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**A Quickstart Guide to Establishing  
a Culture of Continuous Learning**

## A Quickstart Guide to Establishing a Culture of Continuous Learning

L&D is in the middle of a very exciting transformation, driven by new technology, the changing nature of work and an influx of fresh-faced Millennial and Gen-Z employees. Together, these factors will embolden a need for organizations to move away from a training culture to a culture of continuous learning.

And the need to do so is pressing. Rapidly evolving technology is enabling more flexible, open development models (i.e. social/informal learning) that produce enriching learning experiences, compared to static L&D models that depend on traditional, formal formats.

So, why is a culture of continuous learning so important?

A person's career is no longer the end product of an education. Instead, a career is an education itself for workers, and it has to be. The pace at which technology evolves can create circumstances in which a mastered skill may be outdated within a few years.



are concerned about  
the availability of key skills

Source: [PWC](#)

Fostering a culture that places learning and skills development at its core grants any organization the strength and adaptability it needs to overcome whatever challenge comes next. Developing continuous learning habits in this fast-changing world allows learners to shape up their skills and develop professionally by leveraging new tools to absorb the knowledge they need with learning formats they choose.

By enabling employees to take charge of their learning with the right technology (including mobile and artificial intelligence-powered tools), they can determine what they need to learn and are able to uncover that learning when needed. This ultimately makes employees more adaptable, and their organization more agile, collaborative and sustainable.

Continuous learning isn't just a top-notch methodology to keep professionals up-to-date in an ever-changing workplace, it's an essential tool for companies to stay ahead of innovation and their competitors and retain top talent. For it to work, however, continuous learning must be viewed as more than just another task or learning strategy: it must evolve into a "lifestyle" that comes naturally within the flow of work, which will take time, effort and diligence.

Once achieved, the results will be hard to miss.

## Why is a Culture of Continuous Learning So Important in Today's L&D Landscape?

The creation of a culture of continuous learning generally happens on a smaller scale, occurring within teams and smaller departments where managers can encourage and enable their employees to learn whenever and however they can.

### It enhances a company's ability to compete

As learners acquire new knowledge on their own, the chances of uncovering new ways to do things are higher, which can improve efficiency and produce better results.

### It improves employee retention

Continuous learning makes work flexible and more stimulating, producing a powerful sign that the organization is hungry to champion personal and professional growth among its employees (and willing to provide the tools and time to make it happen).

### It enhances operations

Learners grow eager to test new tools (i.e. L&D delivery formats) and methodologies compared to a conservative culture where organizational change is pushed down from the top.

### It yields more efficient leadership

Managers, alongside learners, get excited about learning and experimenting with new solutions and ideas, inspiring reports to follow their path.

### It lowers the costs of learning

Learning becomes a constant process taken on by every individual, compared to a set of formal courses and lessons established, organized and paid for by the organization.

### It makes learning learner-centric

Learning should always be about the learner, and many (especially Millennials and Gen-Zers) expect their organization to provide development opportunities for them.

## Workers are happiest when development opportunities are provided for them

69%

Of employees at mentally-healthy organizations are offered opportunities to learn, specifically to acquire new skills, diversify their work, and experience autonomy.

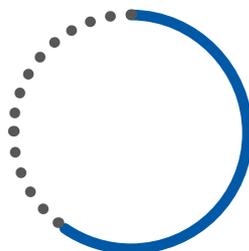
Source: *Mental Health America 2017 'Mind the Workplace'*

Employees who receive and play a role in the learning they want, recognize that their employers care about them and are less likely to leave. Creating a learner-centric environment requires managers to relinquish some control. Rather than pushing certain content, consider the daily life of an employee and try to anticipate the sort of learning they need to do their jobs.

### LEARNING IN CANADIAN WORKPLACES

38%

FORMAL



62%

INFORMAL

62% of learning activities in Canadian workplaces is informal, compared with only 38% formal learning.

