



Are You Prepared To Lead Through Change?

Global L&D Forecast 2025

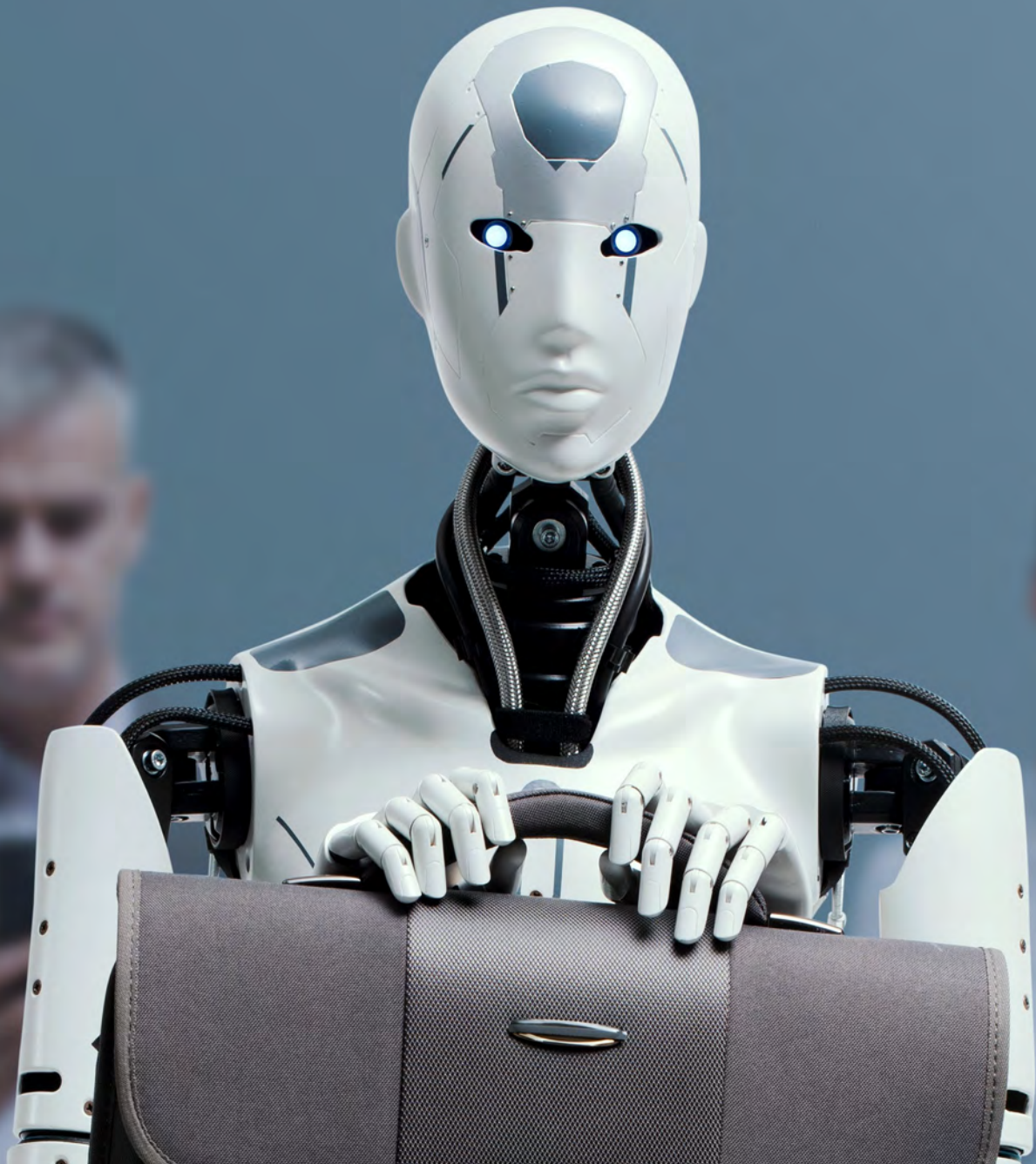




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Introduction

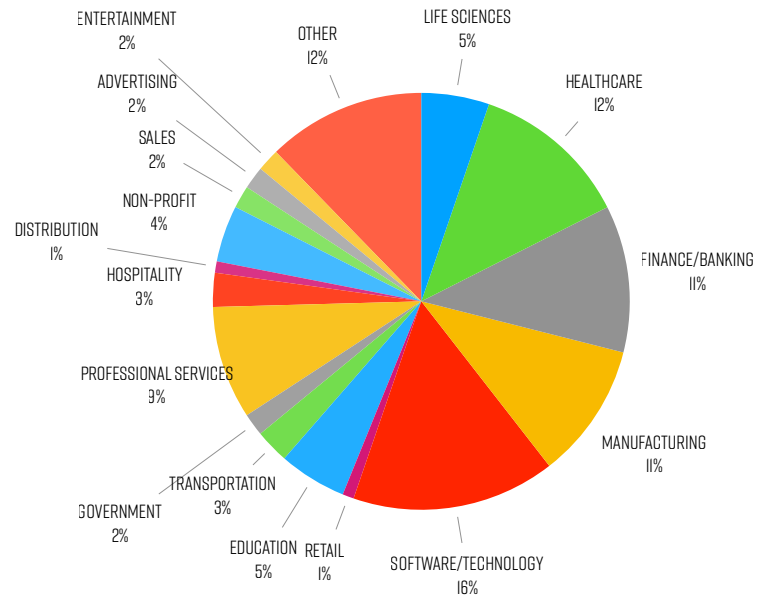
The pace of change in today's business landscape is relentless—driven by AI, workforce expectations are rapidly shifting under economic uncertainty. Yet, most organizations are not adequately equipping their leaders to navigate these disruptions.

Leadership training is no longer an optional bonus—it's a strategic imperative. In 2025, enterprise corporations must prioritize developing leaders who can drive transformation, foster resilience, and inspire teams amid uncertainty.

