

# Changing the Learning Paradigm to Serve the Future Workforce

2021



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## Introduction

Learning has never been more important to employers than it is today. Employees must acquire new skills and become more agile to keep their organizations competitive amid continuous change. At the same time, they want to develop their skills and advance their careers by accessing a wide array of development opportunities.

Therefore, employers should provide learning opportunities that offer mutual benefit to the organization and its employees.

Unfortunately, there is a major gap between the importance employers assign to learning and how integral — or impactful — learning is to the business.

To bridge that gap, organizations must make significant changes to ensure learning is more connected to the business. Learning strategies are not properly aligned with business outcomes and to many employees, the learning process seems to be completely separate from their jobs. Ensuring learning is personal, relatable and easy to access within the flow of work will make it more impactful and sustainable.

There are many different strategies for changing the learning paradigm, ranging from greater involvement of stakeholders in envisioning and designing learning, to making sure every learning intervention is tied to a critical competency or business need.



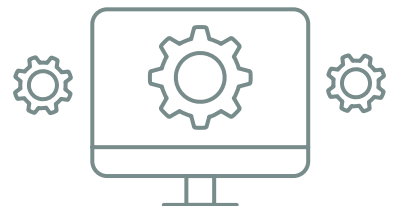
76%

of organizations rate learning at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale of importance.

45%

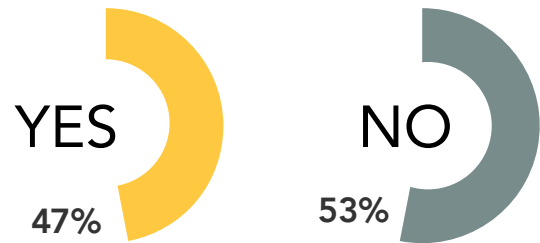
of organizations rate themselves at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale of how integral learning is organization's culture.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Upskilling/Reskilling Study



The question becomes,  
“Is your organization  
culturally ready to change  
the learning paradigm and  
make learning more relevant  
for learners and more  
impactful for the business?”

Is Your Organization Culturally Ready to  
Drive Personalized Learning at Scale?



Source: Brandon Hall Group Upskilling/Reskilling Study

Brandon Hall Group research shows there is momentum for change:



But what is it that really needs to change? If you think about what employers endured during the height of the pandemic, any number of changes had to happen at one time. The challenge becomes providing personalized learning when the solid ground that we thought we were standing on is shifting beneath our feet almost daily.

The best approach is to not aim toward a particular endpoint but to help all employees become agents of change to create learning flexibility and agility. The goal should be to teach everyone in the organization how to adapt, learn, succeed and thrive through change.



# Changing the Learning Paradigm: The 4 Es

To turn the dial on learning, Brandon Hall Group research indicates these are critical steps:



Align the learning strategy with organizational business goals.



Apply principles of brain science to design learning experiences that are more likely to lead to behavior change.



Fully engage managers in the learning experience.



Upgrade learning development and delivery processes so they are agile enough to keep up with the needs of the business.

