

white paper

winning in the 2021 workplace with learning technology

- may 2021



In 2021, we see a greater emphasis on higher and faster growth in organizations.

The increased pace emerges from a need to not be left behind in the era of continuous disruption. In keeping up with the technological momentum, organizations overlook the importance of upskilling the workforce to support their growth objectives.

This whitepaper will focus on recognizing this organization-wide skill gap and harnessing the benefits of Learning Technology to make your workforce job-ready, disruption-proof, and growth-aligned.

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Introduction

The world of work is constantly evolving.

In 2021, we see a greater emphasis on higher and faster growth in organizations due to rapid technological developments and shifts in the business market. The proliferation of hybrid workplaces, innovation in the way we do business, and an increased need for collaboration have urged companies to stay ahead in the era of continuous disruption.

As the adoption of technology increases, 50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025, as per The World Economic Forum.

Most of the organizations today aren't actively tackling the skill gap challenge. Even though executives recognize the threat that talent shortage poses, most organizations have not proactively attacked the problem. This has resulted in a looming global talent shortage that could severely impact economies worldwide.

In this whitepaper, we focus on why it's important to recognize skill-gaps in your organization. This is the hard part. Despite visible signs like increasing clashes, attrition and poor employee performance, a lot of organizations tend to overlook skill-gaps. We also discuss how learning technology is helping them close this gap by driving a culture of continuous learning- a culture that is often understated but makes your workforce disruption-proof and growth-aligned.

The changing nature of learning at the workplace

Automation and digitalization change the way organizations are structured and how people operate and get their work done. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics have altered organizational processes from recruitment, talent management & engagement to exit. The workplace is becoming increasingly automated, and this trend is spreading across all industries.

Many organizations are transitioning to virtual workplaces rapidly. This shift underscores the information technology (IT) and technical skill gaps as employees working remotely need to troubleshoot technological issues independently.

The focus of the Learning and Development function is shifting from building technical domain expertise and retention mechanisms to engage and develop leadership talent continuously.

In the last few years, technology and the generation (Gen Y) at the workplace have reshaped L&D. In 2021, from the assembly line to white-collar jobs, more workers are learning on the job.

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE:

The growing skill-gap

After a year of pandemic response behind them, organizations have paved the way for adaptability and resilience in their workforce and leadership.

However, 79% of CEOs today feel that a lack of essential skills is threatening their business growth.

Having excellent knowledge or aptitude but not executing them leads to missing out on realizing the true potential. Organizations often overlook the need to identify skill gaps that appear either due to the short shelf life of current skills or the lack of a continuous skill-building ecosystem.

Recognizing this value and leveraging the right cross-skilling, reskilling, and upskilling platforms will help organizations deliver outcomes better. A more digitally-focused workforce, new technologies, and growing skill gaps create new challenges while traditional barriers still exist.

Before we dive into the solution, let's discuss what we are solving here:

The growing skill-gap

The unbelievable pace of technological advancement, the inability of traditional educational institutes to keep up, and the high cost of higher education have made learning inaccessible to many. There's a growing chasm between employees' and job seekers' skills and those that companies are hiring for, and the low-income groups that

took a brutal hit.

The pandemic has only further widened the skills gap that continued to plague the global workforce. Even as more people with high education and advanced degrees enter the workforce, it doesn't translate to on-the-job skills.

According to PwC, finding and hiring employees with the essential skills they need to succeed in the digital world continues to keep CEOs concerned the most: 80% of CEOs say they're worried (up from 77% in 2017), and 38% are highly concerned (up from 31% in 2017).

As many jobs have vanished due to the pandemic, more unemployed people are competing for fewer positions. Most of the business and technical skills that were in demand before are now critical for many organizations to meet future skills needs.

Short shelf life of skills.

Research from IBM suggests that skills generally have a "half-life" of about five years and the shelf-life of technical skills is just two and a half years, which requires continuous re-skilling effort to stay relevant.

Our digital world now requires learning to be a continuous, lifelong journey that is imperative for the long-term success of organizations and individuals. The inclination to understand and embrace this journey should be encouraged by organizations while hiring for new roles to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

L&D is not a management priority.

A survey conducted by Gartner discovered that 70% out of 7,000 employees self-assessing their proficiency in in-demand skills said they hadn't mastered the skills they need for their jobs today. 80% said that they lacked both the skills they need for their current role and future career.

Even as employees are aware of their skills gaps, learning is not considered a management priority in many organizations. As per a CIPD study, company leaders have traditional expectations of L&D, which is the most prominent challenge cited by 78% of L&D professionals as these expectations are difficult to challenge.

Other barriers include that learning is not a management priority (74%), organizational culture does not support social learning (64%), and 64% consider learning to be a cost-center, not an investment.

Bridging the skill gap to be ready for what's next

To future-proof their teams, organizations need to keep the following things in mind:

- **Identify skill gaps early:** Identify the critical skills needed for success. Map the skills to the right persona in the organization. For example: A loan officer at a bank might need training on financial softwares to organize and process loans faster, or a course on customer service skills to be better at his job.