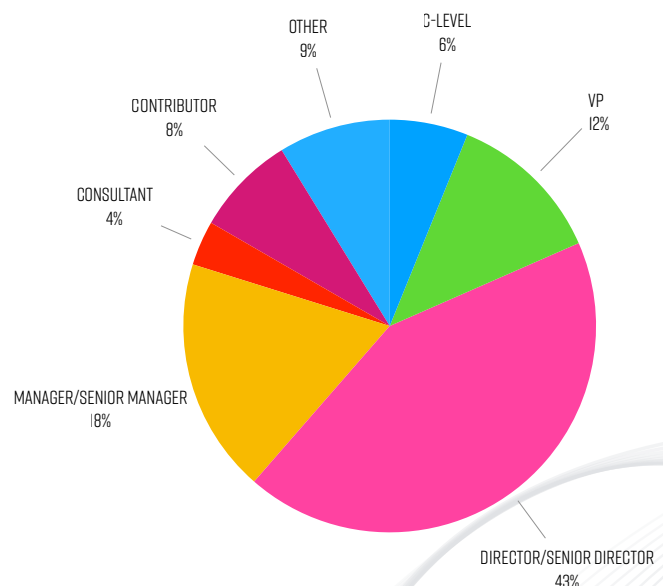
Without a focused investment in leadership capabilities, companies risk stagnation, disengagement, and loss of competitive edge. The question isn't if change will happen—it's whether your leaders are prepared to handle it.

We surveyed over a hundred L&D leaders to identify their top learning and development priorities—here's a breakdown of who participated.

Industry



Job Seniority

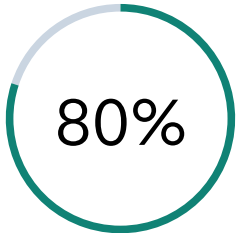




Top L&D Priorities in 2025

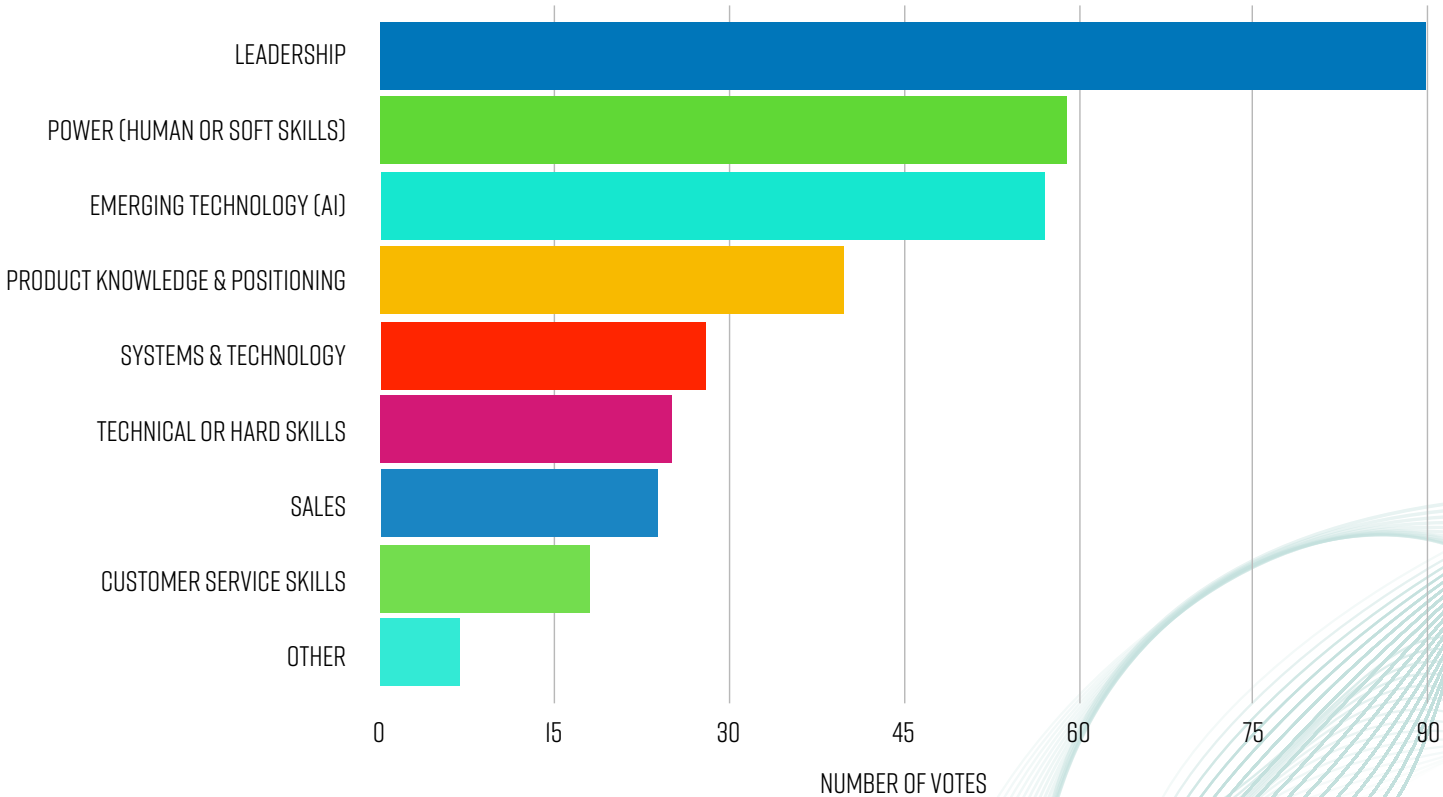
Identifying Skill Gaps

Organizations from all industries are facing a leadership crisis. Our survey reveals that leadership skills are the most critical gap, far outpacing other priorities. This highlights a growing concern: Many leaders lack the adaptability, decision-making, and strategic thinking needed to navigate change.