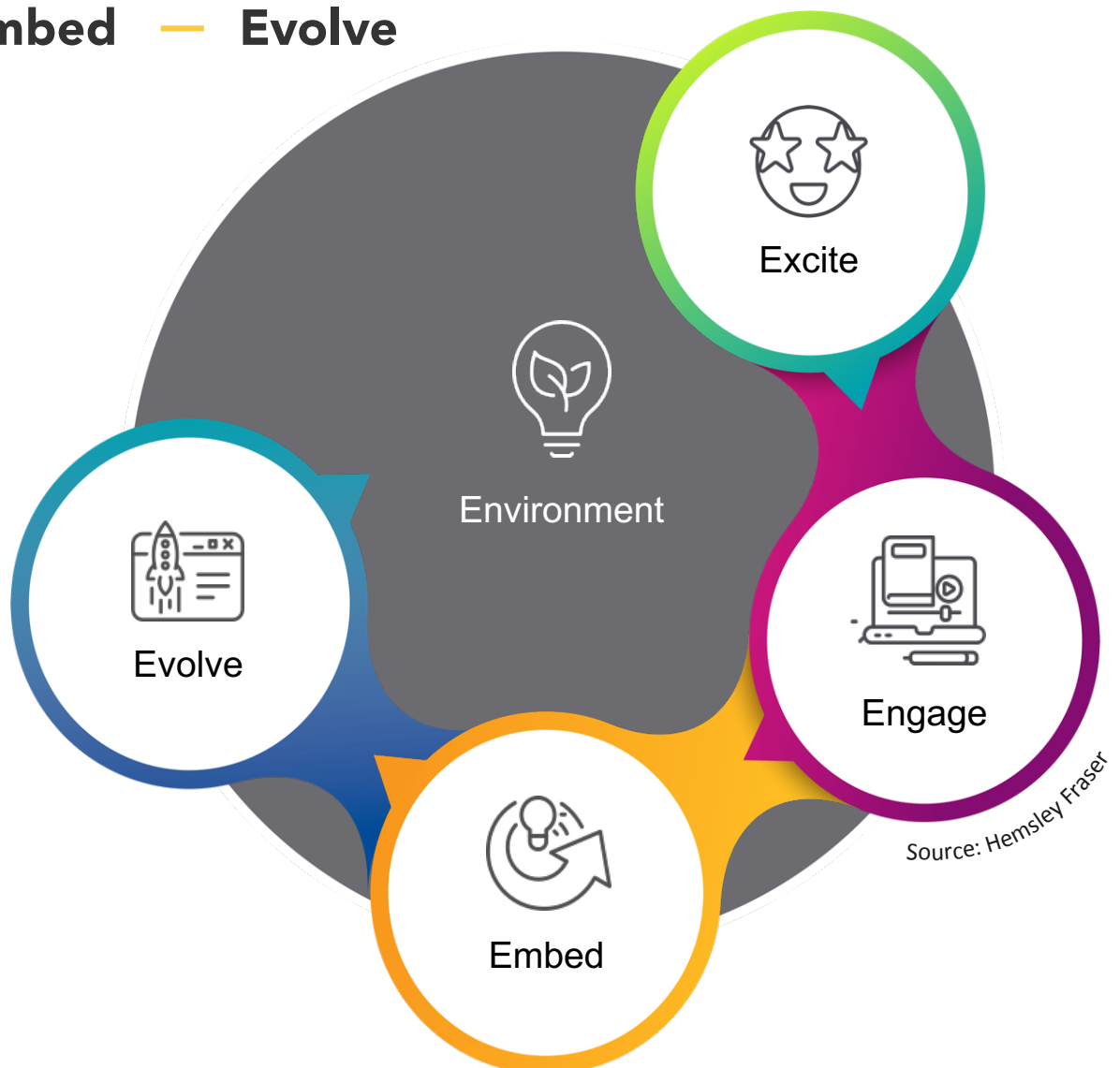


Leverage the tools and technologies needed to help facilitate personalized learning at scale.



That's a lot to accomplish, so it's important to have a simple model. Hemsley Fraser developed the 4Es approach to build an environment that drives learning impact for employees and the business.

**Excite — Engage**  
**— Embed — Evolve**





## Excite

This involves aligning your learning approach with your business stakeholders. Managers and leaders must understand why they should take their team members away from their daily work to learn. You must make it

clear to the business why this learning is valuable, the skills employees will develop during the training and how they will help the business.

Securing stakeholder involvement might seem like you are slowing the process because there is another set of opinions to listen to. But getting early buy-in from stakeholders accelerates the learning transformation process.

The next step is to excite learners. Employees are

bombarded by so many different messages, both internally and externally — flow-of-work emails, marketing messages, HR emails and more. Messaging about learning programs can get lost. You must answer this for learners: “What’s in it for me?” In other words, tell them how they will benefit from taking time to learn.

As learning professionals, we must think like marketers and communicate compelling reasons for employees to want to invest in their own learning.

If we’re going to take people away from their day-to-day jobs for any type of learning — formal, informal or experiential — we’ve got to engage them. We can no longer create a PowerPoint presentation and show bullet after bullet for a couple of hours and expect

anyone to pay attention or receive value from the experience. As learning leaders, we must offer opportunities for people to learn, not only from experts and facilitators, but from each other through real-life stories and a variety of experiences.



## Engage





### Embed

Attending a class, workshop or course can be a good starting point or foundation but it

means nothing if learners don't have opportunities to practice or apply new skills in a variety of ways. Practice and application must be built into — embedded — into the learning design.

Managers must also be aware of the learning their employees are involved in and meet with them to reinforce the importance

and help them embed the learned skills into their daily work.

Another good approach is leveraging accountability partners. This can be a training buddy who has gone through the same learning and helps the learner apply skills and concepts on the job.

This is simply remembering that we are never done designing learning. You cannot expect to launch a program and let it run endlessly without iteration or evolution. We should get feedback from everyone involved in the

learning — stakeholders, the learners, the learner's peers, customers. We must communicate in various ways with all stakeholders, look at the data we receive and adjust the learning approach as needed.



### Evolve





## Case in Point

- Scale the professional development and management learning curricula to a global audience.
- Provide a “classroom-like” level of facilitator<>learner interaction even across the smallest employee populations.

