



WHITE PAPER

Organizational Maturity Index™: Maximizing Success in a Changing World



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today's rapidly changing work environment, how can you maximize the success of your people and your organization?

A key part of accomplishing better outcomes involves integrating learning, talent, and workforce management. Increased communication, shared priorities, and unified alignment to business goals between these functions increases the ability for employees and organizations to achieve strategic results. HR must analyze business aims and align talent, learning, and workforce management to support each other.

The Skillsoft Organizational Maturity Index™ and **diagnostic tool** offers a practical methodology for organizations looking to make tangible improvements. The index meets each organization where they are and provides practical guidance to reach higher levels of excellence.

THE STATE OF HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Today's workforce is in constant motion. Digital transformation has disrupted every industry and heavily influences the changing dynamics of business models across the globe. This rapid rate of change is forcing HR teams and entire organizations to respond to workforce needs in new ways.

The war for talent used to be focused outside—organizations fighting over a finite pool of external talent. But now organizations are shifting their focus toward maximizing the potential of the talent an organization already has in place. HR is getting more innovative in their approaches and companies are turning inward to unleash the power of their existing workforce. The name of the game now is optimization. Successful organizations are upskilling and reskilling their workforce and more strategically managing both long-term career development as well as the day-to-day experience of work. “You could say HR is going ‘agile lite’ ... It’s a move away from a rules- and planning-based approach toward a simpler and faster model driven by feedback from participants...HR processes are starting to change too.”¹

A more nimble HR that focuses on internal talent can do two important things:

1. Constantly organize and reorganize itself to align strategically to the needs of the business (and the needs of the talent)
2. Quickly deploy, and redeploy, the organization's talent to support business objectives²

CEO's and other C-suite executives are expecting more from their workforce. Specifically, HR is being asked to optimize their people investments by delivering tools and insights that enable better decision making, facilitate innovation, and engineer higher levels of workforce productivity.

Skillsoft has the benefit of drawing from our proprietary research and 20 years' experience to formulate what we see as the way forward in the workplace. A recent survey of our clients and leaders across all industries clearly indicates a HR transformation is underway. Coupled with data from our Organizational Maturity Index diagnostic, Skillsoft has

“The name of the game now is optimization. Successful organizations are upskilling and reskilling their workforce and more strategically managing both long-term career development as well as the day- to-day experience of work.”

¹ “HR Goes Agile.” Peter Cappelli and Anna Tavis, *Harvard Business Review*, April, 2018.

² “An Agenda for the Talent-First CEO.” Dominic Barton, Dennis Carey, and Ram Charan, *McKinsey Quarterly*, March, 2018.

a unique view of what leading organizations are doing to meet the demands of change and ensure their people are ready. This whitepaper covers the unique state of learning, talent, and the workforces and offers a framework for HR departments to progress into more mature states of organization for increased business success.

KEEPING PACE WITH TALENT

Failure to keep pace with change means failure to keep top-performing talent. “We in HR are on the hook to deal with this issue. The topics of employment brand, employee engagement, and the employee experience are being discussed in every HR department...And while business may be good, it may be better somewhere else.”³

The most recent Conference Board CEO research demonstrates that finding and retaining talent is the top priority for CEOs. Today's leaders have a much more firm understanding of the impact that talent management has on the bottom line. Executives are now giving talent management the same levels of attention as operations, finance, and strategy. These new expectations are placing a higher level of responsibility on the HR function, and causing HR to reinvent itself and focus on new angles of talent management.⁴ For example, we're seeing organizations spend a good amount of effort defining and promoting their employment brand to stay relevant and attractive to employees.

Retention issues and succession gaps have caused low levels of qualified leaders. A PwC CEO study reported that the top talent concern among executives is fortifying the future leadership pipeline.⁵ Leadership capability is seen by CEOs as a key ingredient in an enterprise's ability to remain competitive and relevant. Given that high-performing leaders create a more engaged workforce, better productivity, and nearly 50% higher profitability, leadership remains a top challenge for organizations.⁶

Onboarding has taken on an even more important role in this landscape as a litmus test not just for employers, but for employees. As employees join organizations, many will decide in their early weeks if they made the right choice and nearly one-third of new hires quit their jobs in the first six months.⁷ For mature companies, the onboarding process

³ “The Red Hot Global Economy: How Should HR Adapt?” Josh Bersin, March 2, 2018.