Align your future skilling strategy through embedded learning across the employee lifecycle.

- **Mobile skilling:** Make learning available easily. We have seen an increase in mobile-first learning over the past few years. A mobile skilling platform gives employees the ability to learn on-the-go. Today when most of the work happens on a hand-held device, it makes it easier to infuse learning with your daily work on a mobile app. Apart from saving costs and efforts, otherwise spent on a manual learning approach, it also gives the learner quick access to their scores and performances.

- **Improve Learning Experiences:** For learning to be effective, it's also important that you make it engaging and personalised for your workforce. Today 43% of Generation Z and 42% of Millennials seek independent and more self-directed learning, which allows the learner to be in control. Let's take Netflix for example. The user can control what to view and how much to view. Users can pause when they like or go back and rewind. Learning should similarly give the authority to the learner.

At Disprz, we have seen customers using a self-paced and a blended approach to learning, where the classroom training is integrated in the skilling platform seamlessly to assess enrollments and effectiveness.

Customers have also used our diversified formats of learning, from bite-sized content like flashcards and videos, to live A/V sessions and Gameinars, to keep their workforce skilled and engaged regularly.

- **Link KPI to learning:** Picture a delivery manager at a logistics company. He has several deliveries to make in one day. He slips up twice, once he scans the wrong order, and the other time he forgets to scan at all. His KPIs are measured on the number of successful and timely deliveries of goods.

What can he do to improve?

Organizations can embed KPI based coaching on the skilling platform to prevent or ensure damage control for such situations. In this case, the delivery manager should be able to open the skilling app, view the SOPs related to internal handling of goods, or check out a quick video on how to scan a product. Any slip-ups could also be notified to his manager, so that he could direct the right resources to help him out.

At Disprz, we have seen KPI-linked coaching work successfully with a lot of our customers.

- **Build competitive skills, from the top:** The C-Suite should lead the way, spending more time learning and upskilling themselves, and should communicate the same to their teams. It is vital in today's economic climate for people to develop

the right leadership skills to keep adding value and keep pushing their organizations forward. Organizations must be cognizant of the emerging job trends and the corresponding skills requirements, which will help them stay ahead of the curve.

- **Measure skill impact:** Learning is a one-way street if it's not combined with assessments and analytics. Both learners and trainers should be able to assess themselves regularly to track learning efficiency and effectiveness of learning resources. Analytics and data help track an individual's progress, productivity, and evaluate career progressions.

At disprz, we have 360 assessments, skill scores, role fitment scores and more such metrics to help learners assess themselves. Trainers can view how many learners have been onboarded within the stipulated time, their completion ratios, learning efficiencies, and KPI-linked performances.

Companies like Ernst & Young, IBM are applying analytics and AI to traditional and new data sets to highlight the available skills within the organization and those needed. This approach helps assess and measure the skill competency of the workforce on a regular, automated basis.

The role of learning technology in bridging the skills gap

In 2021, it's all about rapid skill-building at scale. Companies are adopting skilling

platforms that offer top-to-bottom visibility into the workforce's existing skills, connect the right resources, and drive the right learning experience.

Learning technology does much more than bridge skill gaps. Through AI and analytics, it helps build a personalized learning experience based on the learner's preferences and usage history. It helps organizations map the right skills to the right user and assess their performance.

Analytics:

Organizations understand the increasing importance of advanced analytics and market-based skill data to interpret an employee's current skills and skill depth. With the help of big data, analytics, and AI, organizations can build predictive models to understand how a learner's behavior is impacted after a learning activity, monitor the learning & behavioral patterns, and predict performance.

We have seen a spike in the need for customizable dashboards from our customer organizations. Measuring L&D efforts is useful in assessing the overall performance and impact on staff growth. Analytics like KPI-based metrics and role fitment scores help keep a check on the overall value delivered through learning initiatives.

AI-based mapping and content recommendation:

Organizations can make learning more contextual, intuitive, and personalized with

the help of AI.

Every job role within an organization requires specific learning interventions, and these learning pathways enable organizations to upskill and reskill employees through -

- Identifying skills against industry benchmarks and mapping it to the right learner, helping organizations assess skill gaps
- Algorithms that recommend the right content to the right user based on the user's preferences, interests and learning history to accelerate career development

Creating continuous learning opportunities keeps the workforce engaged and prepared for the next level of work within the same company.

Personalizing the learning experience:

Companies must personalize at scale to make a notable impact. This means going further than categorizing employees in the same roles or the same business units.

As each employee's learning journey is mapped to the skills and efficiencies needed for the next level in their career, AI can offer unique digitally-led personalized learning journeys, combining in-house and industry content repositories.

Learning Technology also helps in tracking improvement & providing certifications.

Personalization has become an integral part of our online experience. From browsing for

new products, restaurants to entertainment, consumers expect instant and personalized search results. They also expect sites to offer suggestions tailored to their preferences proactively.

