

FROM TRAINING TO TRANSFORMATION

The Top 7 Learning Trends for Leaders to Build a Culture of Growth and Results

The Top 7 Learning Trends:

1. Aligning learning to company culture & strategy.
2. Developing tailored, but flexible learning journeys.
3. Administering self-assessments tied to learning.
4. Facilitating live summits for level-setting and skill activation.
5. Incorporating blended on-demand and experiential learning.
6. Developing customizable tools and resources.
7. Embedding consistent coaching frameworks into shared platforms.

Learning leaders will bridge the gap between individual development and organizational outcomes.

The year 2023 brings its own unique challenges to the pharmaceutical industry and overall healthcare marketplace, including continued global supply constraints, rising inflation, staff burnout, and a shortage of talent. However, these challenges also present opportunities for leaders to demonstrate resilience and an ability to thrive through disruptive change.

To succeed in the years to come, leaders in the pharmaceutical and other healthcare sectors will need to focus on retaining top talent and training highly skilled, agile teams that can quickly adapt to change. By doing so, they will be prepared to overcome predictable and unforeseen challenges and drive exceptional business results.

Learning and development (L&D) plays a crucial role in helping achieve business results. However, traditional learning approaches are no longer enough. To drive real, sustainable transformation and unlock the full potential of the workforce, L&D must collaborate (more closely than ever) with business leaders to ensure the latest learning trends are tightly integrated with the company's overarching business and cultural priorities.

OVERVIEW

Brandon Hall Group research shows that 62% of organizations rank L&D as important or critical to the success of the business.

62%

Organizations Rating L&D Important or Critical to Success of the Business

The bad news is only 37% of organizations believe that their approach to learning positions them for future success.

37%

Approach to Learning Positions Organization Well to Succeed In the Future

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, Transforming Learning for the Future of Work

We extrapolated macro trends in the healthcare marketplace from cutting-edge research, and our real-world experiences are derived from many years of consulting across the biotech and pharma landscape. While these trends are not listed in chronological order – they do present a compelling story. We at WLH are well positioned to serve as your thought partners in support of the close integration needed between L&D and the business.

Here are seven key learning trends that L&D and business leaders can leverage to build a culture of growth and achieve exceptional results in 2023 and beyond.

Aligning learning with company culture & strategy.

Learning that isn't tied to a bigger picture may feel haphazard or low in value.

That's why we anticipate a recommitment to thoughtfully designing and delivering learning through the lens of company culture and strategy. Learning that is linked to organizational values, leadership competencies, and strategic goals shapes and reinforces the macro culture.

By connecting learning and skills development to company strategy, culture, and an employee's functional role, L&D professionals can create a meaningful context that motivates employees to engage with and value learning opportunities.

Why It Matters

When leveraged effectively, organizational culture and strategy can become the foundation of all learning. Employees will see how the learning they undertake clearly fits into the broader context of the organization and its mission. This underscores the organization's commitment to development and creating a culture of continuous learning and growth.

How We Can Help

WLH has spent over 30 years helping pharmaceutical and life sciences companies define culture and activate the expression of that culture through learning. Our team of consultants and learning strategists pair organizational effectiveness and learning expertise to help your company ensure human capital strategies and learning align with organizational goals.



Developing tailored, but flexible learning journeys.

No one likes training that feels detached from or inapplicable to their needs. It is no easy feat to craft dynamic learning journeys that create a common organizational lexicon, and simultaneously feel specific to each learner.

Many industry experts are focused on the emerging field of employee experience (much like 'user experience') and the evolving technology that will make hyper-individualized learning journeys a reality. In the meantime, L&D and the business must partner to tackle the thinking that informs future employee experience initiatives.

Organizations should depict ways to broaden development and potential "pathways" for success by serving relevant learning in multiple modalities ([more on that in trend 5](#)). This effort requires collaboration between business leaders who can inform career pathway projects and skilled L&D professionals who can deliver learning solutions.

Why It Matters

When employees see that the learning undertaken is tailored to their real needs (and not just interpreted needs), they are more likely to appreciate and value the time invested and be more engaged in the process. This leads to better learning outcomes and a more skilled and engaged workforce, which can in turn drive stronger organizational performance and enhance talent retention.

How We Can Help

WLH leverages diagnostics to inform and develop targeted, yet flexible learning journeys to fit your workforce character, company's mission, and individual employee's needs. Our highly credentialed learning strategists consider diagnostic findings and bring years of real-world industry experience that ensure the learning journey is relevant and timely.