80% of surveyers stated that leadership was the most prioritized skill gap for 2025.
Insights from Skill Gap Survey

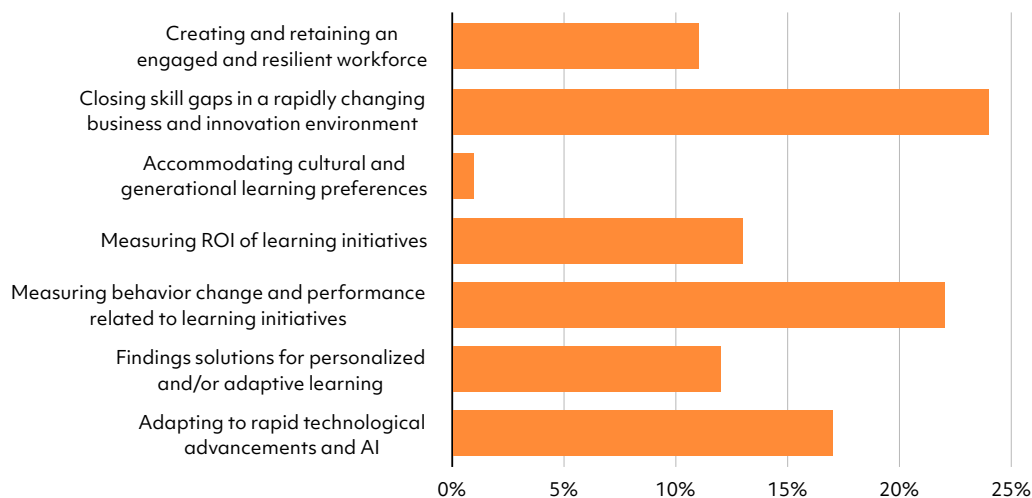
Priority Skill Gaps



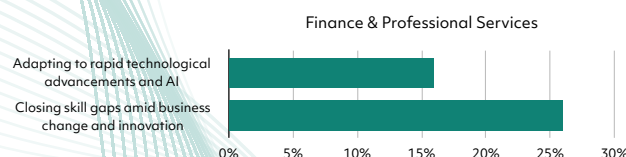
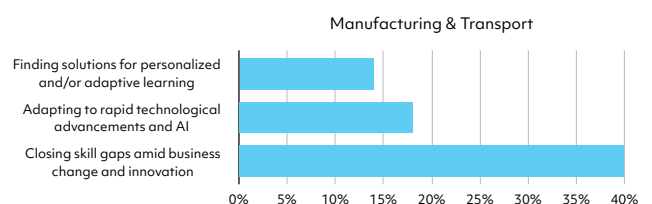
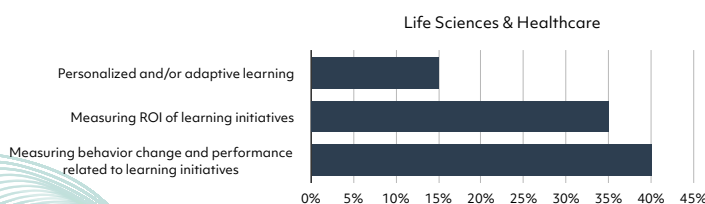
2024 Review: Lessons in Adapting to Change

Successfully forecasting the future requires understanding where we've been. In 2024, Learning & Development (L&D) leaders grappled with similar issues, balancing the need for innovation with the realities of workforce transformation. Our 2024 survey identified three dominant challenges shaping corporate learning. The trends continue today and were present across several industries.

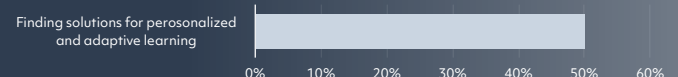
Greatest challenges companies' L&D faced in 2024



Greatest challenge by industry



Insights From C-Suite



What's Driving Change in 2025?



1. Evolving Workforce Demographics:

Generational Diversity: The workforce now spans multiple generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and an increasing number of Generation Z employees. Each group brings distinct values, communication styles, and work expectations, necessitating leaders who can navigate and integrate such diversity effectively.

[enterprise.com](https://www.enterprise.com)

Aging Population: With a significant portion of the workforce approaching retirement, there's an urgent need to develop new leaders who can fill impending leadership voids and manage knowledge transfer from departing employees.

en.wikipedia.org



2. Technological Advancements and Digital Transformation:

Rapid Technological Integration: The swift adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and other digital tools requires leaders who are not only technologically proficient but also capable of guiding their teams through continuous change and innovation.

[kornferry.com](https://www.kornferry.com)

AI-Driven Decision Making: Leaders need to maintain competency in the use of AI and other relevant technological advancements in order to remain competitive in their field.

[forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)



3. Market Volatility and Economic Uncertainty:

Adaptive Leadership Needs: In an unpredictable economic environment, organizations require leaders who can demonstrate agility, resilience, and strategic foresight to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

[lepaya.com](https://www.lepaya.com)



4. Emphasis on Human-Centric Leadership:

Employee Well-Being and Engagement: There's a growing recognition that empathetic and emotionally intelligent leadership enhances employee satisfaction and productivity. Training programs are increasingly focused on developing these soft skills to foster a supportive work culture.

[ddiworld.com](https://www.ddiworld.com)

The Pace of Change

The speed at which new ideas are adopted and integrated into businesses has accelerated dramatically over the past century. From the early days of airlines and telephones to the viral rise of digital platforms like YouTube and Pokémon Go, the difference in the rate of change is striking. Today, AI-driven innovations have pushed this acceleration even further—platforms like ChatGPT and Meta's Threads shattered records, reaching tens of millions of users in mere days. As AI continues to drive exponential change, businesses must adapt faster than ever to stay ahead.

Number of years it took for each product to gain 50 million users:



Airlines
68 Years



Automobiles
62 Years



Telephone
50 Years



Electricity
46 Years



Credit Card
28 Years



Television
22 Years



Computer
14 Years



Cell Phone
12 Years



Internet
7 Years



iPod
4 Years



YouTube
4 Years



Facebook
3 Years



Twitter
2 Years



Pokemon Go
19 Days



Instagram Threads
3 Days

AI Demands Adaptive Leaders

As companies navigate rapid technological advancements, AI is not just transforming employee training—it's redefining what effective leadership looks like. Research shows that agile organizations outperform their peers in innovation, adaptability, and revenue growth, yet many leaders lack the skills to manage this shift. To build a truly modern, resilient workforce, L&D must prioritize leadership training that prepares managers to guide teams through AI-driven change. This means equipping leaders with the ability to leverage AI for smarter decision-making, foster adaptability in their teams, and balance technology with human-centered leadership.

