



Leadership Vision for 2024

**Top 3 Strategic Priorities for
Learning and Development
Leaders**

Leadership Vision for Learning and Development Leaders in 2024

An “unsettled” employee-employer relationship, skills shortages, transformative technology and pressure for efficiency are shaping how the best organizations will manage learning and development (L&D) in 2024.

In this context, L&D leaders’ top priorities for 2024 are:

- Leader and manager development
- L&D design and delivery
- Skills and growth needs identification

L&D leaders can use this research to stay ahead of major workforce trends and lead their teams toward a successful future.

Key questions addressed:

- ① What are the major trends affecting L&D leaders?
- ① How should L&D leaders prepare for the year ahead?
- ① What skills and capabilities do L&D leaders and their teams need to succeed?

Trends Impacting L&D Leaders



**“Unsettled”
Employee-Employer
Relationship**



**Persistent
Skills
Shortages**



**Transformative
Technology
Innovations**




**Pressure for
Operational
Efficiency**

Source: Gartner

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“Unsettled” Employee-Employer Relationship

Organizations		Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% have an on-site attendance requirement. • 26% report their employees fully comply.^a 	Flexibility Controversy	Almost half say the costs of going to the office outweigh the benefits (only 12% disagree) . ^b
58% are confident they can meet their performance targets in the coming year. ^c	Productivity Anxiety	45% worry they can't sustain their current level of performance over the next year. ^c
The average annual number of enterprise changes has increased from 2 to 10 since 2016. ^d	Transformation Deficit	43% are willing to change their behavior to support organizational transformation (down from 74%). ^d
63% trust their employees. ^e	Mutual Mistrust	53% trust their organizations. ^e

^a Source: 2022, Benchmark With Gartner: How HR Leaders Navigate Return to Workplace Pressures and Other Challenges, November 16, n = 51

^b Source: 2022 Gartner Hybrid Collaboration Survey, n = 3,524

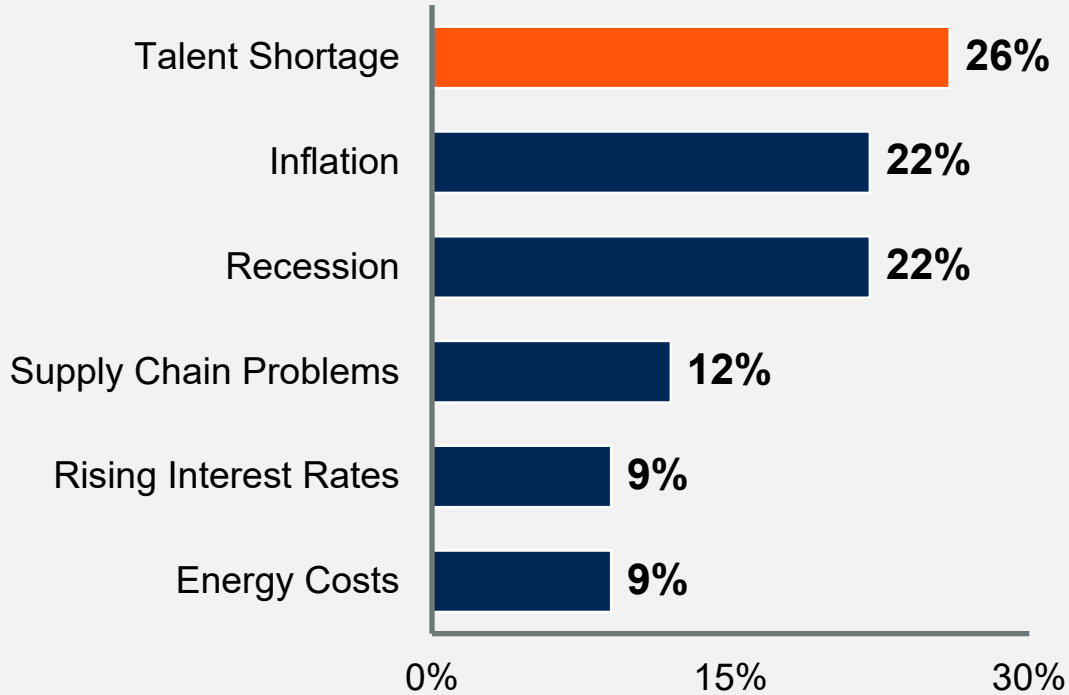
^c Source: 2023 Gartner Achieving High Performance Survey, n = 228 remote capable employees

^d Sources: Gartner 2016 Workforce Change Survey, n = 6,686 employees; Gartner 2022 Workforce Change Survey, n = 3,548 employees; Gartner Organizational Effectiveness and HR Professionals Key Priorities Survey, n = 3,497 employees

^e Sources: 2023 Gartner ReimagineHR HR Leader Survey, n = 287 HR leaders; 2023 Gartner ReimagineHR HR Leader Survey, n = 3,540 employees

Persistent Skills Shortages

Severity of Damage to Business Outlook Percentage of CEOs' Ranking Factor as Most Damaging



n = 312 CEOs and senior executives
Q. Rank the six items in order of the severity of their impact on the outlook for your business, from most damaging to least damaging.
Source: 2023 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey

Perceptions of Skills Shortage Percentage of HR Leaders



83% of HR leaders say they struggle to find **enough talent** with the skills they need.



