



Shaping Tomorrow

Technology's Role in Upskilling the
Workforce For Innovation, Growth,
and Long-Term Business Success.



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Introduction

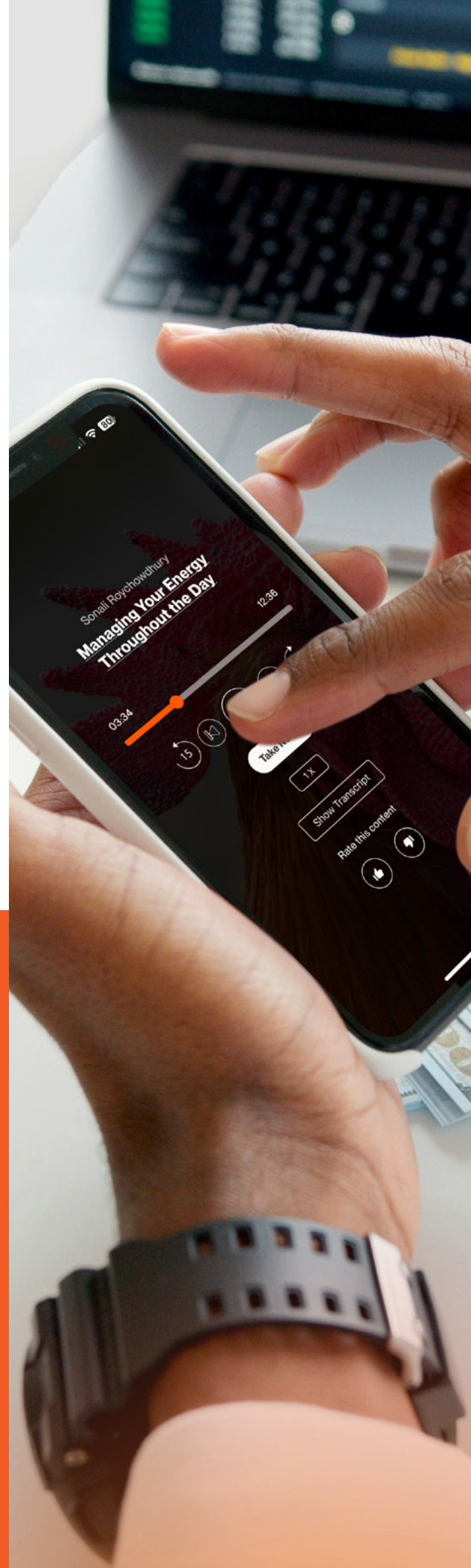
The learning and development (L&D) landscape is deeply influenced by technology, with increasing numbers of corporations prioritizing L&D programs to upskill their workforce and remain competitive in today's ever-changing business environment. A study by Technavio estimates that the global e-learning market size will grow by **\$61.35 billion** from 2021-2025, with a CAGR of almost **14%**.

When leveraged correctly, technology can provide upskilling opportunities for employees that are tailored to their specific needs and flexible enough to fit their schedules. This approach not only enhances employees' skills through continuous learning, but also upholds a culture of innovation, growth, and long-term business success. In essence, upskilling is not just about preparing for the future -- **it's about creating it.**

The WEF Future of Jobs Report 2023 states that for businesses that want to transform over the next five years, technology adoption will be a key driving factor. **Over 85%** of organizations surveyed believe that in order to drive transformation, increasing both access to digital and adoption of frontier technologies will prove crucial.

Tigerhall recently gathered a roundtable of experts from global education, technical training, learning design, people development, DE&I and HR to reflect on the potential power of technology in achieving corporate learning and development outcomes.

In this report, we will explore the learning and development landscape, technology innovations and trends, technology's role in corporate learning, and strategies for successful change management in adopting new technology for corporate L&D success.