This is true for employees as well. Employees expect career, skill, and learning development uniquely tailored to their experiences, goals, and interests in their workplace. Mapping employee goals and skill and learning needs with those of the market can help retain the best talent and build a future workforce.

As per LinkedIn, 33% of Generation X and Boomers are focused on less self-directed learning, and these workers will evolve as technology continues to grow, whereas 43% of Generation Z and 42% of Millennials seek independent and more self-directed learning.

How LearnTech can impact business growth:

The potential of Learning technology in an organization is not fully understood unless it begins to hit the top line. Through faster onboarding, KPI-linked coaching and ability to predict attrition, learning technology finds itself a seat at the company's strategy table:

- Higher time-to-productivity: A skilling platform can help onboard new recruits faster and in a timely manner. It can limit the time spent on formalities and can bring new talent up to speed faster. The first few days in an employee's journey is also crucial for assessments and feedback. Managers can direct them to the right resource, so can peers. A skilling platform

enables all of this, helping organizations expect faster results from a new recruit. We have observed that in the absence of such technology, the time-to-productivity is often slower or delayed.

A lot of our customers swear by our 30-day onboarding and skilling on-the-job process.

- Improved KPI performance: As explained in the delivery manager example before, when learning is aligned directly with a worker's performance, it makes it fruitful for the worker to progress and be better at his job. It also makes it worthwhile for the organization to be investing in a technology that is directly linked to its growth.

KPI linked coaching can also help the learner prepare better for the future.. A manager can assign a course designed for a level higher than the reportee's current role. This helps them prepare better for the next role in his career and be more efficient on the job from day 1.

- Predict attrition: Through self-evaluation and psychometric tests, an organization has the ability to predict attrition and staff turnover in time. This kind of analysis gives organizations that time to prepare for a contingency plan to mitigate any kind of churn or losses. Early signs of attrition can also be seen through the various metrics available like KPI performances, role scores, assessments, feedbacks and surveys.

Transforming L&D function:

Case in point:

Indonesia-based PT Pegadaian:

reduced onboarding costs by 40% and increased daily active users to 14,000+

PT Pegadaian is an Indonesian financial services behemoth, founded in 1901 with more than 30,000 employees.

The situation:

The company's corporate university had a tough time managing the onboarding and role-based development of such a distributed workforce spread across multiple islands and locations. The company was also facing issues in understanding the effectiveness of their L&D efforts in the absence of the right metrics and analysis. Mandatory reports were needed as part of hygiene and compliance aspects mandated by the HR team of Pegadaian.

The organization's goal was to build a structured onboarding program, focus on role-based development, and bring direct correlation and insights between e-learning and classroom training.

What we did:

Disprz helped build a centralized solution that established a blended approach of learning for the customer's entire workforce. By implementing a single platform for this initiative, we managed e-learning, webinar-based online training, and classroom training all in one place. The platform supports two

kinds of users: ~14000 users as part of knowledge workers and ~16000 employees as sales enablement.

As part of transforming the L&D process, we mandated a 4-week role-based onboarding journey to ensure faster time-to-productivity

We were able to measure and generate:

- Classroom enrolment and effectiveness metrics along with online
- Workplace satisfaction through feedback and assessments
- Reports mandated by the HR department and analytics to assess performances

Key Outcomes:

1. 30,000+ plus users on the platform, 14,000+ active users daily.
2. 40% reduction in onboarding costs and 100% increase in the launch of the number of onboarding programs
3. 87% enrolment on the platform within one month of launch
4. 40% reduction in onboarding costs with more personalized programs launched

Conclusion

More often than not, organizations struggle to identify the right skills needed to prepare for now and for the future, leading to a skill gap. We are here to solve the biggest problem in skilling - **eliminating the skill gap**.

Only 2.3% of the workforce in India has undergone formal skill training compared to 68% in the UK, 75% in Germany, and 52% in the USA. We believe that it doesn't have to be this way.

The skills required to stay truly competitive are changing rapidly. Employees need to be skilled for today's business challenges and of the future — And **right-skilling** is the only way to get organizations ready for what's next.

How Disprz can help

Over the past five years, we redefined the digital skilling experience and have transformed into a leader in career acceleration. Millions of learners are upskilling, cross-skilling, and right-skilling with Disprz.

At Disprz, our purpose is to build skills for a better future. We understand the importance of continuous learning to build capability and achieve business objectives. We work with organizations that emphasize higher and faster growth to identify and implement a better way to skill at scale. Learn more at <http://disprz.com/>

Notes and sources

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- Forbes: The Pandemic Widened The Skills Gap And The Tech Industry Must Step Up - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2020/12/03/the-pandemic-widened-the-skills-gap-and-the-tech-industry-must-step-up/>
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- LinkedIn: 3rd Annual 2019 Workplace Learning Report
- Gartner: Motivate Employees to Reskill for the Digital Age - <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/motivate-employees-to-reskill-for-the-digital-age/>



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