Source: *Conference Board of Canada*

## Understand (And Care) About What (Younger) Employees Want

By 2025, 75% of the workforce will be made up of millennials, a generation used to helping themselves to the learning they need whenever they need it. Additionally, by 2020, 20% of the global workforce will consist of the Gen-Z cohort. Together, these new learners combine to produce a learner population keen to leverage the best learning technologies to enable their development.

They're also more than willing to play an active role in their L&D activities, including opportunities to contribute user-generated content via social and informal learning opportunities. Millennials grew up after the establishment of the Internet, and spent their school years looking up information for homework and projects online. They relish opportunities to uncover their own learning and consider professional development one of the most important elements of an organization's culture. On the other hand, Gen-Z is the first truly digitally-native generation, having grown up not knowing what life without the internet and smartphones looked like.

Fostering a culture of continuous learning requires a recognition of this healthy appetite for new employees to own their development and play a valuable role in contributing to it via conversations within a learning platform and creating content.

In high-performance organizations, employees share knowledge with their colleagues at a rate four-times greater than that of workers in lower-performing firms.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Lower Performing Firms

High Performance Organizations

Getting started with a culture of continuous learning requires shifting from static training systems to those that deliver individualized learning.

Doing so organically encourages learners to admit what they don't know and then seek out the knowledge they need on their own, which rewards intellectual curiosity.

# Achieving a Continuous Learning Culture Requires a Mindset Rooted in Learning How to Learn

Start creating it in the following ways:

## 1. SET CLEAR GOALS

Once management and employees know what exactly they can get out of a new program, they're naturally more motivated and engaged in the process. It's important for the L&D department to establish specific goals and communicate them across all levels of the organization.

## 2. ESTABLISH AN L&D PLAN

Building a plan based on the goals outlined in step one is the next step in developing a culture of continuous learning. Your plan should include courses and learning assets that reflect the specific competencies your employees want to develop to ensure they become more meaningful to each individual and the company itself.

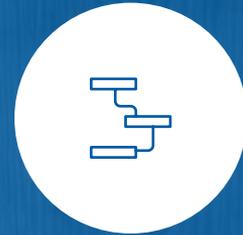
Your plan should include a mix of:



FORMAL



INFORMAL



OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN  
IN THE FLOW-OF-WORK

There should also be an action plan for how employees will use new knowledge on the job. Your plan should outline a list of activities your learners will be doing while they're learning, as well as follow-up activities once they've completed it.