### THE CHALLENGE



- Replaced 1-day in-person workshops with half-day live virtuals, offered globally.
- Deployed the Amgen Learning Hub, which provides access to HF, Amgen, and third-party learning options.
- Uncovered vast interested in self-study learning: staff viewed 50,000+ online resources in year one

### THE RESULTS



- Continued evolution of the primary curricula
- A new enterprise-wide DI&B initiative
- Field-facing Sales Leadership Academies

### THE FUTURE



Amgen is an American multinational biopharmaceutical company with 24,300 employees and annual revenue exceeding \$25 billion. Amgen partnered with Hemsley Fraser for Learning for Growth 2.0, a blended learning curriculum designed to support the professional development lifecycle of employees across Amgen’s workforce, regardless of location or language.

**The program, which earned  
a 2021 Brandon Hall Group  
Excellence Award, combines:**



Highly interactive, multi-language  
extended Virtual Instructor-Led  
Training Workshops  
(xVILTs).



Shorter, complementary virtual  
training sessions (VILTs).



A bank of customized, asynchronous  
online micro-learning assets —  
including eBooks, infographics,  
videos, quizzes and podcasts — that  
are available in multiple languages via  
an Amgen-branded instance of the  
Hemsley Fraser digital hub learning  
experience platform.



Rapidly pivoting to manage the onset of COVID-19 and ramping up activity to ensure on-schedule deployment at a time when many countries were entering lockdown, the partners delivered 365 workshops (in-person and virtual) in 2020 — attracting 5,719 attendees — with 13,276 learners accessing more than 50,000 learning resources via Hemsley Fraser's digital hub over the same time frame. The program, which continues to evolve, contributed to Amgen ranking above its industry benchmark for learning opportunities and staff engagement. You can read more [here](#).



## Ensuring a Return on Learning Engagement

The Amgen story illustrates many elements involved in driving learner engagement and the many complexities that must be addressed, as Brandon Hall Group shows:

### Importance of Personalized Learning Elements

Learning needs to highly align with the personal and professional goals of the learner at every employee level.



Learning needs to highly align with the objectives of the business at every employee level.



Learners require frequent feedback by coaches/mentors and managers.



Learning can be rated by learners.



Learners need to be recognized and rewarded for learning.



Managers need to understand what their employees are learning by taking an executive version of their learning curriculum.



Learning needs to blend multiple modalities in all learning use cases.



*4 or 5 on a 5-point scale*

Source: Brandon Hall Group Upskilling/Reskilling Study



## Top Challenges to Personalization at Scale

68%

We have managers who are not very good coaches and don't know what their employees are learning.

47%

Our learning organization is not trained properly to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.

60%

We do not have the technology ecosystem in place to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.

46%

We do not promote peer-to-peer, collaborative learning.

54%

We believe it would be too expensive.

46%

We don't have a good handle on how to effectively and efficiently reach our learners.

54%

The organization believes a one-size-fits-all approach to learning is sufficient.

42%

We follow traditional learning development processes such as ADDIE and are not familiar/comfortable with new agile development processes.

48%

We believe it would be too difficult to administer and maintain.

42%

We don't have a good handle on what our learners need or drives them.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Upskilling/Reskilling Study



## A few take-aways from the research:

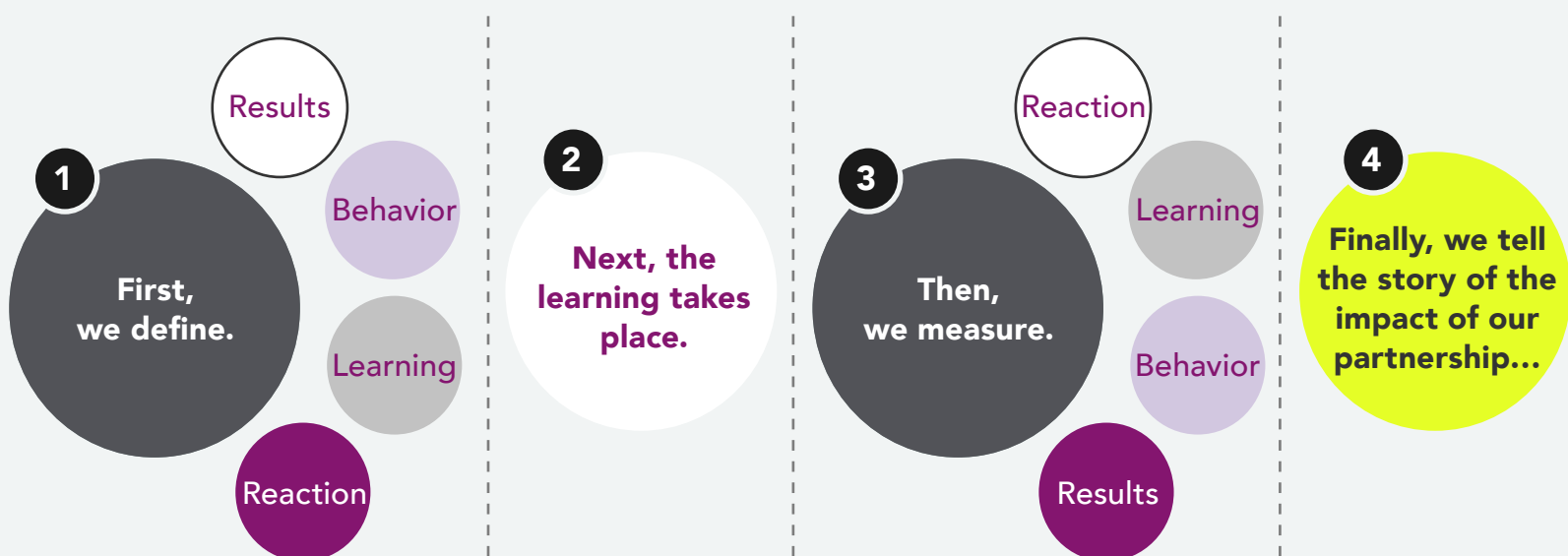
- **Accessibility.** We must embrace blended learning that gives learners a choice based on their preferred learning style. Learning professionals also have a responsibility to ensure learning is more accessible to people with different visual needs and hearing acuity.
- **Less can be more.** In the quest to make learning diverse and accessible, many organizations think that every piece of learning