About the Contributors



Meredith Wellard

VP of Group Learning,
Talent and HR Platforms at **DHL**

Meredith's diverse career spans 25 years, including experience in customer service, human resource management, and talent development across Australia, Europe, and the Middle East. Prior to her role with Deutsche Post DHL Group, Meredith served as Customer Satisfaction Manager and later National Organizational Development Manager at Australia's largest private health insurer. Her background in customer and operations management, coupled with her strategic prowess in HR and technology affords her a unique insight into the substantial value that organizations derive from aligning technology, employee-centric approaches, leadership, and cultural initiatives.



Andy Ho

VP of Learning Experience
and Innovation at **ServiceNow**

Andy is a senior executive with an impressive 25-year track record in the enterprise software industry, specializing in training. Throughout his career, he has overseen the development and delivery of training programs in various formats, including instructor-led, virtual, and cloud-based sessions. In his current role, Andy leads a team focused on revolutionizing learning experiences and driving innovation. As a VP at ServiceNow, he spearheaded the Training Innovations Lab, an ambitious initiative that seeks to reshape the future of tech learning and education through interactive, immersive experiences and new technologies.



Zhdan Shakirov

Innovation and Technology
Director at **BCG U**

Zhdan Shakirov's diverse career spans over 15 years, across management consulting, higher education, and financial services. His unwavering passion for learning innovation and technology is evident in his mission to empower organizations to stay competitive in an ever-evolving landscape by harnessing the combined potential of humans and machines in the workplace. In his current role as the Learning Innovation and Technology Director at BCG, Zhdan takes the lead in conceptualizing and developing cutting-edge learning products and technology-driven solutions designed to deliver substantial value and impact to clients. He stands as a thought leader and a co-creator of the groundbreaking Learning Ecosystem Maturity Assessment (**LEMA**) methodology, a framework that empowers organizations to evaluate and enhance their learning capabilities.



Tara Borchers

Head of D&I and HR Technology
at **PRA Group**

Tara Borchers holds dual roles as the Global HRIS Director and as the Head of Diversity and Inclusion and HR Technology. Her portfolio of responsibilities includes global leadership in Talent Management, Executive coaching Diversity & Inclusion, expertise in HRIS, proficiency in HR Data and Analytics, adept management of HR project execution, a keen focus on fostering employee engagement and shaping organizational culture, effective HR communications, and expertise in eSOCIALg.



Bonnie Willoughby

Group Director of Global Learning
Services Practice at **Siemens EDA**

Bonnie Willoughby serves as the Group Director for the Global Learning Services Practice at Siemens EDA (Siemens Digital Industries Software). With over 30 years of experience in customer service, she has excelled in innovating, designing, developing, and effectively marketing customer service programs. Throughout her career, Bonnie has demonstrated exceptional leadership, heading large international and multicultural teams and aligning corporate and educational strategies for organizations with multi-million-dollar operations. Her impressive track record includes delivering substantial improvements in revenue, margin, quality, and customer satisfaction.



Juliana Saad

VP of Talent Management, L&D
and D&I at **DHL eCommerce**

Juliana is at the helm of Talent Management, Learning & Development, and Diversity on a global scale at DHL eCommerce Solutions, a division of the DHL Group. Her role involves crafting worldwide initiatives and streamlining operational procedures to provide robust support to the HR teams spread across diverse locations in Europe, Asia, and the US. Before her current role, Juliana amassed over a decade of experience within various roles at DPDHL, ranging from Compensation and Benefits to Human Resources Development and Communications. Additionally, she spent six years in her native Brazil, where her focus was on tender management and market research. Juliana's passion lies in nurturing people's development, promoting well-being, and cultivating a culture of positive leadership.

Key Insights



The corporate learning landscape has been reshaped by **low-cost and accessible** software solutions, democratizing training content creation and delivery.



Microlearning is on the rise, **offering bite-sized, easily digestible content** in the flow of work for better engagement and knowledge retention.



Change management is essential when adopting innovative tools and methodologies in corporate learning.



Technology should **complement and enhance the learning experience**, not overshadow it.