3X

Leaders who are AI proficient are **Three times** more successful at meeting customer demands and expectations.

BDCCGlobal

6X

Leaders who are AI proficient are **Six times** more successful at responding to changing customer and market needs.

Bain & Company

\$300B

In 2023, AI applications in workplaces were estimated to save over **300 billion** hours of worker productivity annually.

Wikipedia



Nearly
50%

Nearly half of Fortune 1000 companies have fully integrated AI into their workflows and products.

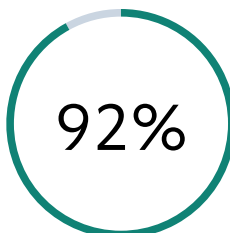
apnews.com



71%

71% of C-Suite employees say that emerging technology skills (AI) is the top priority for 2025.

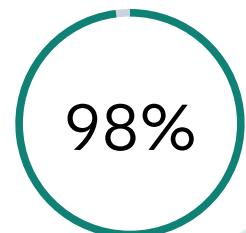
Insights from C-Suite Survey



92%

92% of companies plan to increase their AI investments over the next three years. However, only 1% of leaders consider their organizations “mature” in AI deployment, indicating significant room for growth in AI integration.

McKinsey & Company



98%

98% of small businesses are utilizing AI-enabled tools. This widespread adoption helps reduce personnel costs and enhance operational efficiency.

apnews.com

Adopting AI Tool—Hurry Up!

Effectively leveraging AI is no longer optional—it's a necessity. The rapid acceleration of AI-driven tools has fundamentally changed the way organizations approach leadership training, coaching, and workforce development. It's not just about gaining a competitive edge; it's about staying relevant in an AI-powered business landscape.

Those that adapt quickly will drive innovation and efficiency, while those that hesitate risk falling behind in a rapidly evolving market. **Here are the foundational elements:**

Empower AI: Building a Future-ready Workforce



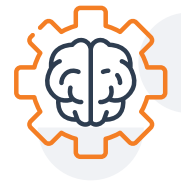
AI Literacy and Awareness Campaigns

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 AI 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. AI and related technologies evolve rapidly.

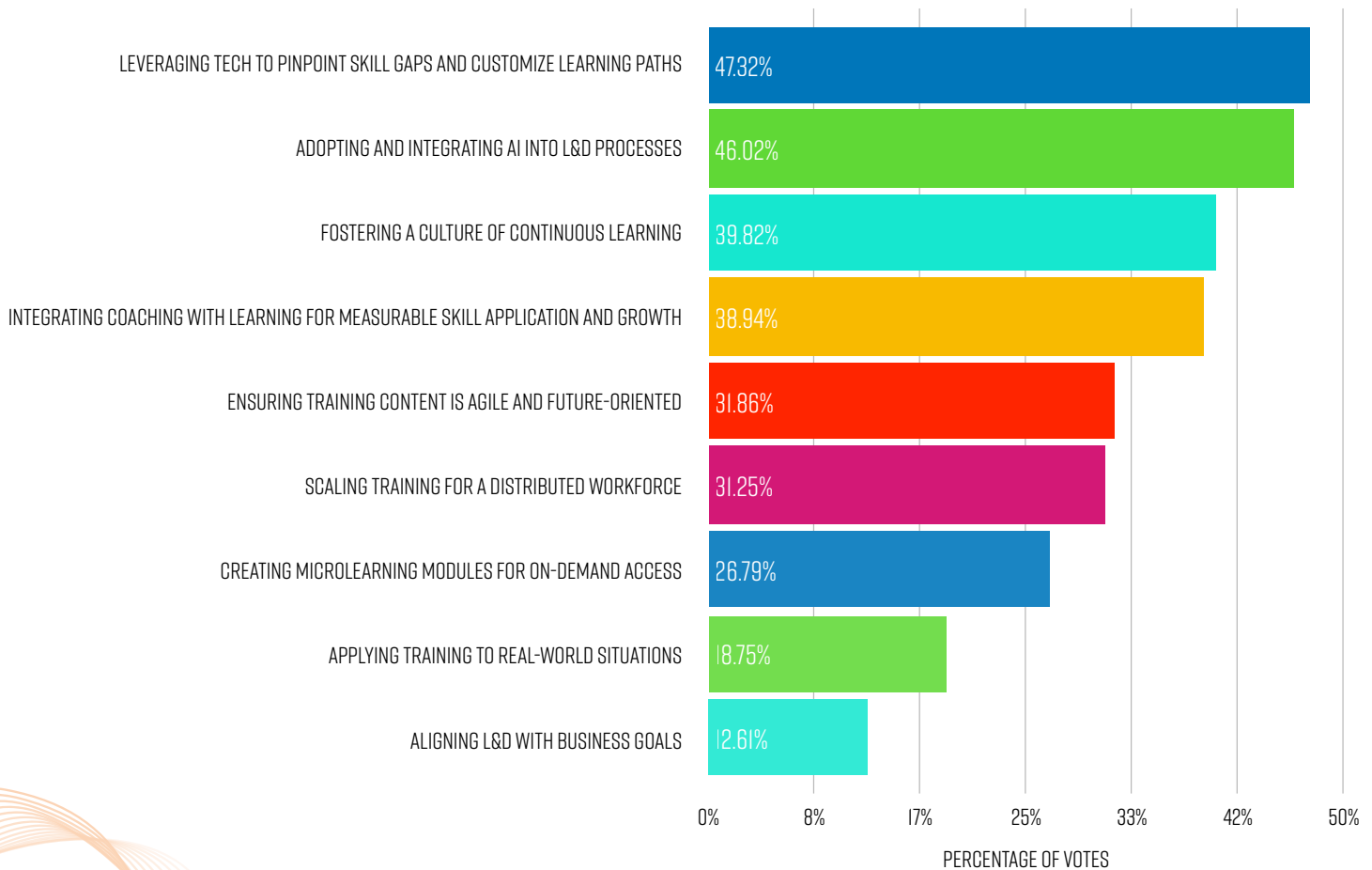


The image features a woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow ribbed sweater, looking upwards and to the right. She is interacting with a futuristic, semi-transparent digital interface that overlays the scene. The interface consists of various data visualizations, including line graphs, bar charts, and network diagrams. Some of the visible data points and labels include '451.9', '903.28', '451.91', '2.804', '2.803', 'YU-Q-D-1W', '743.06', '536.84', 'LARGE', '411.08', '641.52', '536.85', and '51.91'. The overall color palette is warm, with a strong orange and yellow glow emanating from the interface elements.