requires a workshop, a video and other labor-intensive elements. Sometimes an infographic, a two-paragraph handout or a checklist will do. The elements must align with the mission of the learning.

- **Return on engagement.** We must represent, through data, compelling stories, or both, that the investment business stakeholders have made in learning has had a meaningful impact

on the organization. Sometimes that can be expressed in terms of dollars and cents. More often, it can be expressed as examples of behaviors the business was hoping for. To make sure we can show a return on learner engagement, it is important to design your learning with the desired result in mind and work backward. Here are a couple of models that can help.

### Return on Engagement Model



Source: Hemsley Fraser

The objective of Hemsley Fraser's Return on Engagement Model is to first define the results, behaviors, learning and reaction that you want to see. After the learning experience is introduced and has had a chance to take hold, you gauge the impact of the learners' engagement by measuring it for the desired reactions, behaviors and results. In other words, define the specific business impact you want to see, then determine if you have realized those business goals.

**Brandon Hall Group's research confirms that starting at the desired business result and working backward to design learning is an effective way to ensure:**

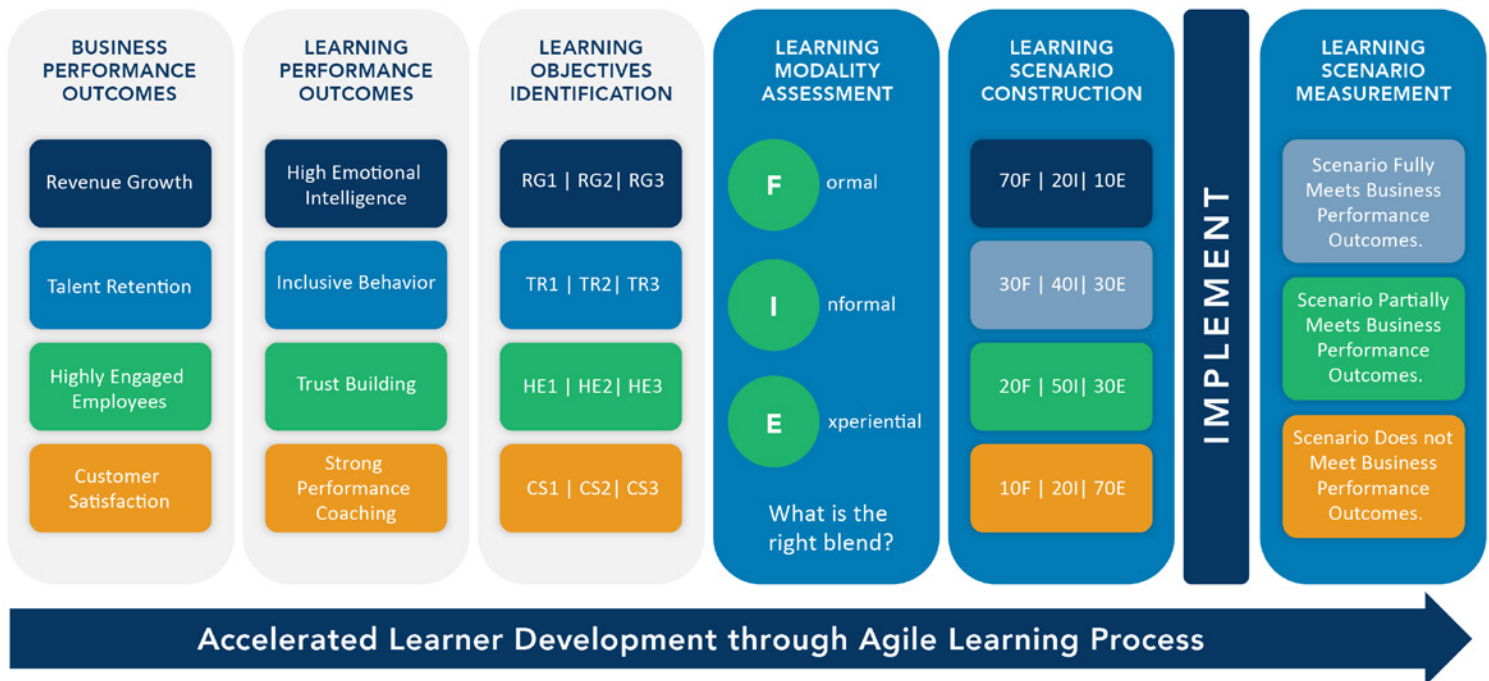
*Alignment with business objectives*

*Learning modalities fit the business objective*

*Measurement is related to business results.*

## Learning and Performance Convergence

**Learning Is Not the Outcome ... It's Emotionally Intelligent  
Leader Behavior that Drives Business Performance**



Source: Brandon Hall Group



# Positioning Learning for the Future of Work

For your business to survive and thrive, you must be aware, agile and adaptable enough to cope with changing and volatile markets. You need to have the right talent and skills to innovate, create new products and drive transformation. Whatever your business agenda

— turnaround, growth, reinvention, merger and acquisition, survival — there is a corresponding [skills agenda](#).

The real objective of changing the learning paradigm is to provide the workforce with the skills to excel in the future of

work. Brandon Hall Group's research shows that about half of organizations believe their approach to learning is positioning them to meet future-of-work requirements. The obvious question is, what do these organizations do better than others to increase the impact of learning?



50%  
of  
companies

believe their approach  
to learning is positioning  
them to meet future of  
work requirements.

## What do they do better?

- They have the **technology ecosystem** in place to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.
- They have a good handle on **what learners need** and drives them.
- They have **managers who are very good coaches** and know what their employees are learning.
- They have been able to find the **right content** in the marketplace.
- They promote **peer-to-peer, collaborative learning**.

Source: Brandon Hall Group

**The research showed five elements that gave these organizations a competitive advantage.**

- **They have the technology ecosystem to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.** Think of how long it took television to go from three networks, where everyone watched the same type of programming, to having hundreds of channels where viewers can choose when, where and how they watch. In learning, we are evolving from one-size-fits-all training to a personalized dashboard of options. Having an ecosystem of learning choices is the foundation for getting employees future-fit from learning.