Organizations should consider **the diverse ways employees adopt specific technologies for learning**, taking generational differences into account.

Looking Back: Learning Technology Trends in the Past Decade

Traditionally, designing and delivering corporate training programs was a laborious and resource-intensive process.

Organizations invested substantial time and capital in crafting learning experiences that often struggled to keep pace with the evolving needs of the modern workforce. However, the past decade has witnessed a remarkable technology acceleration which not only eliminated cost barriers but also fostered innovation and a deeper understanding of employee learning preferences.

The corporate learning landscape has been largely reshaped by the emergence of low-cost and accessible software solutions, posited **Tara Borchers of PRA Group**. Platforms such as learning management systems (LMS) and virtual classrooms have democratized the creation and delivery of training content, allowing organizations of all sizes to embrace technology as an enabler of learning, and reduce the financial burdens associated with traditional training methods.

In the 2010s, both **Bonnie Willoughby of Siemens EDA** and **Andy Ho of ServiceNow** highlighted, we shifted away from 'sage on the stage' of live, in-person instruction to online, self-paced learning. This transition from lecture and lab to the advent of virtual labs not only changed the focus of how learning professionals prepared materials, but also accelerated speed to value for corporate training programs.

Cloud-based LMS platforms have provided organizations with the ability to create, manage, and deliver training content much more efficiently. The flexibility and scalability of such systems have empowered businesses to rapidly adapt their learning strategies and keep employees up-to-date with the latest skills and advancements in their respective fields.

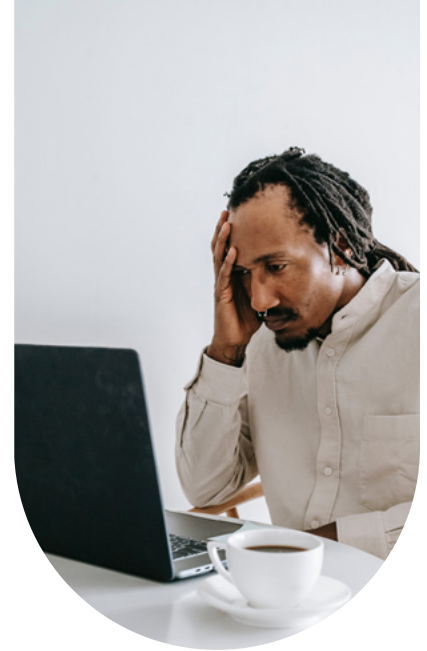
The accessibility of these learning tools has unleashed a wave of creativity among learning and development professionals. With the removal of financial constraints, learning professionals have also been free to experiment with innovative approaches to learning design, resulting in deeper insights as to how their employees perceive and engage with learning.



Technology's Role in Corporate Learning

According to the Harvard Business Review, 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.**

Striking equilibrium between the learner and technology is crucial in turning around these failing numbers. This delicate balance is achieved only when technology serves to complement and enhance the learning experience, not overshadow it.



“**Technology can help a learner connect the dots, but it's the learner who ultimately makes meaning from the experience.**

— Tara Borchers, PRA Group

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It may be tempting to adopt the latest technology that promises to be a cure-all for L&D challenges, but the most successful learning professionals know to first consider the unique needs of their workforce and also, whether or not the technology tools they're considering meet the basic psychological needs of how people learn.

VIRTUAL REALITY (VR),

for instance, provides an immersive educational environment for simulating real-life business scenarios. **Zhdan Shakirov** explained how companies like Walmart and UPS have used VR to train employees in customer service and delivery scenarios, respectively, yet these are unique and specific use cases that cannot be replicated across industries. That VR has its shortcomings is **a view that all of the experts who participated in the discussion shared.** Not only can it be cost-prohibitive for many organizations, but also employees may experience discomfort due to the awkward form factor, or dizziness during use, ultimately undermining the learning experience.