Identifying the Gaps

Leadership Training Gaps Holding Organizations Back

L&D leaders are under pressure to develop leaders who can navigate constant change, yet critical roadblocks are slowing progress. Many organizations struggle to understand where leadership gaps exist, making it difficult to deliver targeted, high-impact training. Without this clarity, development efforts risk being too broad and ultimately ineffective.



Where Does Your Organization Stand?

1

No Learning Ecosystem

- Most or all organizational standards, SOPs, best practices, and skills training are based on undocumented legacy knowledge held by high-performing individuals.
- Training occurs informally or on an ad hoc basis, often driven by immediate need or the availability of a knowledgeable employee.
- Organizations in this state can expect inconsistent performance across teams and higher employee turnover due to lack of structure and clarity.

2

Developing Learning Ecosystem

- Some organizational standards, SOPs, best practices, and skills training are documented and beginning to be made scalable across teams.
- Training cadences are loosely defined and often triggered by onboarding, compliance requirements, or major role transitions.
- Organizations in this state can expect satisfactory performance that reflects current priorities but may struggle to adapt quickly as conditions change.

3

Advanced Learning Ecosystem

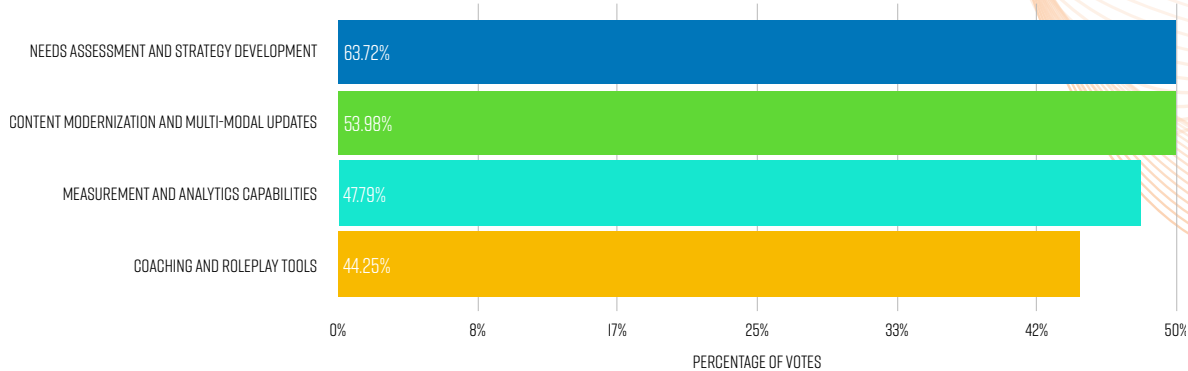
- Organizational standards, SOPs, best practices, and skills training are well-documented, regularly updated, and embedded into scalable programs across roles and departments.
- Training cadences are structured and data-informed, often aligned with business cycles, performance trends, and emerging industry needs.
- Organizations in this state can expect sustained performance and capability development over a 2–3 year period, with flexibility to evolve in response to market changes.

4

Agile Learning Ecosystem

- Organizational standards, SOPs, best practices, and skills training are fully integrated into dynamic, modular learning programs that are continuously refined and aligned to strategic goals.
- Training cadences are proactive, personalized, and responsive—driven by predictive analytics, workforce planning, and real-time performance data.
- Organizations in this state can expect maximum skill agility, readiness for rapid change, and the ability to anticipate and adopt emerging learning technologies to meet evolving learner and business needs.

How We Are Solving These Challenges



1. Training Must Be Data-Driven and Highly Personalized

Gone are the days of generic leadership programs. AI-driven skill assessments, real-time analytics, and adaptive learning paths are now essential for ensuring that training is tailored to individual managers' needs.

Organizations must move toward:

- **AI-powered diagnostics** to identify leadership skill gaps in real-time.
- **Personalized development plans** that adjust based on manager strengths and weaknesses.
- **Microlearning modules** and just-in-time learning for targeted upskilling.



2. Leadership Training Must Integrate AI Fluency & Digital Adaptability

AI is transforming the workplace, and managers who lack digital fluency will struggle to lead effectively.

Leadership training must now include:

- **AI literacy programs** to help managers understand and leverage AI-driven decision-making tools.
- **Scenario-based training** on managing AI-human collaboration in the workplace.
- **Ethical AI training** to ensure responsible decision-making with AI-powered insights.



3. Coaching Can No Longer Be Separate from Training

Leadership skills are developed through real-world practice, not just classroom sessions.

To be effective, training programs must integrate coaching that:

- **Provides ongoing feedback loops** rather than one-time training events.
- **Uses AI-driven coaching tools** that analyze communication and decision-making.
- **Ties coaching outcomes to business performance metrics.**

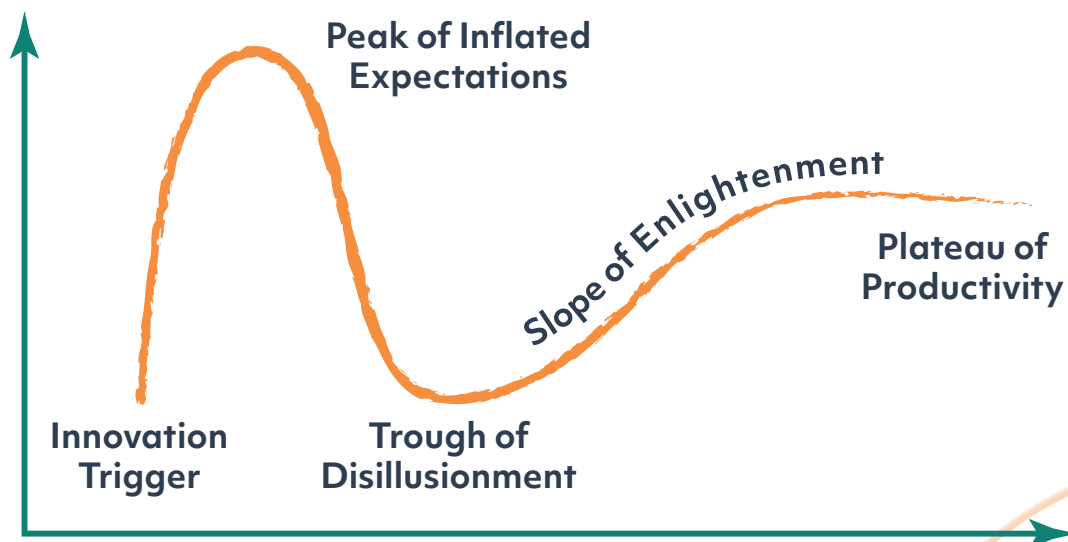
AI Adoption in 2025: Navigating the Hype Cycle