57% of HR leaders say skills shortages are undermining their ability to sustain **corporate performance**.

n = 59 HR leaders
Source: 2023 Benchmark With Gartner: Affirmative Action, Apprenticeships and Candidate Expectations (23 August)

Transformative Technology Innovations



Employees Expect to Use AI

170 million+ people were immediate users of ChatGPT at home.^a



More Disruptive Tech Is Imminent

93% of HR leaders agree that new flash tech trends will be more frequent in the next three years.^c



Leaders Expect Implementation of AI

68% of executives agree that the benefits of AI outweigh the risks.^b



But HR Involvement Remains Limited

Only 22% of HR leaders are highly engaged in enterprisewide discussions on GenAI.^d

^a Source: Gartner Generative AI: The Basics

^b Q. Do you believe the benefits of generative AI outweigh the risks?

Source: Beyond the Hype: Enterprise Impact of ChatGPT and Generative AI Webinar Polls, 21 April 2023, n = 1,079

^c Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. The number of new flash technology trends (e.g., generative AI, metaverse, blockchain, etc.) arising will become more frequent within the next three years.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. As a result of flash technology trends (e.g., generative AI), I am now having to make decisions on whether to adopt and implement it into HR or not.

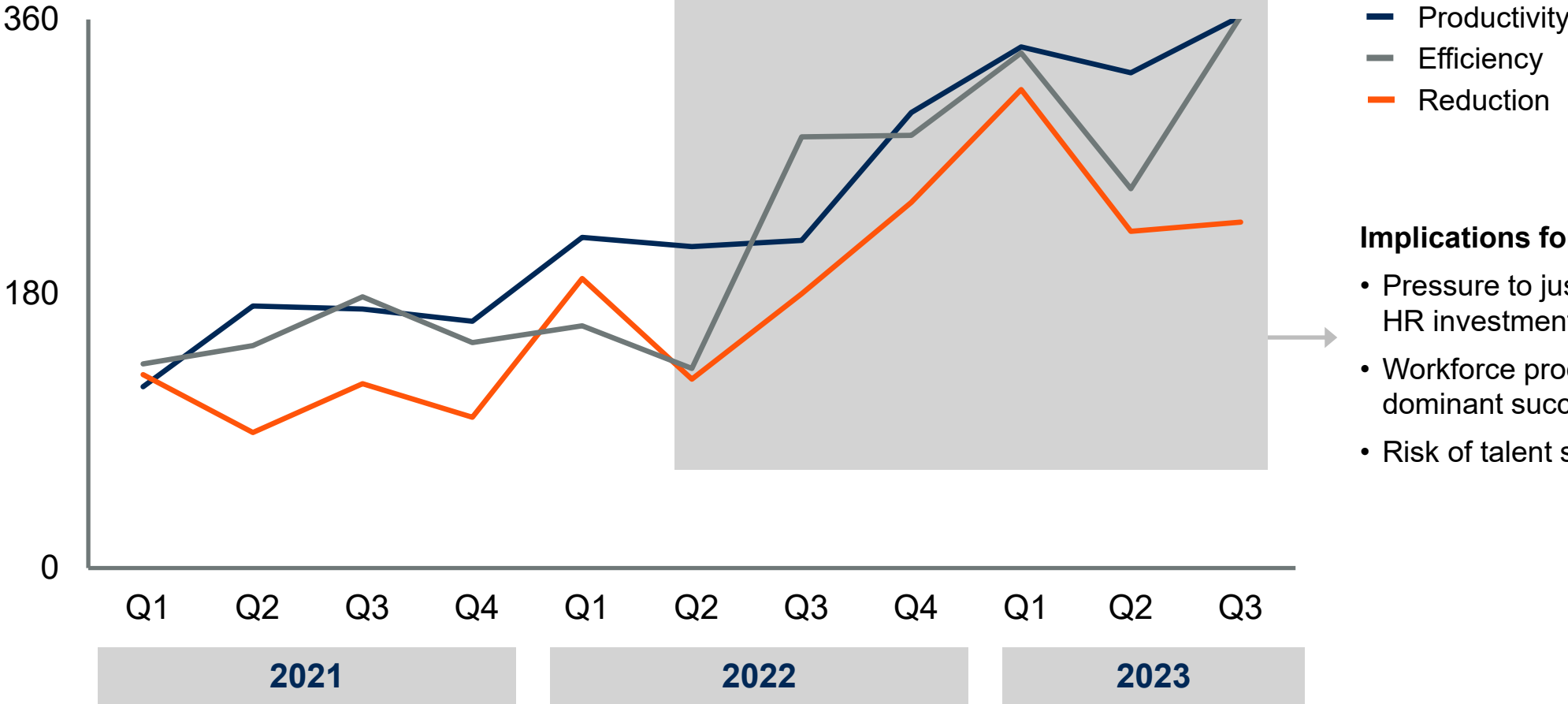
Source: 31 May 2023 Gartner Benchmark: Persistent Talent Shortages, Sustaining DEI and Other Emerging Issues, n = 74

^d Q. As an HR leader, how engaged are you in enterprisewide discussions around use of GenAI?