Administering **Self-assessments** tied to learning.

We already know that learners prefer personalized learning journeys – so what better way to start than with a relevant assessment?

We anticipate a dual resurgence of self-assessments. First, learners should assess overarching developmental opportunities tied to desired skill sets or competencies. These assessments proactively outline where learners should spend the most time, further targeting the developmental investment to their specific needs. If learning journeys give learners a flexible map for their development, these kick-off self-assessments can sharpen recommendations for extended pitstops along the way.

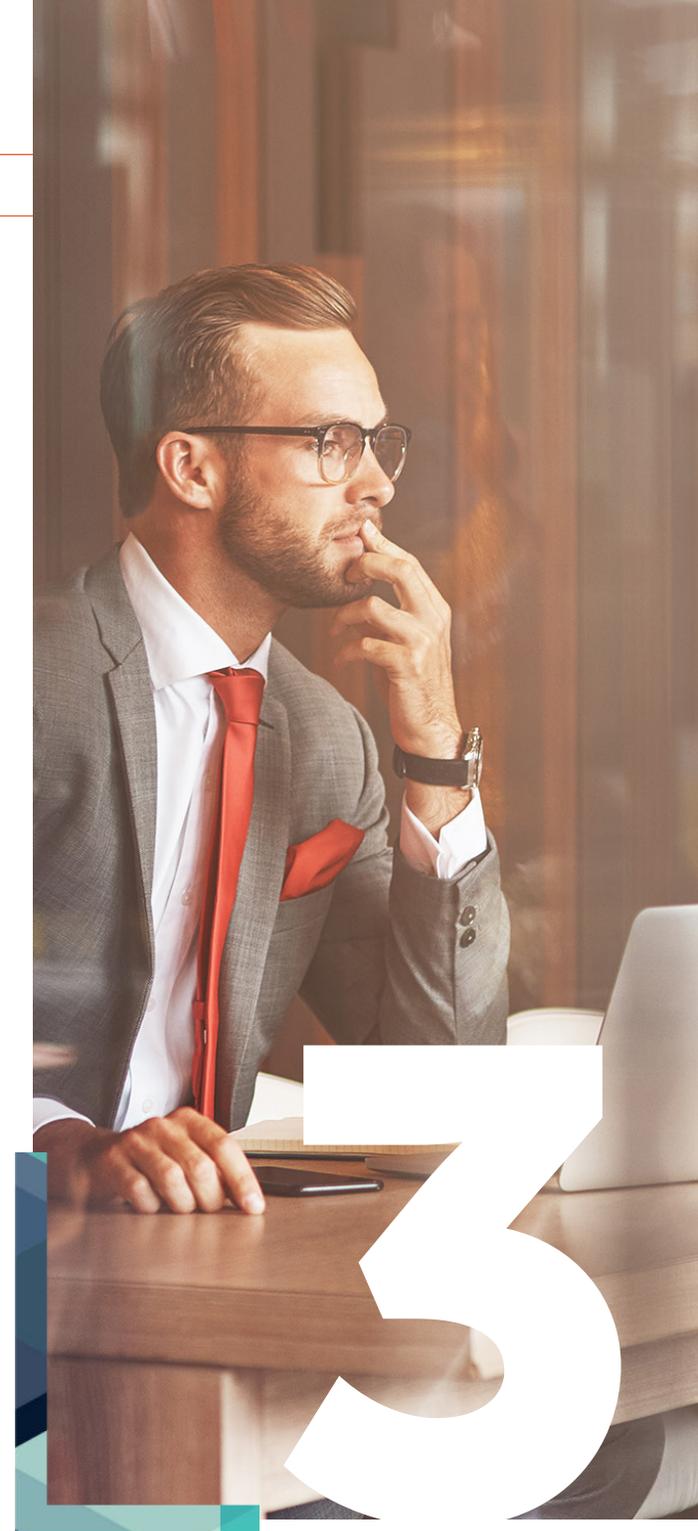
Secondly, self-assessments help identify opportunities for targeted focus within specific learning programs, pre-wiring participants to pay even closer attention to the areas that most develop their skills.

Why It Matters

When development is personalized it feels relevant. Self-assessments help learners become self-aware of their development gaps and allow them to take ownership to address them. Expertly designed self-assessments give learners targeted recommendations that further personalize their learning journey and help them prioritize learning investments.

How We Can Help

At WLH, we have years of experience designing and implementing sophisticated and customized assessment instruments. Our approach is always tailored to fit the needs of the client and their specific objectives.