AI adoption is following a well-documented trajectory—one defined by high expectations, inevitable disillusionment, and, ultimately, productive integration. Gartner's Hype Cycle illustrates where various AI technologies currently stand in this journey.

Right now, many AI-driven innovations—such as generative AI, AI-powered coaching, and automated decision-making—are at the peak of inflated expectations. Organizations are investing heavily, but real-world implementation challenges are becoming apparent.

As companies move past the initial excitement, some will struggle with integration, hitting the “trough of disillusionment” as they face obstacles like scalability, ethical concerns, and workforce readiness.

However, not all AI tools will stagnate; those that prove their value, such as AI-enhanced training and adaptive learning platforms, will move into the “slope of enlightenment,” where businesses refine their use cases and establish best practices. The end goal? Reaching the “plateau of productivity,” where AI becomes a standard, trusted part of leadership development, L&D strategy, and business operations.



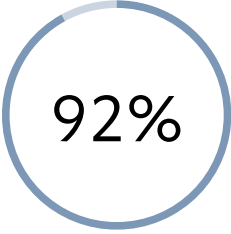
A full-page background image featuring a man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a blue and red plaid shirt. He is standing in front of a whiteboard, gesturing with his hands as if presenting. The whiteboard has some faint, illegible writing on it. The image has a blue tint overlay.

Leadership Training & the AI Transformation

Where Companies Stand

AI is now essential, but most companies are still refining how to integrate it effectively. While AI enhances training and leadership development, many struggle to move from experimentation to real impact. The challenge isn't access—it's strategic adoption for measurable results.

AI Adoption Rate Statistics:



92%

92% of executives plan to increase spending on AI over the next three years.

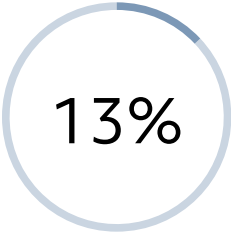
mckinsey.com



20%

Companies implementing AI-driven training programs have reported a **20%** increase in productivity, according to an IBM report.

litslink.com



13%

Only **13%** of employees have been offered AI-related training in the past year, highlighting a significant gap in AI skill development.

trainerhangout.com








34%

Only **34%** of managers feel equipped to support AI integration, indicating a need for enhanced training at leadership levels.

newsroom.wiley.com

Leadership Training At The Pace Of Change

Companies that struggle with leadership training often experience:

-  Poor Communication
-  Coaching Without Giving Feedback
-  Inability to Motivate Team Members
-  Failure to Delegate
-  High Employee Turnover

Effective leadership is the backbone of any successful organization, but great leaders aren't born—they're developed. While some individuals have natural leadership instincts, true leadership excellence requires continuous learning, adaptability, and practice.

Promoting employees based solely on technical expertise or tenure is no longer enough. Today's leaders must master a diverse set of skills—from strategic thinking to emotional intelligence—to guide teams effectively and drive business success. However, leadership is not one-size-fits-all. Managers at different levels face distinct challenges and require tailored skill development to meet their specific responsibilities.

Personalized leadership training ensures that every manager—from first-time supervisors to senior executives—receives the right support at the right time. By aligning development programs with real-world demands, organizations can build confident, capable leaders who are ready to navigate complexity and drive long-term success.