⁴ “The Red Hot Global Economy: How Should HR Adapt?” Josh Bersin, March 2, 2018.

⁵ “19th Annual Global CEO Survey.” PwC, 2016.

⁶ “State of the American Manager.” Gallup, April 2015.

⁷ “Don't Underestimate the Importance of Good Onboarding.” SHRM, August, 2017.

will extend beyond employees' first 30 days and will purposefully persist to continually onboard existing employees throughout their career. Sixty-nine percent of employees that had a positive onboarding experience are likely to stay with an organization for three years and standard onboarding processes result in 50% higher productivity from new employees.⁸

Workplace wellness programs will continue to become an organizational norm as well. Wellness programs offer dual rewards by providing employees healthy lifestyle guidance while also providing companies a savings on health benefit costs.

Organizations must constantly evaluate their ability to understand and respond to the needs of today's workers to support and retain them. Successful organizations are asking:

- Are we leveraging the most relevant and appropriate talent management practices?
- How can we recruit, develop, and deploy people to deliver greater value to customers—and do so better than the competition?
- Do we have the right HR capabilities and enough capacity to drive the changes we need to make?⁹

KEEPING PACE WITH LEARNING

Companies must design and implement learning programs as part of their strategy for success. Important investments this year will be in video and microlearning, learning experience platforms, and self-authored content. Delivering all of this in the flow of work—not taking employees out of their day-to-day in order to learn—will make the investments worthy.¹⁰

Creating an organization with a learning culture is a requirement in today's workplace where skilled workers are in high demand and short supply. Organizations who proactively work to upskill and reskill their employees see improved

Companies and their HR departments will need to up their game by reviewing HR systems, business processes, and common practices—then oust outdated requirements and systems. Employees expect a consistent, modern, consumer-based “hire-to-retain” experience that should begin with the application data an employee provides initially to prime the system, then grow with the employee throughout their tenure. Talent management practices should be interconnected across the different HR functions to ensure a personalized and comprehensive experience is delivered to users.

⁸ “Don’t Underestimate the Importance of Good Onboarding.” *SHRM*, August, 2017.

⁹ “An Agenda for the Talent-First CEO.” *Dominic Barton, Dennis Carey, and Ram Charan, McKinsey Quarterly*, March, 2018

¹⁰ “The Red Hot Global Economy: How Should HR Adapt?” *Josh Bersin*, March 2, 2018

productivity, less time for employees to learn new skills, and a more nimble workforce¹¹ We know that many L&D functions are making changes to meet this demand, however manufacturing, technology, and healthcare industries are moving fastest to focus on skills over degrees because they are the sectors struggling the most to fill jobs.¹²

It will be critical going forward that all employees, beyond the IT department, are digitally literate and able to use tools that ensure productivity. Creating a foundational understanding of the technologies that have disrupted industries and transformed business models is necessary to prime employees to deliver innovations and execute continuous improvement initiatives. Furthermore, the willingness to learn is an ability in high demand itself. The propensity to learn and unlearn skills at a high rate of frequency is key for employees—their dexterity is an organization's success.

While the LMS has been the hub of formal learning, the growth of digital learning assets combined with consumer expectations of workplace technology have given rise to learning ecosystems. These learning ecosystems include all the technologies, organizational structure, and support resources needed to effectively deliver learning. Combining a new breed of microlearning platforms with existing platforms will push organizations to modernized learning ecosystems supported by intelligent machine learning recommendations. Through these platforms, microlearning and even crowd-sourced training will drive L&D's content strategy. Collaborative, social learning using easy-to-use online tools will rapidly take the place of compliance based, classroom training.

In this landscape, learning must be:

1. Built into company culture
2. Delivered how, when, and where it's needed
3. Integrated with talent and workforce management for the greatest success

¹¹ "The Digital Talent Gap—Are Companies Doing Enough?" Capgemini and LinkedIn, October 26, 2017.