## 3. CONTINUOUS LEARNING REQUIRES OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY WHAT THEY LEARN

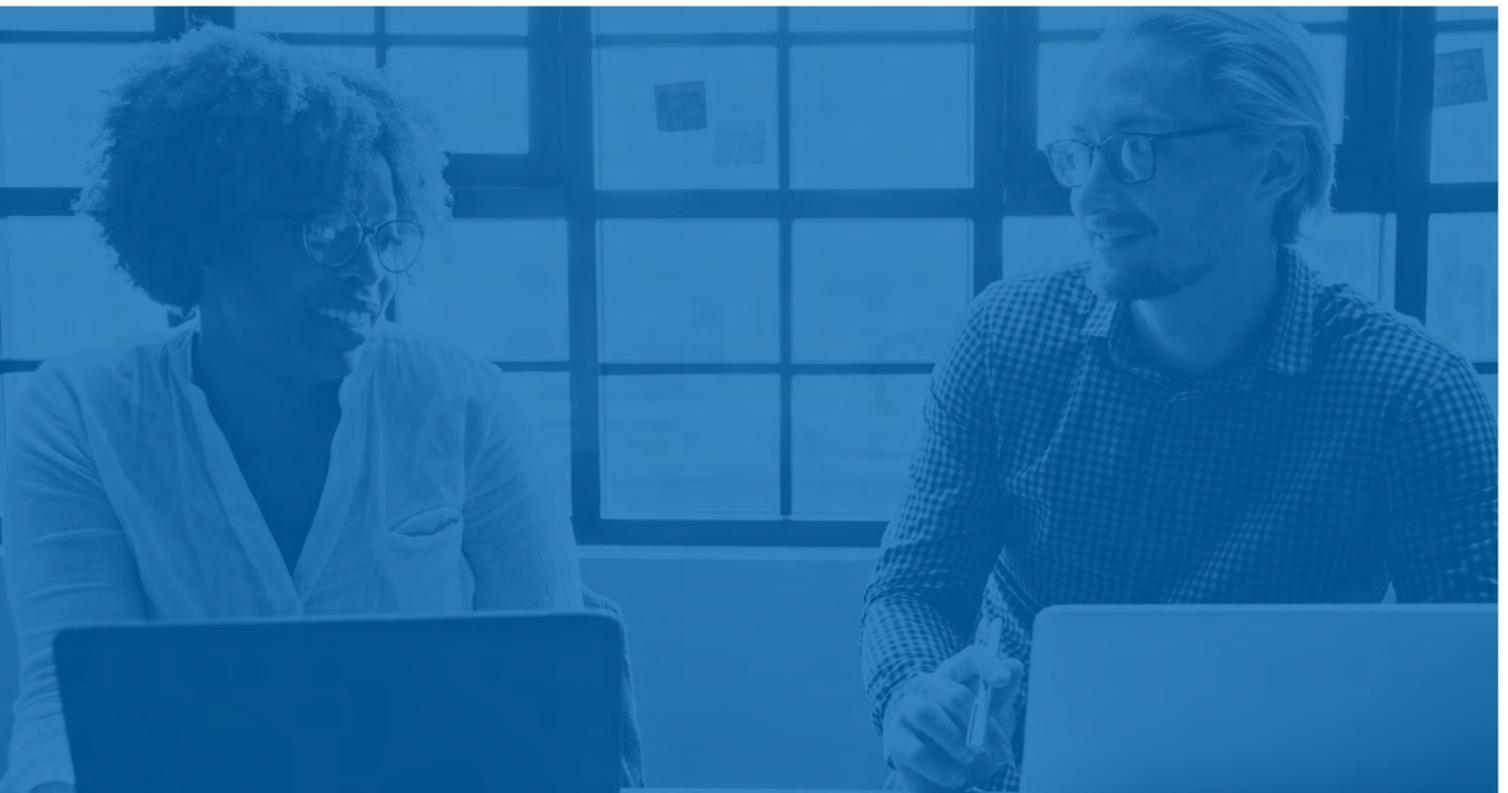
Indeed, learning opportunities should be tailored to the needs and preferences of your employees, but it's arguably more important that they're able to apply or put into practice the new knowledge and skills they have acquired. Do so, for example, by giving employees stretch assignments and encouraging them to participate in discussions via a social learning platform, such as experts asking questions or providing their own insights – this is also a great way to identify subject matter experts across the organization.

## L&D Must be a Continuous Process, Not a Periodic Exercise

Fostering a culture of continuous learning requires leadership and influence from the L&D teams, in which they support and develop a culture that encourages collaboration and regular knowledge sharing.

L&D's role in establishing a continuous learning culture includes:

- Encouraging employees to find time for professional development.
- Leading by example, demonstrating continuous learning by curating and sharing learning content on topics relevant to their jobs.
- Providing tools to support continuous learning, such as curation tools and social sharing.
- Providing continuous access to resources and tools to gather, filter and curate knowledge.
- Focusing on the learner experience to ensure that learning becomes part of their everyday role and practice.
- Making connections between individuals and groups who can help each other with insights.
- Helping people to “learn how to learn” again – the key skill for the future of work to remain agile and relevant.



