fit each learner's best way of learning.
- **Automated Assessment and Feedback:** Automatically provides quick assessment and feedback, making learning more personal by showing where learners do well and where they can improve.
- **Predictive Analytics for Enhanced Learning** Paths: Uses predictive analytics to foresee potential challenges and successes and make proactive adjustments.
- **Efficient Training Program Evaluation:** Offers insights into learning habits, effectiveness, and overall program success.



"I like the idea of adaptive learning, but it seems like it will come with all kinds of challenges."

Adaptive learning is more than a technological advancement; it's a step towards a more inclusive and effective educational paradigm, where every learner's potential is maximized.

While the transformative potential of adaptive learning is evident, implementation does come with its challenges. Overcoming obstacles such as technology integration, budget constraints, and resistance to change requires careful planning, comprehensive training, and clear communication. Understanding and navigating these challenges is critical for organizations looking to take advantage of this innovative approach.

Strategies for Successful Implementation



Demonstrating ROI:

Highlight the return on investment of adaptive learning to secure funding and support.



Comprehensive Training:

Implement thorough training programs to build confidence in utilizing new tools effectively.



Gradual Implementation:

Start with a pilot program to understand implications, address challenges on a smaller scale, and ease the transition.



Consider Open-Source Platforms:

Explore cost-effective solutions through open-source adaptive learning platforms.



Collaborative Funding:

Pool resources through collaborative funding initiatives such as government grants or private-sector sponsors to alleviate budget constraints.



Clear Communication:

Communicate benefits clearly to ease resistance and provide training for ease of use.



Professional Development

Offer professional development opportunities focusing on the advantages of adaptive learning to empower stakeholders in embracing and integrating new methods.





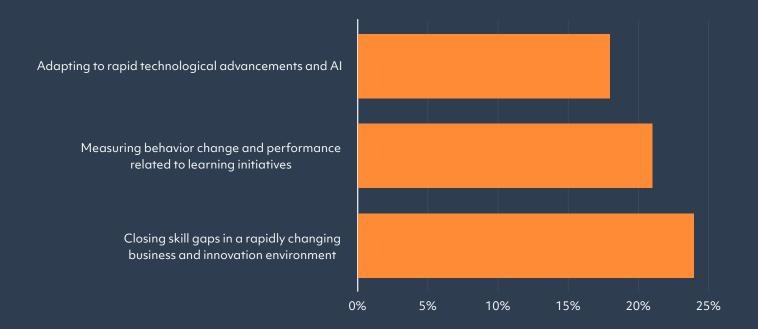
AI AND THE RACE FOR DATA

As AI continues to evolve, technology is getting smarter. It's essential that as we deploy AI on a large scale that it is accurate, secure, and free from bias.

With this ethical and functional imperative comes an ever growing need for good data. Al relies heavily on high-quality, accurate data to generate meaningful insights. If Al is going to transform how we inform, train, and develop talent as L&D professionals, it's going to be data and analytics that gets us there.

It should come as no surprise that a desire for insightful data and the ability to effectively use that data was reflected in this year's survey finding, a shift from prior years. Behind closing skill gaps, the next biggest challenge L&D leaders face is gathering data to measure Level 3 results - changes in behavior.

What are the top 3 greatest challenges your L&D function is facing in 2024?





Evaluating training effectiveness has always been a crucial part of L&D.

It's how we determine if the training achieved its goals. Unfortunately, in many organizations evaluation was often overlooked or left incomplete.

However, with the capabilities that AI brings to the table, companies want more insights about how these training programs impact their organization. Frankly, they want to know that their money was well spent.

For L&D professionals, this means raising the bar on our approach to evaluation. This means doing more than measuring completion rates and learner reactions. Instead, we need to cultivate a growth-minded learning culture grounded in robust measurement and evaluation.

Using good data, AI tools can provide meaningful insights across huge datasets that would be difficult and time-consuming for someone to do unaided. Here are the top 5 ways that AI can assist in making sense out of training evaluation data:



Automated Data Cleansing:

Sift out mistakes and errors like duplicates or nonsense entries, leaving a more accurate and reliable set of data to draw valid conclusions



Pattern Recognition:

Use the raw computing power of Al to identify trends and patterns that might not be apparent through manual analysis



Predictive Analytics:

Create comprehensive datasets with historical information that AI can analyze to predict future trends about which programs are likely to be effective



Sentiment Analysis:

Use natural language processing to gauge sentiment and emotional tone of participant reviews to head off frustration and hone in on effective training



Benchmarking:

Al can compare training data across different departments or even against external industry benchmarks to help identify organizational needs

The resulting insights, when analyzed through the lens of AI, can significantly influence and enhance the direction of our future training programs and ensure that employees learn and grow from L&D initiatives in a way that drives positive business outcomes.





It's clear that L&D leaders are keenly honed in on the potential for AI to enhance and improve the learning experience. Our survey reflects a readiness to embrace these changes, leveraging AI not just as a tool, but as a transformative ally in closing skill gaps.

While challenges remain, particularly in terms of scalability and data management, the potential for AI to fundamentally augment human capabilities and redefine workplace learning is clear. We can ensure that AI serves as a powerful enabler, helping individuals and organizations to thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

If your organization needs help designing your Al integration strategy, contact Unboxed today.

Our Mission

We exist to help companies unlock Skill Agility®: develop skills at the pace of change.

We Create Learning Programs for Any Business

We have the expertise, content, and technology to adapt to your business needs.



Strategy and Consulting

Assess needs, audit content, and build learning strategy



Training Content

Improve and sustain skills and behaviors



Spoke® Learning Platform

AI-Powered Learning & Skill Building

Who We Work With





















































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