¹² "More Companies Teach Workers What Colleges Don't." Douglas Belkin, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 24, 2018.

KEEPING PACE WITH THE WORKFORCE

There is a broader workforce than ever before, and organizations are embracing a diverse, multigenerational workforce. And while it is often reported that technology is disproportionately key to millennial productivity and engagement, all generations—whether “digital natives” or “digital migrants”—find benefit in the use of more intuitive applications that deliver not only a superior user experience but also the ability for employees to participate in workplace decisions. Organizations are streamlining standard workforce management processes and creating efficiencies that enable employees to perform their roles more effectively, eliminating the need to spend inordinate amounts of time on routine day-to-day activities.

Employees will be given opportunities to continually advance their proficiencies and will, in turn, be a company's most precious resource for staying ahead of the competition as industries are continually disrupted. Organizations are providing lateral and vertical movement in an organization through “upskilling” and finding benefits to both the employee and the company. Harvesting personalized and aggregated insights from all learning, talent, and workforce management activities will help create clear and compelling advancement pathways. By demonstrating a willingness to invest in the individual, employees see long-term opportunity for them within the organization.

Now more than ever, companies see that culture is everything. No longer opaque, social media and sites like LinkedIn and Glassdoor have made a company's culture visible to the world, and today's workforce has different expectations regarding their work environment. Many organizations now actively seek out “Best Places to Work” awards and will devote effort to rising in the ranks. Going forward, companies will invest in workplace culture to address engagement and turnover—striving to become a place where people love to be.

MAXIMIZING SUCCESS

Accomplishing better outcomes requires breaking down the artificial walls between talent management, learning, and workforce management. Talent management teams have insight into how to best shape the workforce, while L&D departments may be functioning independent of this important information and the day-to-day management of people is seen as a necessary, but not strategic, HR task.

Many organizations unintentionally silo the talent, learning, and workforce management processes away from each other. This “bolted-on” approach results in a clunky experience for employees and causes HR to apply focus toward fixing integration issues instead of building capabilities for the organization. When talent, learning, and your workforce are interwoven, strategic results can be systemically actualized instead of coincidental. It is vital that HR analyze the business aims and human capital functions to directly support each other.



THE ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY INDEX™

The approach many HR teams have taken in the past will not combat business vulnerabilities—it will take wholesale HR adaptation. The demographic shifts, revamped business models, digitization of products, rise in big data analytics and new forms of competition require organizations to fuel perpetual skill upgrades. HR must evolve to apply new paradigms toward talent attraction, mine for unrealized capability, build rapid development tactics, implement highly effective engagement strategies, and unveil succession pathways with far more innovation than they have demonstrated to date.

Organizations are recognizing that they must shift from “training” employees to designing environments where employee management and development flourishes as a central part of the culture. Learning is more than setting up a catalog within an LMS; developing talent is more than ensuring annual performance reviews take place; and managing the workforce is more than a series of time allocation activities / making sure your employees clock in on time. These functions must work together in concert.

As the interplay between talent, learning, and workforce management becomes more cohesive, and as the alignment to the strategic agenda improves, workforce performance levels increase. Organizations that apply this modern approach not only dissolve silos, but create the competitive advantage of a superior employer brand, a higher level of interested external talent, and an optimized existing workforce.

The Skillsoft Organizational Maturity Index™ offers a practical methodology for aligning learning, talent, and workforce management—a blueprint to help the entire HR function pivot in the right direction to drive tangible business impact. Driving impact requires careful orchestration among culture, people and resources. The model elaborates on these elements and provides concrete stepping stones to reach higher levels of excellence.

Skillsoft has researched over 6,700 organizations and 45 million employees in 160 countries across a diverse industry spectrum. Collaborating with HR teams around the world, Skillsoft has collected data that reveals the indicators of successful organizations and highly predictable milestones organizations go through as they shift from perpetuating old ways to adopting pace-setting practices.