## Learning Technology Can Help You Establish a Culture of Continuous Learning

### Recognize and embrace the power of learning technology

Selecting and using a learning platform that allows employees to access knowledge in the formats they're used to (i.e. social networking platforms) is key, especially for workers from younger generations. This is particularly true of [mobile learning](#). Employees often turn to their phones for information (40% of people search for information using only their phones, according to Google).

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in learning technology will

also open up more opportunities for automated and personalized learning, which will guide learners along their learning journey.

For example, tools that allow learners to [invite their colleagues to consume contributed knowledge](#) gets that content in front of the audiences that will benefit from it the most. Furthermore, AI-powered virtual coaches will learn and adapt to individual learner preferences, providing notifications of new content, and prescribe the ideal learning path each person should follow.

### Use social tools to foster a collaborative learning culture

Social learning and continuous learning are inextricably linked. [Social learning](#) tools create new ways for learners to collaborate, which supports collective knowledge and encourages team building. Employees who share knowledge and discuss content with colleagues develop a better understanding of how to apply new concepts and skills, which is also key to learning in the flow of work.

Social media has changed the way we learn, communicate and share new knowledge. Inevitably, spending all day between social media and work-related material exposes learners to new things. Social learning platforms allow learners to contribute knowledge and share it in a way intrinsically

similar to popular social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Switzerland-based telecommunications company Swisscom, completely transformed its learning strategy by [switching from a top-down, formal learning approach to an informal and social learning strategy](#) that encouraged employees to create their own learning content. Swisscom found that the content produced was more relevant, authentic and applicable to employees' jobs. Over 200 courses or learning resources were created within 12 months and, in that time, employee satisfaction with their L&D activities increased 10%. The number of active users on the company's Docebo learning platform also increased.

### Technology enables learners to own their development

In today's fast-paced business environment, learners require opportunities to close skills gaps beyond the traditional ways of content delivery and development. They demand new, more flexible options to develop their career paths, and want more self-directed learning opportunities that allow them to train in ways that work best for them. In fact, employees are more engaged when given the autonomy to pursue their own

development goals.

A data-driven learning platform provides employees with the tools they need to succeed in self-driven programs. Leveraging learning analytics is also a great way for AI-enabled solutions to deliver more definitive conclusions related to individual learning. This then plays a deeper role in guiding a learner's decision-making process.

### Curate personalized curriculums

Among the many challenges your learners face everyday, one of the most significant isn't finding information for learning new skills, but instead uncovering the right information. Indeed, the Internet has exposed us to a world of information overload, where knowledge on virtually any topic is readily available. But that doesn't always mean everything available is

particularly useful or correct.

A learning platform that allows you to curate content gives you the ability to handpick formal content, providing admins a quality control mechanism, while delivering informal, user-generated content.

## Continuous Learning is Good For Everyone

The benefits of an engaging and continuous learning program go beyond enhancing skill levels. Using the right technology also enables the organization to support talent attraction and retention efforts, which improve employee engagement and are also an incredibly important consideration for new and younger workers on the job hunt.

Continuous learning requires embracing a culture of “investing in people.” Retaining talent is a top priority for today’s companies, and developing that pool of talent ensures they are able to respond to their company’s ever-changing needs.

Aside from the financial savings, among other benefits, continuous learning is a means for the organization to show its employees that they are worth investing in. In turn, they will invest in themselves – much to the benefit of the organization.

Building a culture of continuous learning in your organization is more about adopting an inside-out approach, where employees are encouraged to teach and guide each other, rather than being led by external subject matter experts or externally-produced formal courses to drive their learning initiatives.

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Docebo is changing the way people learn through artificial intelligence. While traditional enterprise learning technologies have dictated the way people learn with formal courses pushed from the top down, Docebo’s learning platform facilitates automated and personalized learning experiences at scale in the flow of work to drive growth, organizational performance and revenue. Docebo is designed to power a cohesive L&D strategy, and has been embraced by more than 1,500 companies (5.6 million learners) around the world for its ability to satisfy multiple use cases for both internal and external enterprise learning.

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