GAMIFICATION,

which involves employing game mechanics like competitions, leaderboards, rewards and recognition, has been successful in promoting learner engagement and motivation. Companies like Microsoft and Cisco have used gamification to enhance their training programs. For example, Microsoft used a game-like interface to train sales personnel, leading to a 10% improvement in productivity. **However, all experts agreed that gamification also has its drawbacks.** Most notably, it can become more about winning the game than the learning itself, detracting from the true objective of the program.

MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOCs)

offer flexible, affordable, and scalable learning opportunities, enabling companies to train a large number of employees simultaneously. For instance, AT&T partnered with Udacity to create a 'NanoDegree' program in data science. **But MOOCs have been criticized for their low completion rates, as they often lack the interaction and engagement among learners that a smaller online course might provide.** Additionally, platforms like Masterclass are missing a key element to motivate learners: relatability. Or put a different way, someone may admire Serena Williams (*for good reason*), but when it comes to actually learning tennis skills, they're motivated by their peers, not the experts.

Upskilling Today

With numerous global and economic factors shaking up the business landscape, upskilling existing staff is becoming a strategic priority for many organizations. It presents a cost-effective alternative to continually hiring new talent with the required skills, and it also helps to foster a culture of learning and growth within the organization. By investing in the development of their existing workforce, companies can ensure they have the skills needed to navigate current and future business challenges.

“For a representative sample of 100 employees, businesses estimate that 39 will not require training before 2027; 12 will need training that will not become accessible to them until 2027; 15 will require training which will not be accessible for the foreseeable future, likely leaving their skills gaps unclosed beyond 2027; and 18 will be upskilled in their post by 2027. Companies expect that 16 of the representative 100 employees will be reskilled and successfully redeployed to growing roles within their organization by 2027.”

— WEF Future of Jobs Survey 2023 - 2027.

The above demonstrates that upskilling the workforce to respond to an uncertain, dynamic future isn't a straightforward task. Skills and jobs are being disrupted on an ongoing basis. As organizations identify that closing skills gaps will lead to significant business transformation, upskilling becomes a business imperative.

Indeed, **Meredith Wellard of DHL** concurred, stating that while knowledge has always been available, people don't always choose to access it. The shift, she underlined, was in taking the organization on the journey, where employees understand learning to be part of the job.

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The problem is that we still see learning as a separate activity to performing, and that disconnect needs to stop. As organizations, we care if they [employees] are performing, but learning is what's necessary to perform.

—Juliana Saad,
DHL eCommerce

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The Rise of Microlearning

Microlearning is predicted to grow substantially in the coming years. According to MarketsandMarkets, the global microlearning market size is projected to grow from **USD 1.5 billion in 2019 to USD 2.7 billion by 2024, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13.2%** the forecast period. This growth is largely driven by the increasing need for skill-based learning in corporate L&D programs.

Microlearning's focus on producing bite-sized content in easily digestible formats makes it both a practical and powerful solution for continuous learning. Employees can effortlessly complete key learnings in smaller moments, leading to better engagement rates. Not only does microlearning address the time pressure and mental fatigue caused by traditional corporate training programs, but it also improves actual knowledge retention by creating multiple opportunities to revisit and reinforce previously completed learnings. According to research in the Journal of Applied Psychology, the **transfer of learning is 17% more efficient** when it comes to microlearning.

Where traditional corporate training would take employees away from their jobs, leading to increased costs and logistical challenges, microlearning fits squarely in the flow of work. This means that employees on the ground can close skill gaps without having to take time away from their work.

Modern Learners Expect Modern Solutions

To stay well-versed in the most promising corporate learning innovations, simply look to digital natives. Today, this demographic flows continuously between mobile games, chatting with their peers on Discord, and interacting on Twitch live streams, thus providing a practical mental map for how learning professionals might integrate these same tools in their upskilling initiatives.