Source: 21 June 2023 Gartner Benchmark Special Edition — Navigating the Workforce Impact of Generative AI, n = 167

Pressure for Operational Efficiency

Prevalence of Efficiency-Related Keywords in S&P 100 Earnings Calls



Implications for HR Leaders

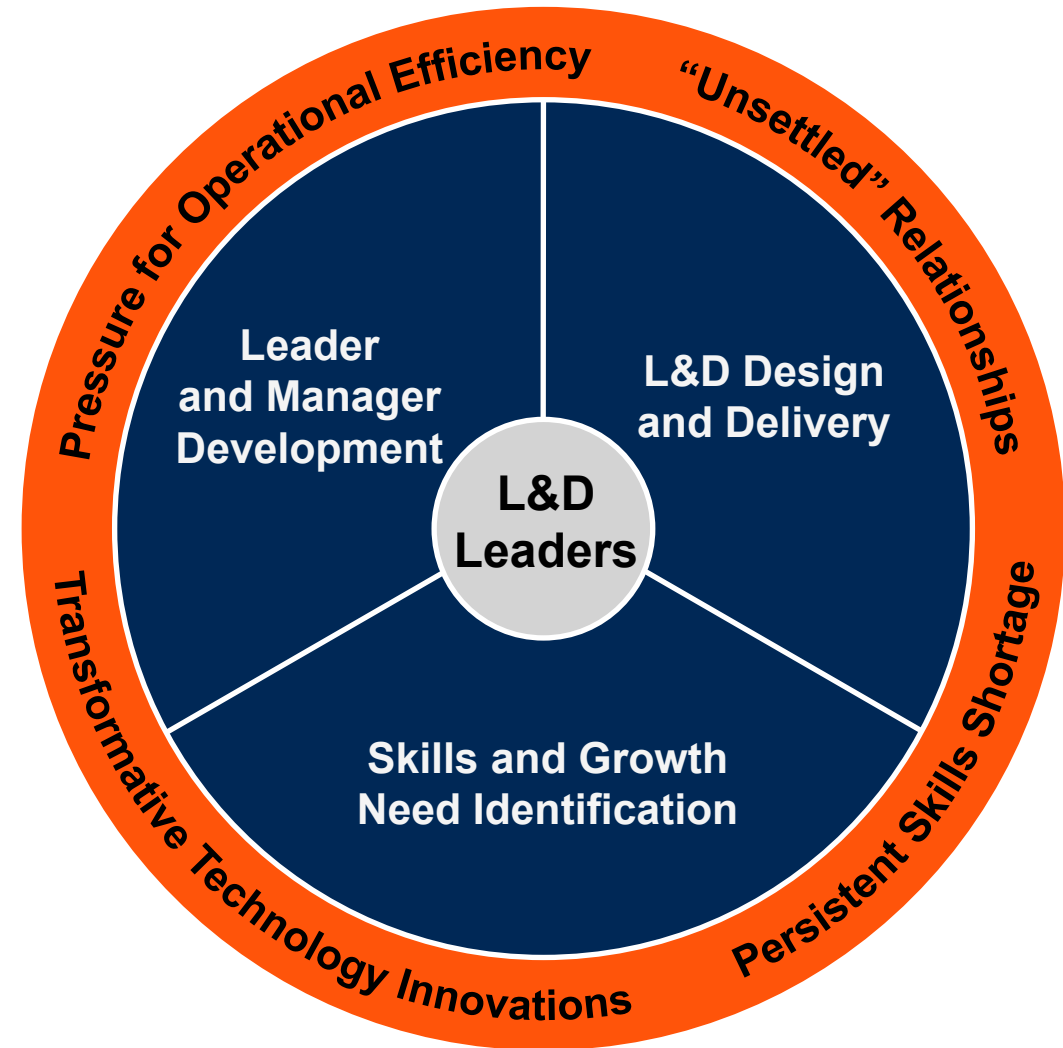
- Pressure to justify the value of HR investments
- Workforce productivity, the dominant success measure
- Risk of talent supply disruptions

n = 855 earnings transcripts
 Source: Analysis of all S&P 100 Company Earnings Calls Transcripts, Jan 1, 2021 – Aug 31, 2023