Learning & Development Trends: Workplace, Talent and Learning Survey Results

496 survey responses over an
18 month period, May 2016 –
November 2017

1.9

AVERAGE ORGANIZATIONAL
MATURITY SCORE

By utilizing the maturity index, an organization can assess their progress and understand the milestones that demonstrate advancement to the next stage. Skillsoft provides a complimentary online assessment that diagnoses a company's present stage and provides a playbook of recommendations to ascend to the next stage.

THE NINE INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Through research and decades of hands-on experience, Skillsoft has identified nine indicators that affect an organization's ability to methodically optimize the investment in their workforce.

1. People-Centric Culture

A "people-centric" culture plays an important role in extracting the best out of employees and has a significant effect on employee tenure. It is the culture that determines the way employees interact with one another and how well the organization functions collectively. Enterprises that intentionally foster a healthy culture often do so because it is correlated to employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. Today employees often seek out employers for their culture, beyond a paycheck. With sites like Glassdoor, prospective employees can easily review comments from current and past employees of a company with respect to the leadership, work environment, and salary. Organizations recognize the importance of industry recognition through the "Best Places to Work" and "Training Top 125" awards. Annually Glassdoor ranks company ratings to devise its own Employees' Choice Awards. Information about company culture has never been more available, and this trend is likely to continue to evolve.

Organizations with acclaimed cultures have highly supportive leaders focused on people prosperity, instead of viewing its staff as a scaffold of workers hired to perform static jobs. The employee experience is systematically evaluated, and continuous improvement efforts are focused on building the employment brand. Additionally, these organizations are continuously striving to improve internal and external operations by introducing technologies that help their workforce perform duties more efficiently, enabling transformation through purposefully engineered efficiencies.

THE NINE INDICATORS OF SUCCESS



1. People-Centric Culture



2. HR's Role & People Strategy



3. Organizational Alignment & Curation Strategy



4. User Experience



5. Technology Infrastructure



6. Elective Participation



7. Governance



8. Funding



9. Reporting & Measurement

2. HR's Role & People Strategy

While it's not for lack of desire, many HR departments struggle to fully connect with the employee base and are left feeling like they're pushing boulders uphill to encourage participation in HR programs. At the root, many HR teams fundamentally do not understand the employees or departments they strive to support. In fact, it's estimated that only one-third of learning teams have a solid understanding of their audiences' business priorities, skills, work environment, career interests, digital capabilities, or their preferences.

The most mature organizations thoroughly analyze the employee lifecycle and address each member of their workforce as a unique individual. The role of a Chief People Officer or CHRO emerges as a central figure to position the learning and talent functions as key contributors to organizational success. Advanced organizations also have a defined HR strategy that guides the functional maturity of the individual HR units as well as the HR department as a whole. Progressive HR teams focus on flexible alignment of their team members to remain in close proximity to the business strategy and other workforce management functions that support business outcomes. HR teams operating at the higher levels ensure the management structures, roles and processes of the talent, learning, and workforce management teams are tightly integrated. They also have a strong understanding of the overarching business objectives, specific departmental needs, and their employees. Under these conditions, HR teams know precisely what problems they are trying to solve, and as a result their well-articulated strategy tends to be far more nimble and successful.

3. Organizational Alignment & Curation Strategy

The industry is starting a shift beyond internal programs aimed at training people to innovative environments that fuel employees to develop themselves.

Traditionalists at the lower end of the maturity spectrum tend to view their workforces as a passive audience. For the more autocratic organizations, the burden for development lies squarely on HR to operationalize programs and tell employees when and where they should develop their skills. In this scenario, HR struggles to identify and address general and specific business challenges across the organization. Career mobility is limited and jobs do not morph frequently. Workforce data is rarely aligned to business goals because of the lack of operational awareness across external departments and the absence of holistic insights on each employee and team.

Organizational Alignment & Curation Strategy has a strong positive relationship with **User Experiences and People-Centric Culture**. Accountability and alignment can promote continuous improvement directed internally and externally.