79%

79% of employees will quit due to a lack of appreciation



83%

83% of businesses agree that leadership development is important at every level

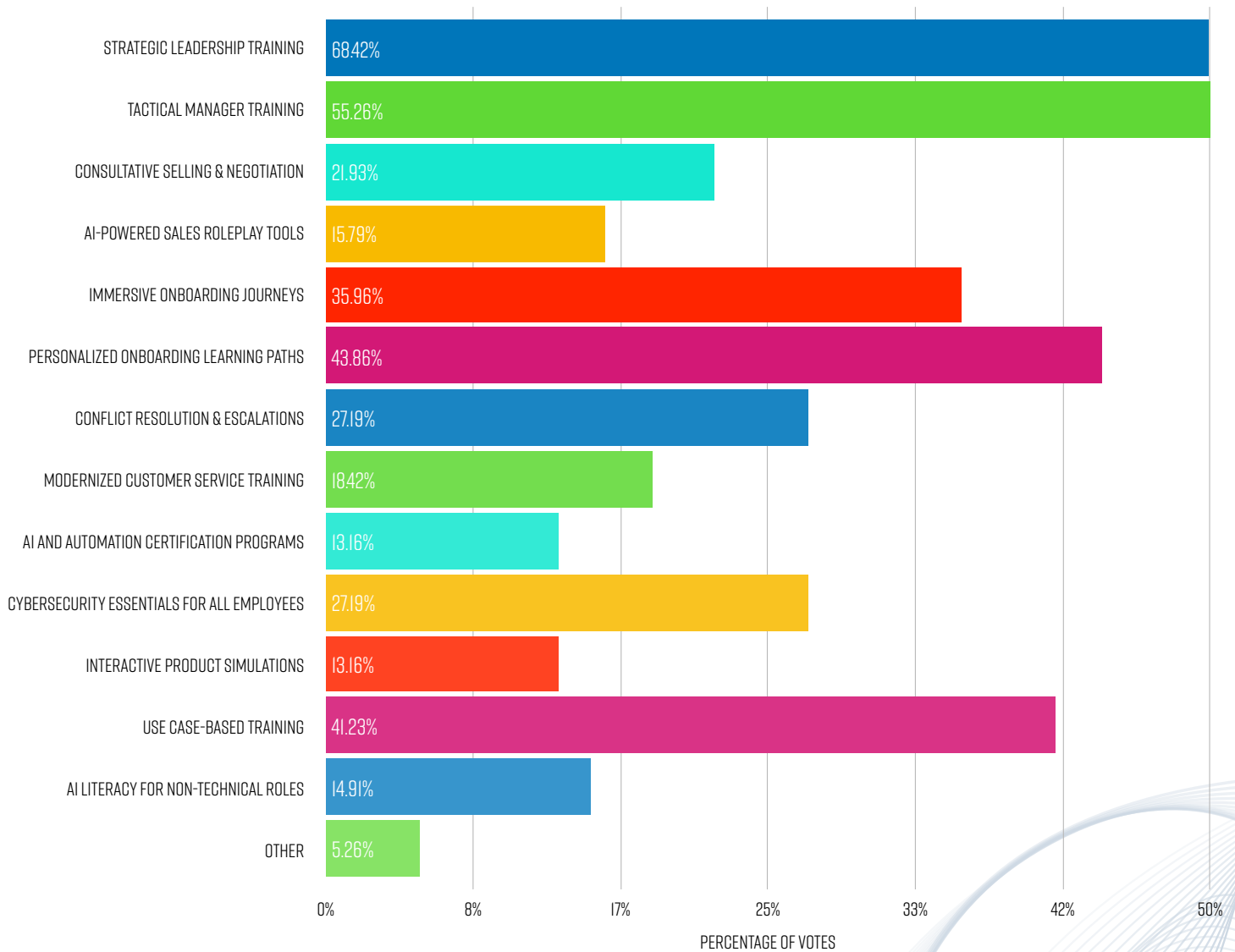


95%

95% of learning organizations plan to increase or maintain their current investment in leadership development

Strategic Leadership & Tactical Manager Training

Organizations are prioritizing strategic leadership and tactical manager training to ensure leaders at all levels can navigate increasing complexity, drive business outcomes, and foster high-performing teams. This shift demands that L&D functions take a more consultative approach, aligning leadership development with broader business objectives rather than just delivering static programs.



Strategic Leaders

Strategic leaders focus on long-term goals. Their work is determined by the big picture and how they can remain on the path to reach those long-term goals. They look at the skills employees will need in the future, analyze the competition, and look at how what they're doing today will impact the future. A good strategic leader has a vision and a mission. They know where they want to go and what they need to do to get there.



Strategic Decision-Making

Strong leaders don't just react to challenges—they anticipate them. They analyze data, trends, and business dynamics to make informed, forward-thinking decisions. By developing a strategic mindset, leaders ensure they're not only solving today's problems but also positioning their teams for long-term success.



Emotional Intelligence & Coaching

A great leader doesn't just manage people—they develop them. By mastering emotional intelligence, leaders can recognize and regulate their own emotions while understanding and responding to those of their team. This ability fosters trust, strengthens relationships, and enhances team performance. Effective coaching skills empower employees to grow, improving retention and overall engagement.



Technology & AI Fluency

Modern leaders must be comfortable working alongside AI, automation, and digital tools. They don't need to be technologists, but they must understand how AI-driven insights can support smarter decision-making. Whether it's leveraging AI for training, streamlining workflows, or enhancing customer interactions, leaders who embrace technology gain a significant competitive edge.



Agility & Adaptability

Change is constant, and leaders who resist it risk being left behind. The best leaders embrace uncertainty, pivot strategies as needed, and inspire their teams to do the same. By fostering a culture of adaptability, they ensure their organization stays resilient and competitive, even in unpredictable environments.



Strong Communicator

Leadership is about more than just talking—it's about ensuring that the message is received as intended. Great leaders practice active listening and communicate with clarity, adjusting their style based on their audience. Whether delivering difficult feedback or rallying a team around a vision, they ensure their words drive action and alignment.

Tactical Leaders

Tactical leaders are managers looking at daily goals rather than the big picture.

They are more focused on the short-term, day-to-day activities that get the job done, including project management, delivering feedback, coaching, and organizing meetings. They use a list and cross things off as they go. A good tactical manager can make sure things are done right so that the job gets done.

There are also traits that stick out when looking at successful managers, some of which are similar.

Successful Tactical Leader Traits:



Team-Oriented:

They work closely with their team members and need to ensure that they are getting the best out of each one. They must be able to address issues as they arrive and set the tone for their team.



Strong Communicator:

They work to bridge the gap between employees and leaders, helping everyone to come together as a team. Managers should strive to become strong communicators.



Dependable:

They should be trustworthy and accessible for their employees and team.



Management Style:

They must have a clear understanding of the organization's goals and values so that they can instill the correct culture and working environment for their employees.

Systematic Approach to Assessing Leadership Skill Gaps

Identifying leadership skill gaps requires a structured, data-driven approach that captures real-time insights, evaluates competencies across multiple dimensions, and provides a clear understanding of where leaders struggle. A comprehensive assessment framework should focus on observing behaviors, gathering multi-source feedback, analyzing decision-making processes, and leveraging data-driven insights to uncover critical gaps.

1. AI-Powered Leadership Simulations

- **Scenario-Based Evaluations** – Leaders engage in real-world, simulated challenges that test decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills in a controlled environment.
- **Behavioral Analysis** – AI evaluates response patterns, reaction times, and communication styles, identifying tendencies such as hesitation in decision-making, lack of clarity in direction, or an over-reliance on consensus.

2. Multi-Source Feedback & Self-Perception Gaps

- **360-Degree Feedback** – Collect insights from direct reports, peers, and senior leaders to assess leadership effectiveness from multiple perspectives.
- **Self-Assessment vs. External Perceptions** – Compare leaders' self-ratings with team feedback to highlight misalignments in self-awareness, confidence, and actual performance.
- **Behavioral Consistency Checks** – Identify discrepancies between how leaders believe they act and how they are perceived by others in real-world situations.