- **They understand what learners need and what drives them.** This requires some Design Thinking — talking to learners at the outset. We recommend including some learners in your learning design teams. Understand from the outset what learners want and need to know so you are not shooting in the dark.





- **They have managers who are good coaches and know what their employees are learning.** For many companies, this is the heaviest lift because you can't just snap your fingers and turn managers into better coaches. There must be a mindset that coaching and feedback are part of managers' jobs. That requires clear messaging and training, so it won't happen overnight. Organizations that are successful in this area have seen it as a culture-change initiative and invested significant time and resources in it.
- **They have been able to find the right content in the marketplace.** L&D departments often have limited resources and can't possibly meet all organizational learning needs without content from external vendors. Targeting the content they need assistance with and finding the right vendors is a critical competency for L&D teams. There are fantastic content partners out there that run the gamut from hyper-focused topic areas to generalists. Once you have a system in place to find

the right content, curation becomes critical. Giving people access to 400,000 learning resources is not productive. They will drown in a sea of information. You don't want to give your learners [digital fatigue](#). You must help employees contextualize their learning opportunities.

- **They promote peer-to-peer, collaborative learning.** No matter how great the content that you develop internally or purchase externally is, it cannot replace the value of having your employees learn from each other. High-performing L&D organizations empower their employees to collaborate and learn as they work. One important channel that often is overlooked is social media. Think of it from the employees' point of view. They spend time on social media "liking" items their friends and family post on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and other platforms and they share the content they find funny, interesting or valuable. The learning ecosystem should provide learners with similar opportunities to share the best content with their work colleagues.



# Building Your Learning Ecosystem

There are many ways to build your ecosystem. There are a number of building blocks to get away from one-size-fits-all learning. And there are new and evolving approaches, such as [hybrid learning](#). Understanding your learners and their preferences helps you to choose the right building blocks for your ecosystem.



VIRTUAL TRAINING



FACE-TO-FACE  
TRAINING



COACHING



FLUIDBOOKS



VIDEOS



ANIMATIONS

## Building Blocks of a Learning Ecosystem

Source: Hemsley Fraser



STANDARD & HTML  
INFOGRAPHICS



PODCASTS



HTML MICROSITES



QUIZZES &  
ASSESSMENTS



DIGITAL FLIPCARDS



HANDOUTS  
& Z-CARDS

A true ecosystem enables your learners to choose how they learn. Whether it's your own content, third-party content or team projects, stretch assignments or other elements, you want learners to have a great experience with one place to access all their learning.