L&D Priorities for 2024

Top Business-Supporting L&D Initiatives

- 1 Leader and Manager Development
- 2 L&D Design and Delivery
- 3 Skills and Growth Need Identification
- 4 Learning Culture
- 5 Organizational Culture
- 6 Career Management/Internal Mobility
- 7 HR Technology
- 8 L&D Functional Management
- 9 Succession Management
- 10 Talent Analytics



n = 31 Heads of L&D

Q. [For each of three custom priorities shared] Please select the two key areas in which you will focus to support that priority

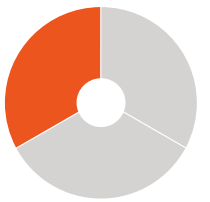
Source: 2023 Gartner HR Priorities Survey

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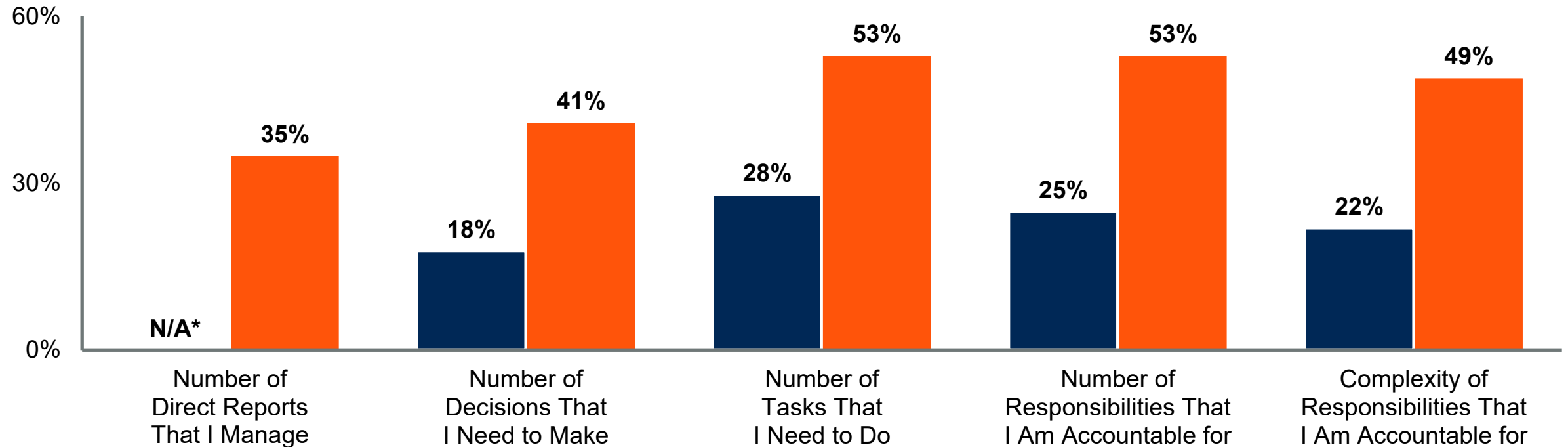
Managers Are Overwhelmed

Increase in Responsibilities, Compared to Before the Pandemic

Percentage of Respondents Reporting an Increase



■ Individual Contributors ■ Managers



n = 2,812 individual contributors; 3,544 managers

Source: 2022 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Employee Survey

* Manager only question

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Connectors Make the Job More Manageable



Connectors Make 3 Connections



The **Employee** Connection

Overinvest in employee diagnosis.



The **Team** Connection

Facilitate peer-to-peer skills sharing on their team.



The **Organization** Connection

Connect employees to best-fit people and opportunities.

✓ **Saves time for managers** by distributing the responsibility of developing employees.

✓ **Takes the pressure off** of managers to always be the expert at every skill.

Job manageability is **5x more effective** than skill proficiency in improving manager effectiveness.

n = 3,186 managers; 6,356 employees

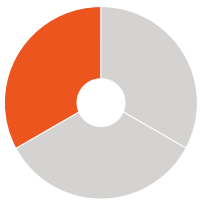
Source: 2023 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Manager Survey; 2022 Gartner Building an Organization of Great Managers Employee Survey