3. Leadership Competency Benchmarking

- **Defined Leadership Skill Metrics** – Assess leaders against predefined core competencies such as strategic vision, emotional intelligence, coaching effectiveness, and execution.
- **Industry & Peer Comparisons** – Benchmark individual and team leadership capabilities against internal expectations and industry standards to identify areas where the organization lags behind competitors.

4. Data-Driven Insights & Decision-Making Patterns

- **Performance Analytics** – Track trends across multiple leadership assessments to pinpoint recurring weaknesses and patterns.
- **Real-Time Decision-Making Evaluation** – Use roleplay and AI-driven analysis to measure how quickly and effectively leaders make choices under pressure.
- **Engagement & Influence Metrics** – Assess the ability to motivate and guide teams, looking at factors like communication effectiveness, delegation, and conflict management.

5. Observational Leadership Analysis

- **On-the-Job Leadership Audits** – Conduct structured shadowing sessions where leadership behaviors are evaluated in real-world settings.
- **Meeting & Communication Analysis** – Examine leaders' tone, clarity, and influence in team meetings, one-on-ones, and strategic discussions.

A Framework for Continuous Leadership Development

Leadership isn't built through one-time training—it's a continuous process of learning, application, and refinement. The Framework for Continuous Development provides a structured approach to building leadership capabilities that evolve with business needs. This framework ensures that leaders don't just acquire knowledge but also practice skills, receive feedback, refine their approach, and continuously grow.

At the heart of this model is AI-powered review and coaching, which is revolutionizing leadership development. AI enhances this process by:

Providing real-time, scenario-based coaching tailored to individual leadership challenges.

Delivering instant, personalized feedback to reinforce best practices and correct gaps immediately.

Tracking skill development through data-driven insights, helping L&D teams measure growth and refine training.

Simulating real-world interactions with dynamic personas, ensuring leaders develop adaptability and decision-making skills.



A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, looking at a large digital screen. The screen displays a blurred, high-tech image of a human face, possibly representing AI. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal/cyan filter.

Now Forget AI and Focus On Your Humanity

Emotional Intelligence for Leaders:

The Number One Predictor of Professional Success

It's time to prepare for "The Great Rehiring" by developing key skills in emotional intelligence that will empower your leaders, managers, and teams.



"Leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading people to work toward a common goal, and those common goals can be found when you develop the proper skills to connect with others."

Daniel Goleman

Author of Emotional Intelligence



What Is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence (EQ) affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results. An emotional leader can influence the atmosphere of the whole group. A Leaders' EQ affects organizational profitability and performance; they must be able to relate to and understand customers and competitors in order to gain a competitive advantage.



The Five Keys to Emotional Intelligence

These skills stem from Daniel Goleman's five key components of emotional intelligence:

Self-Awareness

You understand your strengths and shortcomings, and how you respond in certain situations.

Self-Regulation

The opposite of impulsiveness, you control your behavior through self-evaluation.

Empathy

You're a good listener and interpreter, attuned to body language and expressions.

Motivation

You're doing it for you, to fulfill your personal goals and needs, or to drive higher performance.

Social Skills

You connect to others through active listening and strong communication skills.



The 4 EQ Superpowers of AI-Era Leaders

1. Self-Awareness → Digital Confidence

Understand how emotions, values, and biases shape leadership — especially when interpreting AI insights.

Action: Use reflective assessments + coaching dashboards to develop self-awareness over time.

2. Self-Management → Change Resilience

Stay grounded and agile when AI shifts roles, routines, or strategies.

Action: Equip leaders with just-in-time microlearning on stress, time management, and uncertainty.

3. Social Awareness → Inclusive Intelligence

Recognize team emotions, virtual signals, and cultural nuances in hybrid environments.

Action: Use dynamic personas and scenario-based simulations to foster empathy and perspective-taking.

4. Relationship Management → Trust-Centric Leadership

Build high-trust, high-performance teams—even when AI is mediating communication and feedback.

Action: Train leaders to coach with authenticity, using AI as a tool—not a substitute. performance

EQ × AI = The Winning Combination

When Emotional Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence work together, they create scalable, personalized leadership development:

AI Brings

- Data-driven diagnostics
- Real-time performance analytics
- Feedback at scale
- Adaptive learning paths
- Roleplay with dynamic AI personas

EQ Enables

- Personalized, human-centered coaching
- Ethical decision-making
- Trust-building and nuanced communication
- Self-reflection and continuous growth
- Empathy, authenticity, and coaching instincts

AI accelerates insight. EQ brings intention.

Together, they help leaders adapt faster, lead better, and build trust in a high-change world.



The image features a central, glowing wireframe cube with a rainbow gradient, set against a dark, starry background. The scene is populated with numerous floating rectangular blocks of various sizes, some of which are also glowing. The floor is a highly reflective surface that mirrors the cube and the surrounding blocks, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, purples, and greens, with bright highlights from the glowing elements.

About Unboxed

Our Mission

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

We Provide An Integrated Learning Ecosystem

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



Strategy & Consulting

Assess needs, audit content, and build learning strategy



Training Content

Custom training programs to improve and sustain skills and behaviors



Unboxed Skill-Building Platform

AI-powered learning, coaching and skills development

We Solve Complex Employee Training Challenges

Unboxed Training & Technology helps organizations unlock **Skill Agility®**—the ability to rapidly develop the right skills at the right time. Through a combination of strategic consulting, custom training content, and the integrated **Unboxed Skill Building Platform**, we deliver end-to-end solutions that make learning scalable, engaging, and measurable.

Our platform empowers employees to **Create, Learn, Collaborate, Practice, Coach, and Measure**—providing personalized development experiences that drive real-world performance and future readiness.

By aligning learning to business needs and embedding it into the flow of work, Unboxed ensures your workforce is equipped to meet challenges, seize opportunities, and grow with confidence.

Company Values



Respect

Unique strengths and opinions inspire greatness.



Excellence

Deliver consistently exceptional results.



Simplicity

To be simple is to be great.



Trust

Without trust, we fail.



Who We Work With





(888) 723-9770



hello@unboxedtech.com



2201 West Broad Street, Suite 202
Richmond, VA 23220