## A True Learning Ecosystem



**A user-friendly learning experience platform** available on all devices, 24/7/365



**A one-stop-shop**, thanks to the ability to integrate and leverage your own content and third-party content



**What users have come to expect** from on-demand services like Netflix, YouTube and Spotify ... in a learning environment



**Features you and your learners want**, including 'save for later,' social sharing, trending resources powered by machine learning and analytics

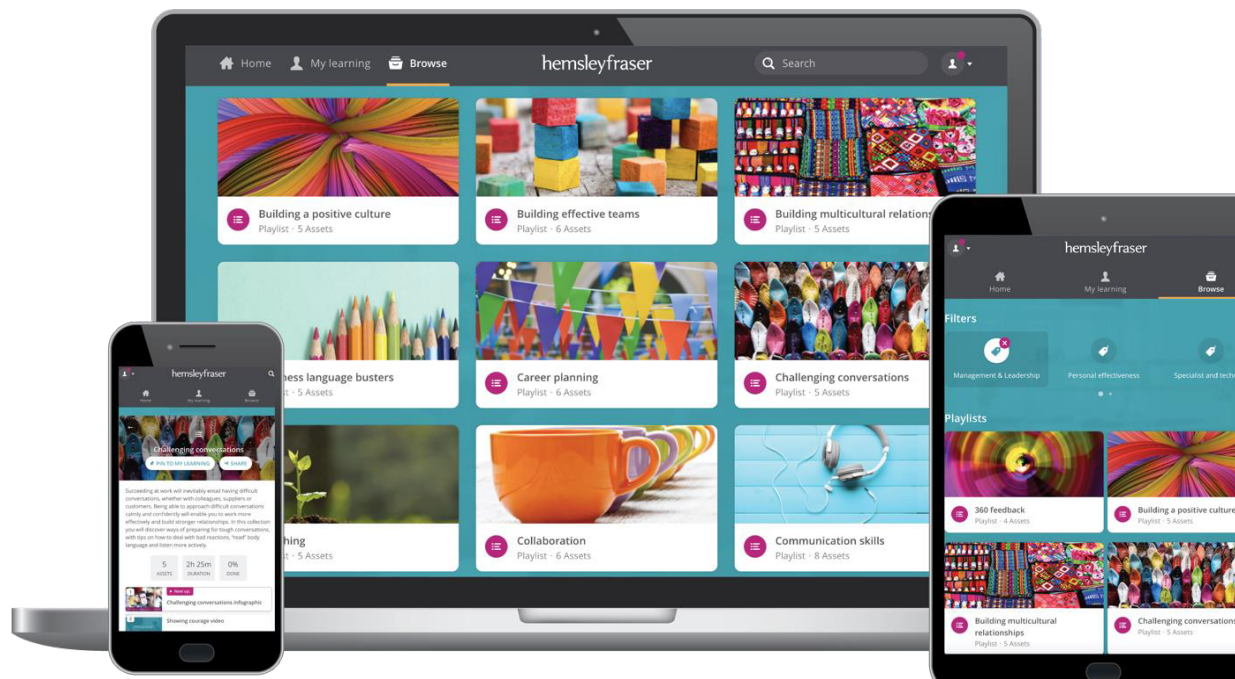


**Single-source access** to learning journeys and customized programs, with access to both instructor-led and self-study resources