Facilitating live summits for level-setting and **skill activation.**

After the past few years of video conferencing and virtual solutions – live summits are making a comeback. Leaders are trading years of aimless learning for a few days of targeted intervention. Whether it's to kick off and level-set a new way of thinking or further develop existing skills, bringing learners together to leverage the power of personal interaction is at the forefront of growth-oriented organizations.

Live summits can help reinforce organizational values, imbed competencies, and socialize or initiate learning journeys. They activate informal networks and trigger peer-to-peer learning, amplifying skill development and group alignment in critical areas of business, account planning, and matrix team effectiveness. These summits co-facilitated by L&D and business leaders may be localized to commercial or span the entire organization.

Why It Matters

Even the most well thought-out learning maps fall flat without proper socialization and communication. By leveraging level-setting summits, organizations encourage learners to own their development, while still providing guidance, setting expectations, and outlining development opportunities.

How We Can Help

We have seen our clients completely reenergize their organization's commitment to growth and development by reclaiming time through live touchpoints. Our learning strategists can support your efforts to design and facilitate summits that create high energy, enthusiasm, and engagement while also being purposeful in delivering impactful and relevant learning.



Incorporating **blended on-demand** & experiential learning.

Traditional on-demand learning is out. Blended learning solutions are in.

Learning maps will still feature on-demand resources ranging from eLearning programs to podcasts, but that is not enough for today's talent. In the years to come, we see L&D collaborating more closely with their business counterparts and outside consultants to incorporate relevant experiential learning into the journey. This means more applied, on-the-job learning that better aligns with organizational objectives and leads to real work being done.

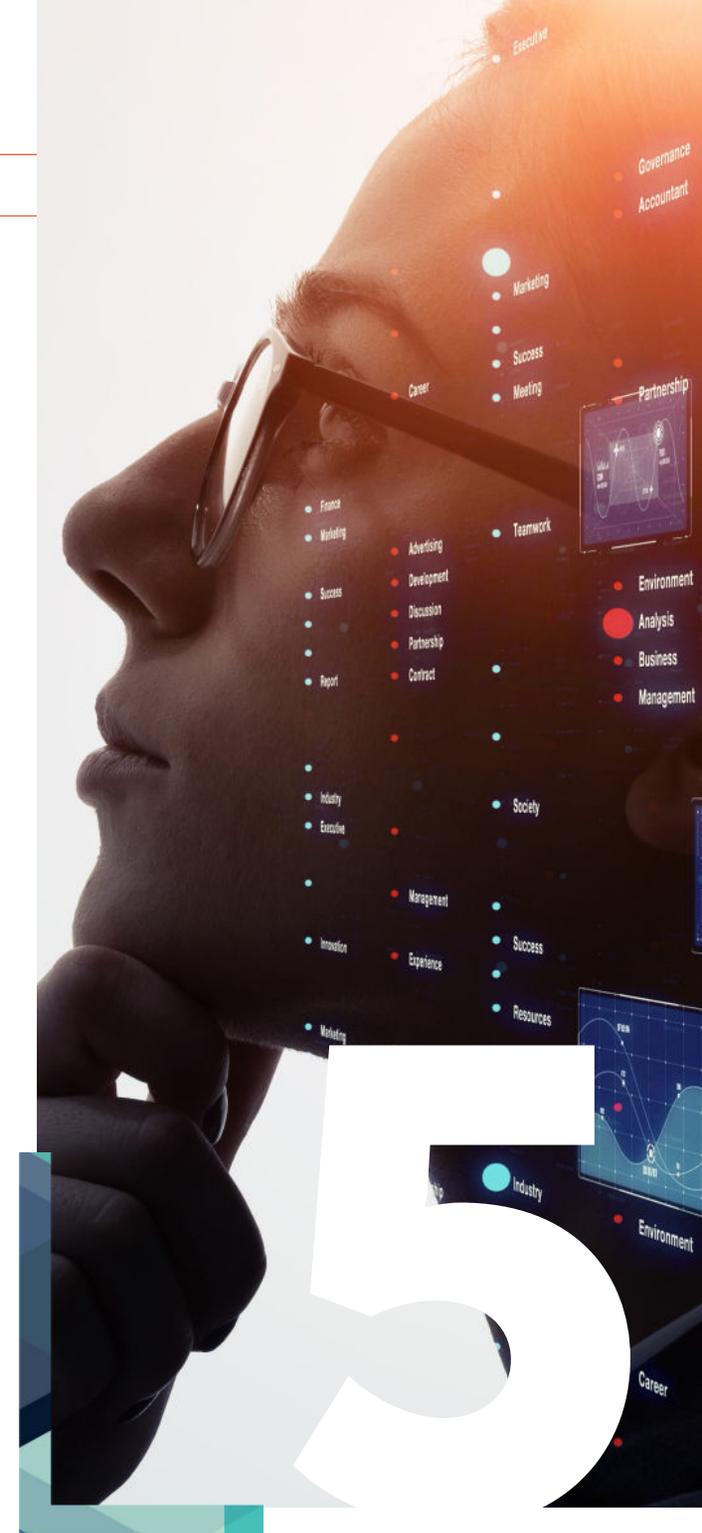
Learners should have multiple touchpoints to apply knowledge and practice skills in real-world or simulated environments. Training professionals and their business counterparts should partner to roadmap the optimal integration of blended learning solutions, ensuring relevance and appropriate timing.