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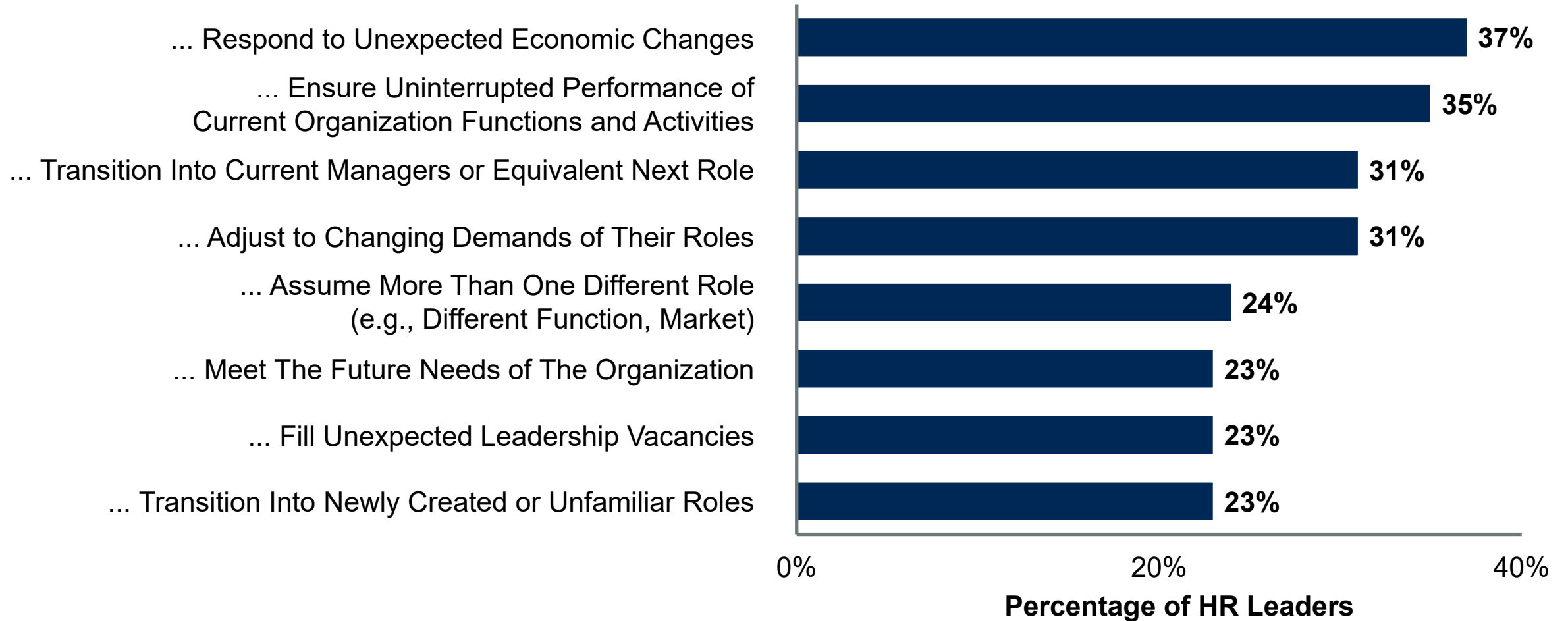
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Low Confidence in Rising Leaders



How Confident Are You That Your Organization Has Rising Leaders Who Can ...



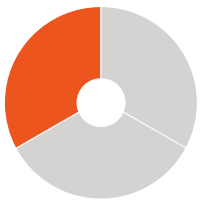
n = 62 HR Leaders

Source: 2022 Gartner Leadership Development HR Leader Survey

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Leaders Need a New Approach

2024 Trends and Their Impact on Core Leader Responsibilities



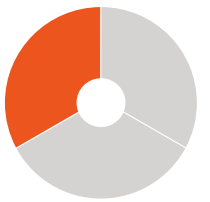
	Core Leader Responsibility		
	 Role-Model Behavior	 Support Teams	 Deliver Results
Prior Approach	Professional Enabling workplace boundaries	Employees Addressing work needs	Efficient Managing standardized workflows
Emerging Challenges	Anxiety, confusion and mistrust in the employee-employer relationship	Blurring boundaries, fatigue and uncertainty as organizations grapple with skills shortages and productivity demands	Variety in/transformation of work norms as organizations cope with skills shortages and adapt to disruptive technologies
New Approach	Personal Enabling safe self-expression at work	People Addressing life needs	Individualized Managing tailored, flexible workflows

Source: Gartner

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The Human-Centric Leader

Components of Human-Centric Leadership



Authentic

Act with **purpose** and enable **true self-expression**, for both themselves and their teams.



Empathetic

Show genuine **care, respect** and concern for employees' **well-being**.



Adaptive

Enable **flexibility** and support that fit team members' **unique needs**.



Human Leadership

Source: Gartner

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Recommended Actions for L&D Leaders



Assess

- **Review** your organization's current leadership competencies and expectations against human-centric leadership and Connector manager principles.
- **Assess** current state of human-centric leadership and Connector managers at your organization and existing HR support by partnering with C-suite and senior leaders.



Plan

- **Prioritize** updates to development programs for managers and rising and established leaders to support human leadership and Connector manager outcomes.
- **Identify** opportunities to rebuild the manager pipeline by updating criteria for new manager selection in line with connector attributes.
- **Modify** leadership and HIPO development strategies to identify successful human-centric leaders in high-impact roles.