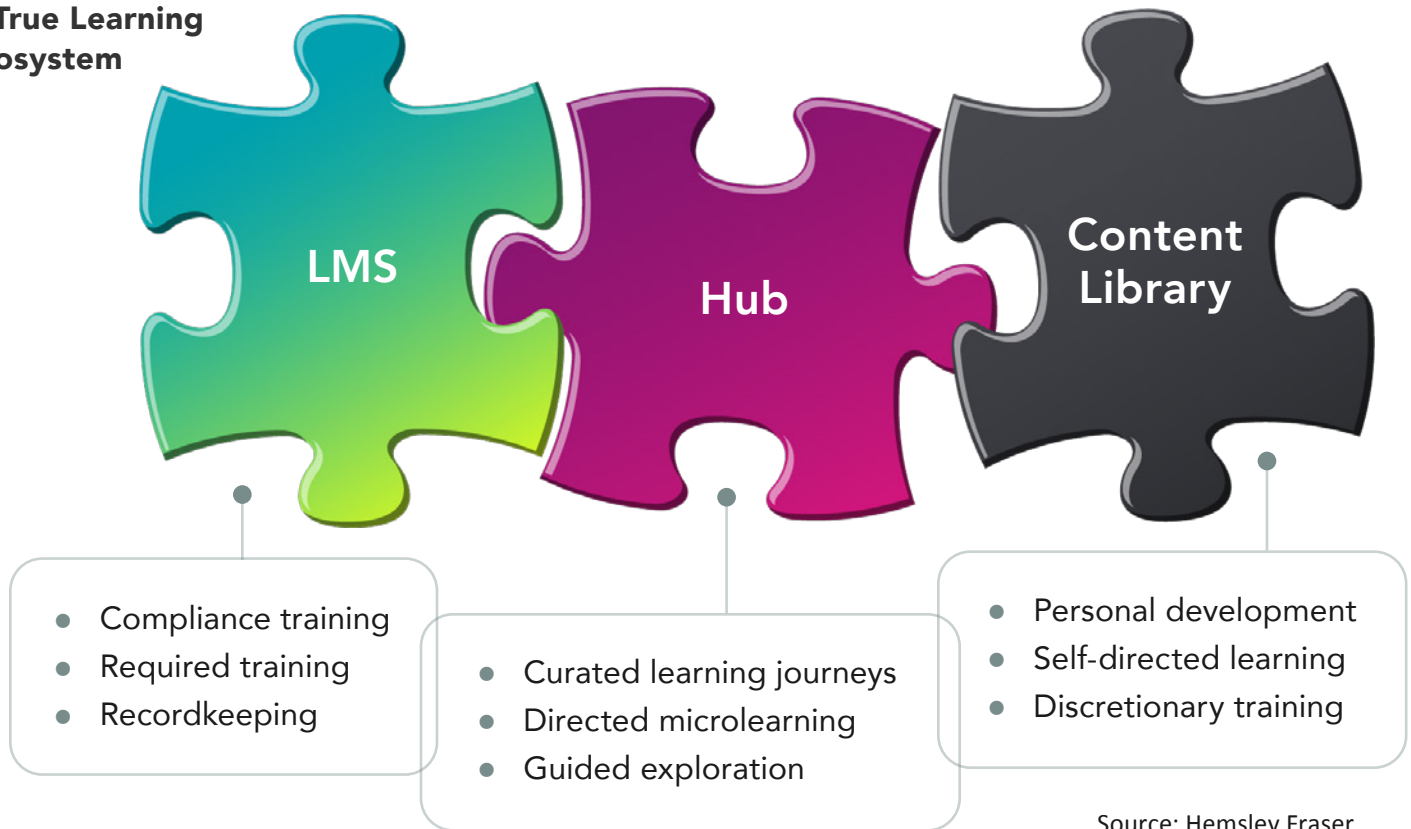


**Curated content library** with over 90 different topics and 4,000+ online assets

Source: Hemsley Fraser



**A True Learning  
Ecosystem**



Source: Hemsley Fraser

Everything we discussed about changing the learning paradigm only works with the right technology. A true learning technology ecosystem works much like the interfaces you use in your personal life. When you stop working for the day, you might turn on your Smart TV, your iPad or any other device. It is typically a user-friendly, simple experience. That is what the corporate learning experience must become.

With the right ecosystem, which usually involves a central hub or learning experience

platform, everything has been curated to match the latest accessibility guidelines, the latest adult learning guidelines and any other requirements.

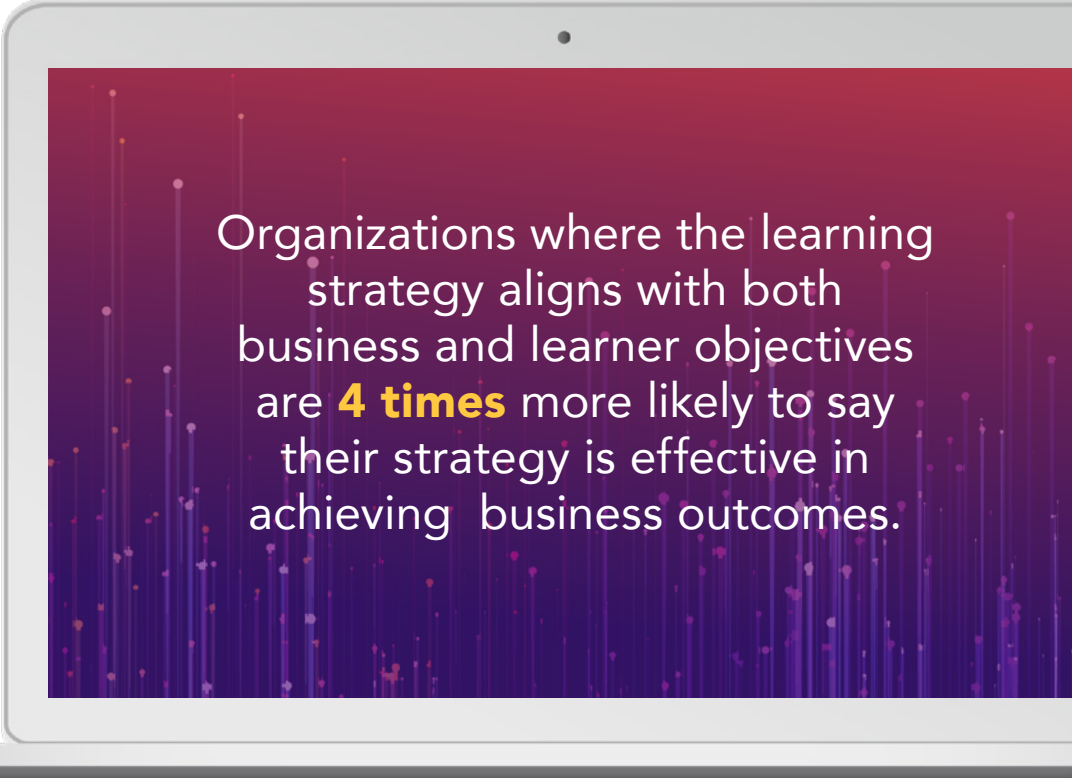
The ecosystem should seamlessly integrate with your LMS, content library and other technologies. Your current investment in traditional technologies will always have a place. You need a tech provider that can knit your traditional learning programs with new-style learning programs in a learner-centric, mobile-friendly way to help your employees become a future-fit workforce.