Why It Matters

Experiential learning, via live touchpoints is often regarded as a 'one-and-done' exercise. However, these experiences have the potential to be invaluable supplements to on-demand learning curricula. Organizations can harness the power of simulations, live workshops, and field-based applications to ensure learners turn knowledge into demonstrable and repeatable skills.

How We Can Help

WLH has an award-winning library of blended learning solutions designed for the pharma and life sciences industry. Our team of learning strategists partner with L&D to integrate on-demand eLearning, field-based applications, and leader-led 'meetings-in-a-box' with custom, facilitated experiences designed to fit the unique needs of your organization.



Developing customizable tools & resources.

The move to more and better customization is accelerating. Off-the-shelf learning tools and resources rarely reflect all the unique needs of an organization and its employees. Why? No matter how well thought out, one-size-fits-all learning materials cannot effectively address the intersection of each organization's goals, culture, challenges, and people.

Customizing learning activities and tools allows for a more tailored and relevant learning experience, leading to better engagement and retention of the material. Whether it's custom-designed kick-off webinars and application workshops, tools that map to existing organizational processes, or scripted videos that demonstrate leadership commitment to a specific framework – the design and selection of learning resources should be strongly influenced by audience needs.

Why It Matters

As the market continues to evolve, business leaders will challenge L&D to provide comprehensive training that is not outdated as soon as it launches. Customizing learning tools and resources allows for a more agile approach that can easily be adjusted and updated as needed, ensuring learning experiences remain relevant and effective over time.

How We Can Help

Off-the-shelf tools and resources in the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry are rarely well-received. At WLH, we believe that the unique circumstances in your market and product mix deeply impact the application of any learning. Our learning strategists customize tools and resources to map to organizational philosophies, processes, and circumstances impacting your audience.



Embedding consistent **coaching** frameworks into shared platforms.

The practice of hiring tenured talent is not a new trend; however, level-setting talent with consistent coaching frameworks is becoming more prevalent. Pharma and Biotech leaders agree that while territories are unique, there are predictable patterns in how top talent operates within them. This predictability suggests consistency in coaching models and frameworks is essential for ensuring performance aligns with organizational expectations.

Organizations continue to redefine and streamline frameworks (e.g., performance or development coaching). Business leader collaboration with L&D is needed to ensure 100% adoption of these specific frameworks. A large part of that change resides in the business identifying the correct platforms to store and retrieve data (e.g., performance data and coaching check-ins) to ensure easy accessibility and usefulness. L&D needs to mine that data to inform targeted application and continued upskilling.

Why It Matters

Specific and targeted frameworks help organizations shift from start-up to growth by ingraining consistent processes and a common lexicon. The adoption of these frameworks, however, remains elusive unless both L&D and the business effectively collaborate to ensure it is easy to reference, store, and retrieve data.

How WLH Can Help

WLH has years of experience co-creating new frameworks with the business and supporting L&D's efforts to successfully embed these frameworks within the learning journey. Our learning strategists help organizations level-set talent development strategies and achieve consistent adoption and application of new skills sets and practices.



A successful future requires an even closer and sharper collaboration between L&D and business leaders.

The pharmaceutical industry and healthcare ecosystem will face numerous new and continuing challenges in 2023, including global supply constraints, pricing pressures, and a shortage of exceptional talent. To overcome these challenges and drive exceptional business results, organizations should focus on retaining top talent and training highly skilled, agile teams that can adapt quickly to changing conditions.

By following and adapting from these trends, L&D professionals can help business leaders successfully bridge the gap between individual development and desired organizational outcomes to drive real, sustainable transformation.

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