On the other side of the maturity spectrum, relationships with key stakeholders are built and maintained to ensure alignment of business needs with HR initiatives. The more mature organizations also catalyze employees to take active roles in the thriving development environment. These companies foster the responsibility for shaping capabilities and career opportunities by equipping their employees to steer themselves. In some instances, organizations are even allowing employees, not just subject matter experts, to contribute to the development content. Managers are enabled to operate more as coaches, encouraging employees to take on greater levels of accountability because they are equipped with relevant team-based and individual-focused workforce insights that are aligned across multiple stakeholder groups. They also tend to not see employees or their current roles as fixed—positions can easily adapt, and models can morph with agility as organizational and industry dynamics change.

4. User Experience

Today's users expect more. State-of-the-art design principles deliver experiences that are simple, effective, and enjoyable. A great user experience (UX) enables a task to be performed successfully, while also providing an overall compelling experience for the user.

Less mature organizations underappreciate the importance of UX in employee systems, so they concentrate instead on satisfying a checklist of features oriented around HR's needs. Less mature companies also frequently keep HR's talent, learning, and workforce management systems distinct from one another, making for a cumbersome employee experience. Employees at all levels in these organizations will often complain that the systems are dated and slow. While it is hard to believe in today's technology-rich landscape, some HR teams still rely on paper and pencil processes for development plans, performance appraisals, benefits enrollment, expense reporting, and time and attendance management.

In the ideal state, tools should be combined to create a sticky effect that compels employees to explore more of its capabilities. Technologies for employees are viewed as tools that improve decision making, save time through automation, reduce the potential for errors, and deliver personalized value to each employee. The use of a robust employee profile is essential to driving personalization and relevance to the platform experience, which more mature organizations appreciate. This class of companies have a tremendous focus on the user experience of their systems, and they are vigilant about reducing any friction between them. Tools must work across any device and are so intuitive that minimal educational effort is required to use the tools. They're in tune with top consumer experiences because they know employees will bring that level of expectation to the systems they use at work. More mature

End-User Experience has the strongest positive relationship with **Elective Participation, Organizational Alignment& Curation Strategy and Governance**. Organizations are most likely buying to ensure multidimensional administrator and end-user requirements are satisfied. Making it easy to get more than what they need is contingent upon how intuitive the experience is.

organizations also ensure that their workforce doesn't see distinct lines between using talent, learning and workforce management systems.

5. Technology Infrastructure

Captivating content and delivery platform combinations that are synchronized with workforce management systems provide new possibilities for reaching employees, extracting deeper insights and impacting the business. When an organization melds rich employee profiles with intelligent talent, learning, and workforce management software, the full power of what is possible can be realized.

Companies at the lower end of the maturity spectrum often lack comprehensive staff profiles, relevant job descriptions, and other sources of workforce intelligence that can inform talent and business initiatives. These organizations frequently scramble to devise contemporary job profiles, and they typically have elementary levels of employee data scattered across legacy time and attendance, payroll, and human resource information systems.

More mature organizations maintain an enterprise competency dictionary and robust job descriptions as well as extensive employee profiles. These higher-stage organizations view their platforms as a way to maximize the return on human capital, so they exploit the advantage big data algorithms provide, building out “smart systems” that get more intuitive over time. Organizations with a more mature technological infrastructure also instinctively control costs, mitigates risk, avoid fines, and reduces the need for litigation. Clear pictures of workforce capacity, capability, and other correlations are accessible and frequently leveraged to maintain organizational agility. This is important to adapt to changing industry dynamics, regulatory laws, and information technology standards.

6. Elective Participation

The level of endorsement for an organization's talent and learning strategy can be judged by the degree of elective participation it receives from the “connected population.” The connected population includes employees that have routine access to a personal computer or device with access to HR's learning and talent offerings or other workforce management applications. Less mature organizations have very low elective participation rates and rely on very self-motivated individuals to go beyond the obligatory asks. The less mature organizations also tend to employ traditional marketing techniques to spur elective participation, so uptake is directly influenced by the effectiveness of their “push” campaigns. Beyond compulsory performance reviews and compliance training, how much discretionary use of HR's

Technology Infrastructure is critical to efficiency and scalability. To maximize technology investments and improve overall maturity, organizations must actively develop and nurture other indicators.

talent and learning offerings do employees consume? Are employees able to access relevant comprehensive workforce insights that can inform personal activity for individuals, team-based activity for managers, as well as organizational data in aggregate form?