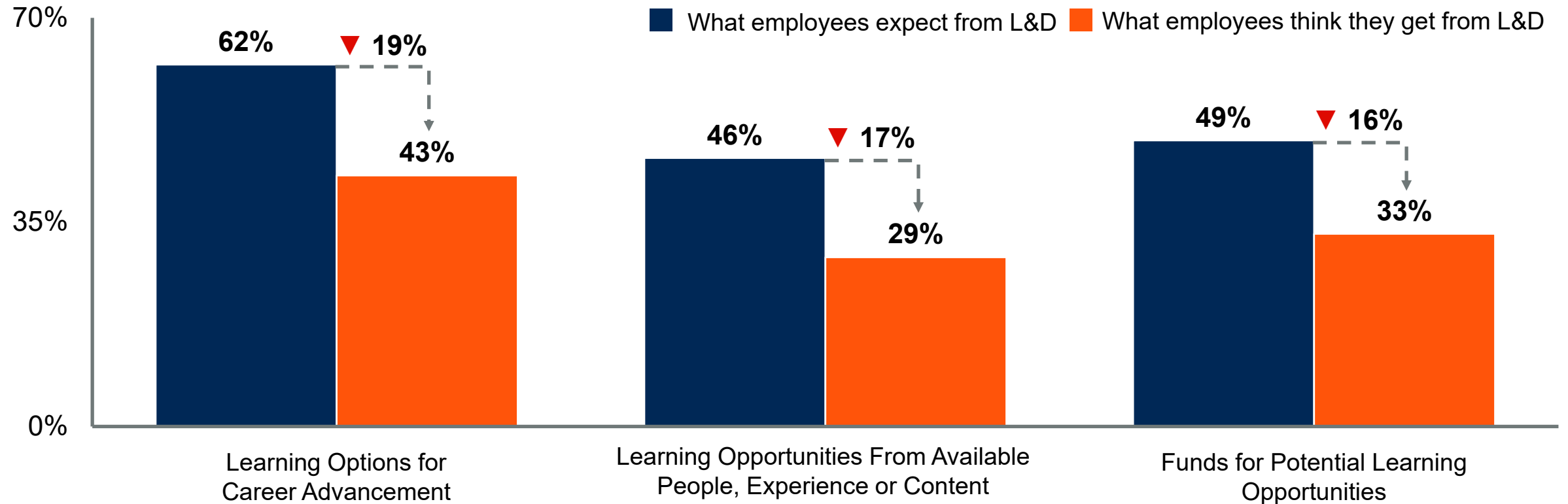
Execute

- **Implement** updated manager and leadership development initiatives to drive human leadership and support Connector managers.
- **Partner** with HR leadership team colleagues to identify strategies to support manager enablement beyond development.

Source: Gartner

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Learning Opportunities Not Meeting Employee Expectations



n = 3,508 employees

Source: 2022 Gartner L&D Model Impact Survey

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A Focus on Consumability Falls Short



What Consumability Can Do:

Create a satisfying learning experience to build knowledge.



What Consumability Can't Do:

- Build deep relationships with colleagues that can accelerate and reinforce learning.
- Guide employees to the most relevant learning resources during times of need.
- Show how the learning connects to employee responsibilities and growth.

Source: Gartner

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Focus on Support, Not Just Consumability



Examples of Consumability

Resources are engaging.	Resources are interactive.	Resources use advanced technology.
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Improving all aspects of consumability can increase employee growth by up to 21%.



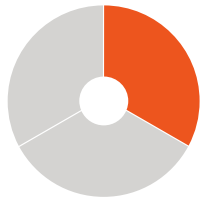
Examples of Support for Learning

Employees are directed to relevant virtual resources and opportunities.	Employees are aware of resources' link to their role and growth.	Employees have access to mentors or peers to contextualize learning.
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Improving all aspects of support for learning can increase employee growth by up to 45%.

n = 3,512 employees
Source: 2023 Gartner Impactful Learning in a Hybrid Work Environment Employee Survey
Note: These factors are examples to help define each category. They do not encompass all of each category or all of what could be driving the effects.

Optimize Partnerships to Support Learning



Leader as Advocates

Foster a shared mindset around business and learning outcomes.



Employees as Activists

Activate a network of motivated learning champions.

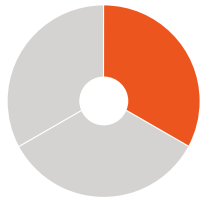


Managers as Allies

Equip managers to connect employees to best-fit learning experiences.

Source: Reimagine HR Breakout Session 2023 (Breaking Bold: How World-Class Learning Leaders Sustain Growth)

Recommended Actions for L&D Leaders



Assess

- **Review** your learning strategy to prioritize initiatives and investments that drive support for learning application not only learner engagement.
- **Assess** current state of learning partnerships with leaders, managers and employees.



Plan

- **Identify** expert partners in the organization to co-curate impactful virtual learning opportunities.
- **Cultivate** a diverse network of learning champions across the organization to advocate for learning.
- **Design** virtual learning cohorts with accountable peers and mentors to help employees apply and contextualize learning.



Execute

- **Implement** multiple partnership strategies (with managers, employees and leaders) to activate “best fit” support for learning.
- **Link** learning opportunities to overall career growth by showing employees how learning advances their current and future roles.

