Delivering an Effortless Learning Experience

Learning and Development (L&D) functions have focused on engaging employees by creating fun, timely learning experiences. But are those investments driving application? Organizations that instead focus on minimizing unnecessary effort increase the likelihood of successful learning outcomes.
Digital Learners

- Learn from a broad group of peers
- Use independent learning resources and take learning into their own hands
- Find information when they need it

The Rise of the Digital Learner

Due to changes in technology and access to information, the way professionals learn and consume information has changed, resulting in the emergence of the digital learner. Our research found that digital learners are empowered, networked, and impatient in their approach to learning.

Empowered

- Seventy-six percent of employees report they will “do what they need to do” to learn effectively.
- Employees have access to independent learning resources and take learning into their own hands.

Networked

- Sixty-nine percent of employees regularly seek out new ways of completing work from coworkers.
- Beyond coworkers, employees learn from broad networks of peers.

Impatient

- Sixty-six percent of employees expect to learn new information when they need it.
- Employees believe they will find the information they need when they need it more quickly.

Engaging the Digital Learner

To keep pace with digital learners, L&D functions typically focus on delivering engaging learning experiences by making learning fun, proliferating learning channels, and responding to immediate learning needs. In fact, the average L&D function has increased spending by 16% in the last three years to create an engaging learning experience.

Making Learning Fun

79% of L&D functions have redesigned learning content in the past three years to make it more enjoyable.

Proliferating Learning Channels

67% of L&D functions have increased the number of learning channels they offer in the past three years.

Responding to Immediate Learning Needs

59% of L&D functions prioritize immediate learning needs for employees’ current jobs.

CEB Learning & Development Leadership Council

We help heads of L&D and their teams optimize the performance of their function and business.

For more information, visit cebglobal.com/learning-and-development.
Engaging Learning Doesn’t Drive Learning Application

While the approach of creating engaging content has increased digital learners’ satisfaction with L&D offerings, learning application remains low.

Engaging the Digital Learner Drives Satisfaction, Not Application

78% of Employees Are Satisfied with L&D Products

37% of Learning Is Applied on the Job

n = 9,071 (Digital Learner Survey); 7,576 (Dashboard).
Source: CEB 2016 L&D Digital Learner Survey; CEB Training Effectiveness Dashboard.

Learning application is defined as the percentage of learning experienced in the last six months that was applied on the job.

If learner satisfaction has increased, why has learning application remained low, and how can L&D increase rates of application?
Boost Learning Application

Deliver an effortless learning experience by making learning easier for employees to:
- Access,
- Consume, and
- Apply to current and future roles.

Increase Application by Delivering an Effortless Learning Experience

Minimizing the effort required of learners—specifically the effort put into consuming, accessing, and understanding the applicability of content—has the strongest impact on learning application.

An Effortless Learning Experience Drives Application

*Maximum Impact of Learning Characteristics on Learning Application*

- An effortless learning experience has the greatest impact on learning application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ease of Career Application</th>
<th>Ease of Access</th>
<th>Ease of Consumability</th>
<th>Immediate Relevance</th>
<th>Peer Networking Opportunity</th>
<th>Information Retrieval Speed</th>
<th>Employee-Generated Content</th>
<th>Enjoyable Products</th>
<th>Diverse Channels</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learner Value Ranking

1. Ease of Career Application
2. Ease of Access
3. Ease of Consumability
4. Immediate Relevance
5. Peer Networking Opportunity
6. Information Retrieval Speed
7. Employee-Generated Content
8. Enjoyable Products
9. Diverse Channels

Digital learners value an effortless learning experience more than other learning characteristics.

n = 9,071.
Source: CEB 2016 L&D Digital Learner Survey.
Learning Requires Effort; Learning Experiences Should Be Easy

While effective learning requires that learners make an effort to reflect and change behaviors, L&D can maximize application by making sure accessing, consuming, and seeing the applicability of that learning is as effortless as possible.

Development Is Hard; the Experience Shouldn’t Be

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What Could Be Hard</th>
<th>What Should Be Effortless</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investing the time required to learn a given skill</td>
<td>Finding the learning when and where you need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting forth the effort to practice new skills on the job</td>
<td>Consuming learning in an easy-to-use format</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying your personal learning goals and objectives</td>
<td>Understanding how to connect learning to your job and career</td>
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Source: CEB analysis.

Unfortunately, current learning experiences typically require substantial effort for employees, who report that learning is hard to consume, access, and apply to their careers. In fact, only 19% of employees work at organizations that deliver all three pillars of an effortless learning experience.

Not an Effortless Learning Experience
Examples of Sources of Employee Effort

55% of employees find learning hard to consume.
57% of employees find learning hard to access.
54% of employees find learning hard to apply to careers.

Source: CEB 2016 L&D Digital Learner Survey.

n = 9,071.
Deliver an Effortless Learning Experience

We found that delivering an effortless learning experience affects learning application 2.7 times more than delivering engaging learning experiences, increasing revenue by $1,040 per employee and improving profit by 1.9x.

To improve learning application and employee performance, take the following steps to deliver an effortless learning experience:

1. **Understand Learners’ Values**—Make learning easier to consume by ensuring L&D designs content around what learners value, not just what the business needs. Use a design thinking approach to determine employees’ top performance and career concerns, and connect these with your learning strategy. (See details at left on how **CEB Leadership Academies** design a curriculum to provide an effortless development experience for your learners.)

2. **Prioritize Placement of Learning**—Make learning easier to access by lowering barriers to access rather than increasing the number and diversity of learning channels. Partner with business leaders to identify employee access barriers and deliver learning in the moment of need.

3. **Boost Career Applicability of Learning**—Make learning easier to apply to employees’ careers rather than just meeting their immediate needs. Create greater transparency of how skills and experiences are changing in value to the organization, and empower employees to chart their own course.

4. **Prepare L&D Staff**—Develop L&D staff capabilities and mind-sets to deliver effortless learning experiences rather than engaging learning products. Design staff development experiences that enable L&D staff to both practice and apply new skills on the job.

5. **Measure Learning Application**—Measure and validate the impact of learning to determine if learning is being applied and to ensure you are receiving returns on learning investments. By using an objective, analytical measurement diagnostic, you can enable data-driven decisions about talent and see the learning and business performance of your employees. (See details at left on how **CEB Metrics That Matter™** resources can help you.)

For Members: Assess Your Current Effectiveness

CEB Learning & Development Leadership Council members may access an anatomy diagnostic that helps provide a clear understanding of their current effectiveness at delivering an effortless learning experience. Members may visit [cebglobal.com/effortless-learning/member.html](http://cebglobal.com/effortless-learning/member.html) to access the diagnostic.
More on CEB L&D

CEB L&D enables heads of L&D and their teams to benchmark performance against best-in-class metrics and achieve critical business objectives through successful L&D strategies. We provide data-driven best practices, implementation tools, and ongoing support from members of our Executive Advisor™ team to help you save time and make better decisions. For more information, visit cebglobal.com/learning-and-development.

More on CEB Leadership Academies

CEB Leadership Academies are a functionally specific development program that uses a blended-learning approach to reinvent learning combining live and virtual sessions depending on organizational needs. We enable participants to discover best practices, learn through a flexible model, apply new skills immediately, sustain ongoing development, and measure the impact of learning on their performance using Metrics That Matter™ tools. For more information, visit cebglobal.com/leadership-academies.

More on CEB Metrics That Matter™

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