The more mature organizations have advocates who turn toward the HR experience to continue to grow capabilities and cultivate careers. There is more employee “pull” because the value of HR programs and applications is contextual and accessible in the employee’s moments of need. More mature organizations also leverage engagement tactics fueled by big data to encourage more voluntary participation.

7. Governance

HR’s ability to instill governance is a clear sign of its maturity level. Our research indicates that Governance is the greatest influencer on other indicators toward the overall organizational maturity of an enterprise.

For the less mature organizations, the structure for talent, learning, and workforce management is highly decentralized. Guardrails are absent where organizational efforts are not monitored, so there is little coordination between HR’s own efforts and its interface with other functional groups across the enterprise.

As organizations evolve toward higher maturity phases, they gradually see that they must implement more controls in order to get a stronger handle on decision-making, forward-looking plans, resources, and cost. At the middle stage of maturity it is common for organizations to establish steering committees of functional stakeholders from across the business, which eventually transitions into formal governance structures. In fully mature organizations, the governance for both learning, talent, and workforce management jurisdiction is clarified and intuitive. These organizations also operate from a fact base of data to optimize efficiency and continually enhance their effectiveness.

8. Funding

While a distributed or federated model of funding may seem liberated, in the end, organizations typically find they must rein in rogue and redundant expenses to maximize their purchasing power.

Governance has the strongest positive influence on the maturity of other indicators. Governance structures facilitate short-term and long-term success and scalability.

Stakeholder involvement via governance creates consistent engagement, structured practices, and group ownership.

Less modern organizations focus on constant reduction of expenses; there is no predefined talent investment and spend levels tend to be underwater compared to industry benchmarks. Cloud-based learning is frequently implemented in order to increase scale and offset more expensive training delivery options. Funding processes are not uniform and HR is often subject to disproportionate reductions when economic times are tight.

As an organization's funding strategy matures, rationalization efforts emerge in collaboration with procurement counterparts and other stakeholders. In more evolved companies, talent is viewed as key investment that directly influences the organization's strategic success. Therefore at the higher levels of maturity, budget in human capital often exceeds industry benchmarks. Funding strategies for learning, talent, and workforce management initiatives are also artfully coordinated through advanced governance.

9. Reporting & Measurement

Data-driven decisions are becoming more prevalent in literally every organizational function, and HR is no exception.

In the early stages of maturity, organizations tend to focus on garnering participation measures as a proxy for success. They use participation rates as the principle means of articulating value. Reporting efforts are often ad-hoc and reactionary and do not incorporate business outcomes based on learning, talent, and workforce management data.

As enterprises move up the maturity framework, their efforts become more proactive, and the data used comes from a vast array of sources—not just traditional HR streams. As an organization transforms beyond traditional HR practices, a measurement strategy is defined for the programs and operational initiatives, with business impact becoming a key performance indicator of success. Productivity metrics become more visible, and the organization operates under a defined measurement philosophy that continually assesses learning, talent, and workforce management functions. As an organization progresses up the maturity model, it steadily increases its own self-discipline toward evidence-based decisions. Eventually a dedicated practice for measurement is created, including sophisticated data visualizations, statistically oriented analysis, and predictive data modeling based on synchronized learning, talent, and workforce management data.

THE FIVE STAGES OF GROWTH

Achieving the results of a mature learning strategy is a journey. Benchmarking, both formally and informally, helps identify the methods and actions that will make a difference. Through research and hands-on experience, Skillsoft has identified five stages of growth:

Stage 1: Disparate learning, talents, and workforce functions; culture is hierarchical and unengaging.

Stage 2: Initial coordination between learning, talent, and workforce functions; burgeoning executive interest in employee engagement and culture.

Stage 3: Learning, talent, and workforce functions merge; culture is very people-centric.

Stage 4: HR is a core strategic decision maker; engaging, agile organizational culture

Stage 5: Self-developing ecosystem; a highly sought after culture.