Source: Gartner

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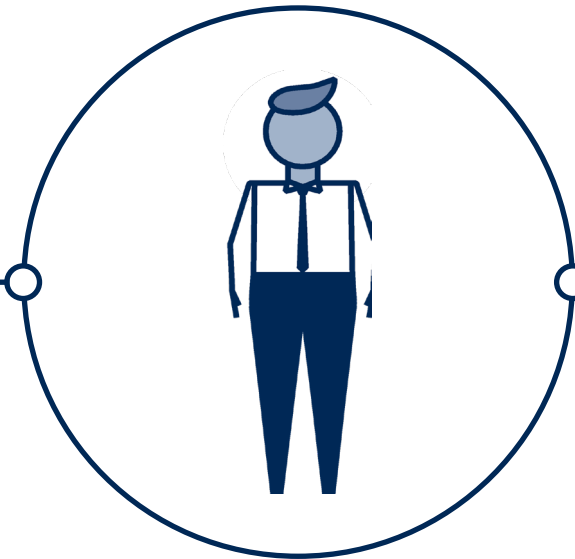
Organizations Are Unprepared for Changing Skills



Skill Preparedness



11% of L&D staff believe employees **have the skills they need for future roles.**



Skill Application



33% of L&D staff say employees can **quickly apply the skills they have learned.**

n = 66 L&D Staff

Source: 2023 Gartner Impactful Learning and Learning Advisor of the Future Survey

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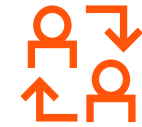
Drive Agile Development With a Dynamic Skills Strategy



Facilitate **cross-organizational networks** and gather skills data to sense shifting skills needs.



Implement **agile learning** to develop skills at the speed and scale of need.



Use **transparent information** to enable employees to make dynamic skills decisions.

Source: Gartner

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Use Framework to Flex for Changing Skills Needs



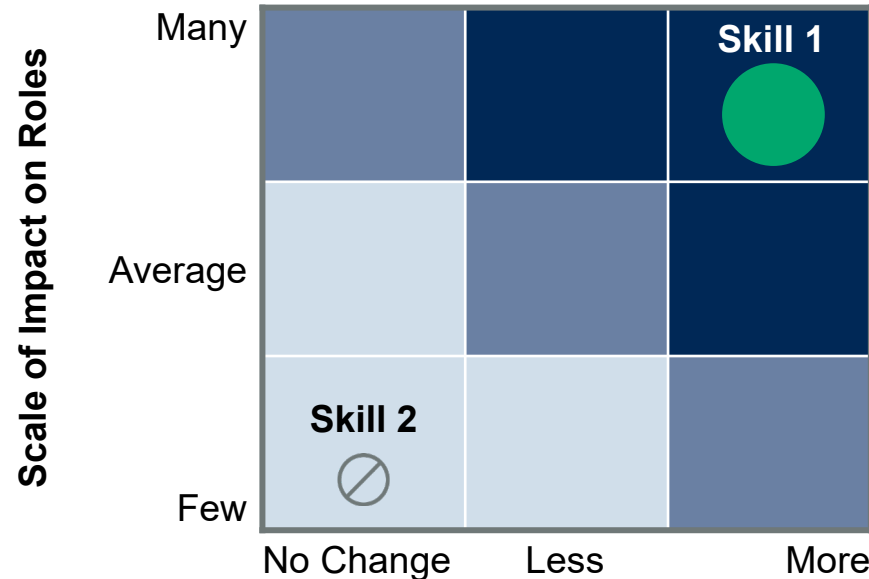
Criticality of Skill Investments — Heat Map Legend

Critical
 Less Critical
 Not Critical

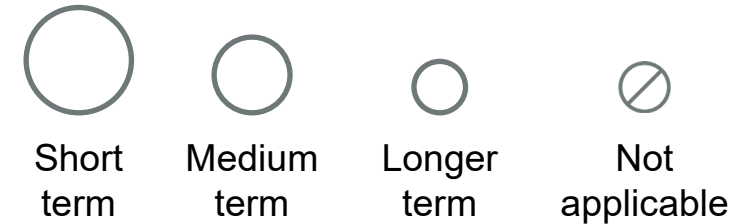
How learning leaders use skills investment data to inform skills strategy:

- Identify skills most in need of development.
- Identify upskilling and reskilling opportunities.
- Identify gaps in learning content.
- Share skills investment priorities with employees to help them with development decisions.

Skill Investments Assessment



Time Frame of Impact



Current Capability to Intervene



Change Needed to Meet Current Business Goals

Structured framework enables L&D to quickly pivot investments as needs change.

Source: Gartner

Note: Critical — Risk to operational success and competitive edge high.; Less Critical — Threatening to success. Monitor for change and similar trends across BUs.; Not Critical — Skill under control, managed by skills-sensing network.

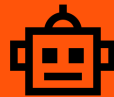
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Consider AI-Enabled Skills Management to Keep Pace With Change



🔍 Opportunities

- Automatic updates of skills ontologies to support learning strategy
- Use AI-enabled skills data to identify skills gaps and support targeted upskilling and reskilling initiatives.
- Match people to projects based on skills strengths, and create connections based on skills interests.
- Use directional skills data to identify and communicate critical organization skills initiatives and gaps.