For Andy Ho, bridging the gap between corporate learning and the consumer world is an ongoing challenge, and succeeding to do so will prove essential. Why is it that people are willing to spend hours on platforms such as YouTube or Threads, but unwilling to take on learning

that's readily offered up to them? Meredith Wellard stated that the answer is in striking the fine balance between the "push" of personalization with the "pull" of choice, with corporate learning often falling short on the latter. Zhdan Shakirov added that the other vital ingredient for effective learning is applicability – providing employees with a safe space in which to learn by doing and making mistakes.

This is also an important reminder to be considerate of generational differences among employees and to clearly

identify the diverse ways in which they do – or don't – adopt specific technologies for learning. For instance, US insights from PwC's Global Hopes and Fears Survey 2023 show that while **44% of baby boomers don't believe their jobs will be impacted by AI, Gen Z and millennials hold a more realistic view of how this technology will impact their roles.** Understanding the diverse motivations that drive employees towards curiosity and growth mindedness, alongside technology, will be crucial.

Approaches to Closing Skill Gaps as an Organization

During the Tigerhall roundtable, panel experts shed light on potential strategies and approaches to make learning a continuous, adaptable, and inclusive process.

Curate for Learners

Meredith Wellard at DHL highlighted the significant transformation in how learning is perceived today. Gone are the days when learning was considered a one-time event; now, it's an ongoing process. She emphasized the importance of curation in a deliberate manner, ensuring consistency and understanding of how individuals learn. Learning, she argued, should be deeply ingrained in an organization's culture, strategy, and day-to-day operations, rather than being a stand-alone event with interchangeable content. The focus, she stressed, should shift from the content to the learner.

Focus on Impact

Andy Ho at ServiceNow expressed concerns about the resistance to change, especially in larger corporations. Many organizations still view training as an event, a mindset that can hinder the adoption of new technologies like GenAI. He emphasized the need to shift from delivering a portfolio of classes to providing experiences and cohorts that cater to different learning styles and schedules. The challenge, Andy pointed out, lies in transitioning from a product-oriented view of training to a more dynamic and continuous learning approach.

One key reason change management efforts often fall short, according to Ho, is the disconnect between learning and return on investment (ROI). Corporations tend to measure success in terms of customer satisfaction, revenue, and certification numbers, overlooking the importance of adoption and continuous learning. To drive change, he argued, organizations must shift their focus from events to streams of learning.

Personalization is Key

Zhdan Shakirov at BCG advocated for personalized learning experiences tailored to individual needs. He stressed the importance of having learning elements integrated into daily work, citing examples like Highspot's sales enablement tool, which suggests learning resources in real-time. Creating agile teams that combine business and learning expertise, he added, can further enhance individual career progression.

Tune In

Bonnie Willoughby at Siemens suggested that change management can be more effective when organizations actively listen to market and learner needs. By aligning efforts with what learners are willing to accept, change may become less daunting.

Consider Preferences and Pain Points

Juliana Saad at DHL highlighted the importance of connecting pain points and desires when implementing change. She encouraged organizations to learn from the consumer world, where choices and preferences are valued.

Make Learning Accessible For All

Tara Borchers at PRA Group emphasized the significance of accessibility in creating digital competency and thus ultimately, learning. The lack of one (digital competency) could create disparities in the other (learning).

She contended that learning content should be accessible and easy to navigate for the learner as well as — easy to create— and adaptable for the instructional designer. To that end, quality thresholds often set by corporate learning can be lowered without compromising effectiveness.

Overcoming the Challenge of Adoption Through Effective Change Management

The adoption of innovative tools and methodologies in corporate learning is not just a mere technological shift, but a cultural one. Organizations must prepare their employees for the transition and create an environment where they feel heard and valued.

Five Tips to Help Your Organization Embrace Change

With the right strategies and support, the adoption of technology tools in corporate learning and development can unlock a wealth of opportunities and help organizations achieve their desired outcomes. Here are some ways to get started.