Take the online diagnostic
to determine your organization's
level of maturity.

THE LEARNING AND TALENT MATURITY FRAMEWORK™

	STAGE 1: SILOED	STAGE 2: TARGETED	STAGE 3: TRANSFORMING	STAGE 4: CONTINUOUS	STAGE 5: OPTIMIZED
People-Centric Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, talent, & workforce mgmt completely separate • Unengaging culture • Highly hierarchical • Operational inefficiencies are the norm • Lacks diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly top-down driven culture but more exec support for engagement & program alignment • Process improvements emerge • Diversity awareness prompts isolated action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, talent, & workforce mgmt begin to converge • A more people-centric philosophy emerges • Clear expectations are present • Diversity becomes a strategic imperative • Seek “Best Place to Work” recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative rapid-responder • Engagement is high due to people-first philosophy • Leveraging of new tools to create efficiencies. • Positive recognition for diverse & inclusive culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developing ecosystem • Collaborative & transparent • Strong employee value proposition • Highly sought-after employer
HR's Role & People Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process resource with minimal overarching HR strategy • Reactive to random business needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Manager of talent, learning & workforce mgmt processes • Little to no HR integration in depts • Proactive business alignment begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyst synchronizing functions to drive adaptability & effectiveness • Performance consulting starts to root • Chief People Officer role emerges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief People Officer (CHRO) is a Workforce Architect who directs business-centric interconnected talent, learning & workforce mgmt processes • Informs business strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive enabler with highly sophisticated & agile HR & people strategies that drive business outcomes
Organizational Alignment & Curation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, talent, & workforce mgmt initiatives not aligned with business needs • Employees viewed as passive • Comply with compulsory requirements • Curation is isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee ownership emerges • HR appreciates self-initiated efforts • Development structure is provided to certain employees • External alignment emerges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees become more accountable for steering development & career • Multiple types of aligned developmental experiences begin to appear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR enables dept improvements • Employees are leveraged as resources • Developmental programs are relevant & viewed as valuable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong people brand • Employees are adaptable & encouraging to others • Teams form to tackle projects • Workforce data are leveraged to model & project

	STAGE 1: SILOED	STAGE 2: TARGETED	STAGE 3: TRANSFORMING	STAGE 4: CONTINUOUS	STAGE 5: OPTIMIZED
User Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parallel learning, talent, & workforce mgmt workflows Mobile rare No tech integrations No formal employee profile Many shadow systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateways between learning, talent, & workforce mgmt emerge Some tools are modern & intuitive Some mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers begin to dissolve between learning, talent, & workforce mgmt More functionality is leveraged across systems Profiles emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compelling UX in learning, talent, & workforce mgmt tools Workflows are engineered for efficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World-class UX Personalized, adaptive, & highly informative High mobile usage
Technology Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systems or legacy systems for learning, talent, & workforce mgmt functions Heavy technical admin support Operational view of platform(s) Many shadow systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning, talent, & workforce mgmt platform(s) in place with moderate admin support Elements mostly behind-the-firewall Fewer shadow systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More sophisticated learning, talent, & workforce mgmt platforms come together Integrated suite (SaaS) Few to no shadow systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated platform/suite viewed as a human capital maximizer Always pacing with latest version 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use patterns of employees feed the cutting-edge platform's big data algorithms
Elective Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20%+ Adoption depends on frequency & reach of marketing "push" efforts Most offering & tools are generic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30%+ Momentum depends on end user experience & emerging manager support Some offering & tools are contextual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50%+ Deep linking (integration/suite) begins to bring learning, talent, & workforce mgmt into workflow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80%+ Majority of managers are learning, talent, & workforce mgmt evangelists More "pull" Tools & offerings are relevant & engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90%+ Big data insights drive highly tailored recommendations to end-users