AI-Enabled Skills Management

⚠️ Risks

- Inferring skills from learning content
- Inconsistency in AI and taxonomy models
- Closed systems: Additional investments may be needed to align data within different systems.
- Underestimated user effort: While AI may do some of the heavy lifting, user validation is still needed to fine-tune algorithms and address incomplete data.

Source: AI-Enabled Skills Management for L&D Leaders

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Recommended Actions for Learning Leaders



Assess

- **Review** skills strategy to course correct regularly in line with changing organization and employee growth needs.
- **Assess** how potential vendor partners identify and define skills to determine if their approach aligns with your skills strategy and data requirements.



Plan

- **Prioritize** learning needs that deliver skills aligned to critical, strategic objectives.
- **Develop** a cross organizational network to engage key stakeholders on changing skills needs.





Execute

- **Establish** a skills investment framework to enable the quick pivot of investments as needs change.
- **Implement** agile learning principles like dynamic pathways and learning embedded in workflow in learning solutions to accelerate the speed and scale of skills delivery.

Source: Gartner

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The Changing Role of L&D

L&D's role	Deliver Formal Training		Connect to Learning		Empower Employee-Led Growth		
Goal	Employees have the skills to succeed in their current role.	 <p>Drivers of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized career paths • Fast-changing skills • Proliferation of learning vendors 	Employees are connected to a variety of opportunities for current and adjacent roles.	 <p>Drivers of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing employee expectations • Hybrid work • Advanced talent analytics 	Employees co-create opportunities for personal and professional growth.		
Hallmarks							
How does L&D offer learning?	L&D runs/facilitates				L&D expands with third-party vendors.		L&D co-creates with employees.
What support is provided?	For current role performance				For current or adjacent role performance		For whole career growth
Where is L&D focused?	The classroom		The learning platform		The learning ecosystem		

Source: Gartner

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Model of a World-Class Head of L&D

Drive Business Results

Define Learning Strategy to Deliver Capability	Build an Adaptive Learning Function	Deliver Dynamic Learning	Drive Shared Ownership for Learning Culture
Collaborate cross-functionally to identify changing skills needs.	Optimize L&D functional design for agility.	Activate diverse learning opportunities for personal and professional growth.	Enlist executives as L&D advocates.
Align and integrate business, talent and learning outcomes.	Drive a high-performing L&D team with advisory capability and specialized skill sets.	Adopt an agile approach to accelerate learning design and delivery.	Partner with line leaders to create a safe and effective learning environment.
Actively manage learning offerings as product portfolio.	Prioritize technology and automation.	Integrate data-driven, AI-enabled approach to drive personalized learner experience.	Engage employees as active partners to drive learning adoption.
Drive for learning impact.	Manage and advocate for the L&D budget.	Deliver inclusive and equitable access to development.	Elevate L&D's brand.
Business Acumen Understand the business model, financials, external markets and customers		L&D Technical Acumen Understanding of L&D science, practices, processes, structures and technologies	
Data Judgment Knowledge of key data trends and ability to use them to influence function and business strategies		Interpersonal Acumen Demonstrate emotional intelligence, collaboration and influence skills in working with the network	
Foundational Capabilities			

Source: Gartner

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Learning Advisor Skills Prioritization Matrix

Learning Advisor Skills Prioritization Matrix

Confidence
in Executing

Deprioritize Low Importance, High Confidence	Sustain High Importance, High Confidence
<p>Skills: Facilitation, L&D Terrain Knowledge, Project Management, Communication, Influencing, Expectation Management, Relationship Building</p> <p>Action: Deprioritize these skills in comparison to the other three quadrants.</p>	<p>Skills: Critical Skills and Growth Needs Identification, Agility, Innovation, Strategic Consulting</p> <p>Action: Continue to work on projects that enable you to hone these skills.</p>
Delay Low Importance, Low Confidence	Push Forward High Importance, Low Confidence
<p>Skills: Instructional Design, Analytical Skills</p> <p>Action: Occasionally seek projects to build these skills.</p>	<p>Skills: Learning Technology Deployment and Management, Portfolio Management, Learning Culture Stewardship, Business Acumen, Learning Analytics, Learner-Centric Design</p> <p>Action: Proactively look for development opportunities to build these skills.</p>

L&D professionals should focus most of their time and efforts on developing the skills in this quadrant.

Increase in Importance

Source: Gartner

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Actionable, objective insight

Position your organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for HR leaders:

Action Plan



Evolve Culture and Leadership for the Hybrid World

Use this 12-month roadmap to build cultural connectedness and develop human leaders in your organization.

[Download Plan](#)

Guide



Managers Are Cracking – And More Training Won't Help

Explore four HR actions to go beyond skills development and redesign the manager job for success.

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Virtual Event



Managers Are Failing, Here's How HR Can Help Them

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