## Key Take-Aways

The critical question to answer as you seek to evolve is, “How well-aligned is your organization’s learning strategy with the desired learner and organizational outcomes?” Brandon Hall Group research shows there are five key steps to aligning the learning and business strategy:

### Learning Strategy Alignment

- Include business leaders/stakeholders in strategy development.
- Include learner feedback.
- Define metrics from the outset.
- Include a technology roadmap.
- Alignment drives engagement.



Organizations where the learning strategy aligns with both business and learner objectives are **4 times** more likely to say their strategy is effective in achieving business outcomes.







### **Include Business Leaders, Other Stakeholders in Strategy Development**

- L&D must be plugged into the business strategies.
- Many learning functions don't have a so-called seat at the table to understand what business leaders are thinking. You need to find ways to change that.
- As you involve stakeholders, make sure that learners and customers are represented.

### **Include Learner Feedback**

- Not just satisfaction surveys
- Get detailed feedback.
- Give learners the “what’s in it for me” connection.
- Several organizations have learner councils that provide feedback on learning initiatives as they are being developed so L&D can iterate even before the content is released.

### **Use Business Metrics to Measure Learning Impact**

From the outset, define business metrics that will help you understand how learning is driving business results.

### **Include a Technology Roadmap**

The level of investment required to develop your learning technology ecosystem may require doing it in stages, perhaps over a couple of years or more. Don't let the scope derail you. Build a technology development plan that works for your organization.

### **Understand that Alignment Drives Engagement**

Brandon Hall Group research shows that organizations where the learning strategy aligns with both business and learner objectives are **4 times** more likely to say their strategy is effective in achieving business outcomes.

## Authors and Contributors



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## About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 27 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Some ways we can help ...



### MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE

Includes research library access, events, advisory support, a client success plan and more.



### ADVISORY OFFERINGS

Custom Research Projects, including surveys and focus groups interviews. Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.



### EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Global recognition showcasing leading programs and practices with a library of case studies.



### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Virtual and on-site certification programs, workshops and webinars supplemented with research-driven assessments and tools.



#### ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.



#### SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's quarter of a century's experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.



#### HCMA PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

are comprehensive educational programs that center around a multiphase knowledge test.

## About Hemsley Fraser

Hemsley Fraser is passionate about learning, and the transformative effect that it can have on the entire workplace experience. They've been in the learning space for 30 years and for the past decade have been consistently ranked as one of the Top 20 companies in the world for leadership development, digital content and training outsourcing. And, frankly, they've never been more excited about the potential learning can play given changes in today's workforce.

Hemsley Fraser started as a public training course provider in 1991, quickly becoming one of the largest training providers in the UK. After 30 years, their business has expanded greatly to include custom client

solution creation, training outsourcing provision, international faculty management and digital training development.

Expanding their services to the US in 2006, they've since serviced over 30% of the Global Fortune 500, as well as partnered with several of the largest US government agencies. With a presence in the German Market since 2008 and the opening of HF Canada in 2019, they have further expanded their international capability working with multiple DAX 30 Index companies.

Today, Hemsley Fraser operates in more than 90 countries and nearly as many languages, with a vast global supply chain of industry experts at our disposal.

# hemsleyfraser

To learn more, please visit: [www.hemsleyfraser.com](http://www.hemsleyfraser.com)