	STAGE 1: SILOED	STAGE 2: TARGETED	STAGE 3: TRANSFORMING	STAGE 4: CONTINUOUS	STAGE 5: OPTIMIZED
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized Little coordination between learning, talent, & workforce mgmt efforts Inefficient Lots of rogue & redundant initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination begins with process standards &/or partnerships Learning council may be established for collaboration on targeted initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee oversees transformation, supported by executive team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly centralized strategic & operational decisions Roles, responsibilities, & jurisdictions are defined Targeted CofE's exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully mature processes that leverage data-driven inputs Controls not difficult to uphold
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expense reduction is the constant focus Minimum spend, below benchmarks Tools are not seen as influences on business performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federated Spend outside of HR is common May take spend benchmarks into account Business cases for isolated initiatives begin to emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationalization & centralization underway Budgets refer to benchmarks Certain learning, talent, & workforce mgmt initiatives are seen as strategic investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People investments reliably in place Budget reflects spend targets of best-in-class Investments in modern tools are expected to impact KPIs across the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding per capita is high New investments are constructed in business payoff terms Investments are aligned to tangible & intangible value
Reporting & Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success is conveyed through efficiency metrics & anecdotal feedback Ad-hoc & required reports come from separate systems Data are often unreliable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement strategy begins More proactive reports but inputs are often not combined Effectiveness is evaluated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for data-driven decisions takes root Business impact studies begin under a formal measurement practice General correlations emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key decisions are made with data Causal analyses, ROI, impact studies, visualizations are routine Data & insights are shared with internal & external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleeding-edge measurement practices HR risk mitigation plans & predictive scenarios All initiative are managed & monitored longitudinally Complex data visualizations

HOW TO MAKE PROGRESS

Initiating change can seem daunting at first. Organizations are bombarded with “best practices,” but the plethora of options have added to the confusion and led to paralysis of action. This has put the credibility of the learning, talent, and workforce management functions at stake.

The most important step to success is to focus on two indicators that are of highest priority for the organization. It’s impossible to influence all nine maturity indicators at once—the transformation is a continuous journey. Consider gathering stakeholders together to take the online diagnostic. The resulting conversations will be a good starting point for determining priorities and aligning goals.

For those in Stages 1 or 2 of the model, the first step will require clarifying expectations with your clients. It will also require establishing boundaries for the work your function will and will not take on.

Progressing to Stage 3 requires aligning with the priorities of the business and helping line managers drive outcomes through talent. This step requires a focus on outcomes and adopting an evidence-based mindset to innovate and solve problems.

Stages 4 and 5 focus on data-based decision making and intelligence-driven solutions. Ultimately, evidence-based methodologies provide greater control in future outcomes and create a culture of self-propelled improvements.

The index helps organizations chart a path toward progress and makes the learning, talent, and workforce function a strategic partner in business success.

Steps to business impact

1. Become clear on what value Learning, talent, and workforce management will help drive
2. Start with the outcomes most critical for business success
3. Use evidence-based approaches to identify practices to drive outcomes
4. Measure, analyze, and adjust to fine-tune results
5. Celebrate success!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Brent Colescott is the Senior Director of Business Strategy and Transformation for SumTotal with over 20 years of experience in the learning and talent fields. He has successfully initiated and optimized online learning platforms and programs during his career in the HR, Utilities and Energy industries. Notable accomplishments include being recognized by WebEx as their “Innovator of the Year” in 2005 and by Skillsoft as the “2007 Learning Leader of the Year.” Brent holds a Master of Education in Administration and Technology and is a former Chairman of the Humble ISD Education Foundation.



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Skillsoft is a front-runner in corporate learning, delivering beautiful technology and engaging content that drives business impact for modern enterprises. Skillsoft comprises three award-winning systems that support learning, performance and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform and the SumTotal suite for Human Capital Management.

Skillsoft provides a comprehensive selection of cloud-based corporate learning content, including courses, videos, books and other resources on Business and Management Skills, Leadership Development, Digital Transformation, Technology and Developer, Productivity and Collaboration Tools and Compliance. Percipio's intuitive design engages modern learners and its consumer-led experience assists in accelerating learning. The SumTotal suite features four key components built on a unified platform: Learning Management, Talent Management, Talent Acquisition and Workforce Management.

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