1 Define Clear Goals and Objectives

The foremost step in any change management strategy is to define clear goals and objectives. Once the objectives are defined, it becomes easier to identify the technology tools that align with those objectives.

2 Create a Change Management Plan

It is essential to have a robust change management plan to ensure that the transition is smoothly carried out. The plan must cover all aspects, including a clear communication strategy, training and development of team members, and a risk management plan.

3 Training and Development of Team Members

The adoption of technology tools in corporate learning and development requires a significant shift in mindset and skill set for both employees and managers. Therefore, it's critical to provide training and development to the team members to increase their digital competency and equip them with the necessary skills to utilize technology tools effectively. Managers must lead by example and be a role model for digital competence for their team members.

4 Communication and Engagement

Clear and effective communication is essential for successful adoption of technology tools in corporate learning and development. Prepare a brand campaign that helps shift the prevailing mindset of training from a series of events to a stream of ongoing experiences. A clear understanding of the technology and its benefits make employees more willing to support the transition. Organizations can create an environment of engagement by allowing employees to have a voice throughout the process. Consider testing smaller learning elements as part of daily work and identify how and where

5 Celebrate Successes and Learn from Failures

Every change journey comes with its successes and failures. It's essential to celebrate every success, no matter how small, to show employees that their efforts are being recognized. At the same time, it's essential to learn from failures and take steps to avoid future mistakes. Conducting periodic reviews and audits of the change implementation process will ensure continuous improvement in the system.

Accelerating Upskilling With Technology: The Road Forward

Traditionally, designing and delivering corporate training programs was a laborious and resource-intensive process. Organizations invested substantial time and capital in crafting learning experiences that often struggled to keep pace with the evolving needs of the modern workforce. However, the past decade has witnessed a remarkable technology acceleration which not only eliminated cost barriers but also fostered innovation and a deeper understanding of employee learning preferences.

By implementing the following 10 steps, corporate learning and development professionals can harness technology to not only engage employees, but continuously provide them with access to new skills that prepare them for tomorrow's challenges today.

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Knowledge is accessible to so many more people around the world thanks to technology. You just need to take the initiative to seek it.

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— **Bonnie Willoughby,**
Siemens EDA

Assess Technological Needs: Begin by conducting a thorough assessment of your organization's learning and development needs. Identify areas where technology can enhance training, improve skills, and align with business goals.

Select Appropriate Technology Solutions: Based on your assessment, choose the right technology tools and platforms that align with your learning objectives. Consider factors such as ease of use, scalability, and integration capabilities.

Customize Content for Digital Learning: Adapt your learning content to suit digital formats. Create engaging, interactive, and bite-sized materials that are suitable for online delivery.

Provide Comprehensive Training: Ensure that employees and trainers are proficient in using the selected technology tools. Offer training programs and resources to build digital competencies.

Measure and Analyze Performance: Implement performance metrics and analytics to track the effectiveness of your technology-enabled learning initiatives. Monitor learner progress and gather insights for continuous improvement.

Iterate and Update: Regularly update and refine your digital learning content and strategies to keep them current and aligned with changing business needs and technological advancements.

Encourage Collaboration and Engagement: Foster collaboration among learners through online forums, discussion boards, or virtual classrooms. Encourage active participation to enhance the learning experience.

Ensure Accessibility and Inclusivity: Make sure that your digital learning content is accessible to all employees, including those with disabilities. Consider diverse learning styles and ensure inclusivity in your training materials.

Seek Employee Feedback: Actively seek feedback from employees regarding their experiences with technology-enabled learning. Use their input to make adjustments and improvements as needed.

Stay Informed About Technological Trends: Continuously monitor emerging technological trends in the learning and development space. Be prepared to adapt and incorporate new tools and approaches that can enhance your upskilling programs.

Many thanks to the Tigerhall roundtable panelists for their time and thoughtful insights.

If you would like to join a future Tigerhall roundtable or have suggestions for an industry topic, please contact us at hellotigers@tigerhall.com

Resources For Further Exploration

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