



Creating and  
Delivering  
Highly Engaging  
Learning for the  
**Hybrid  
Workforce**

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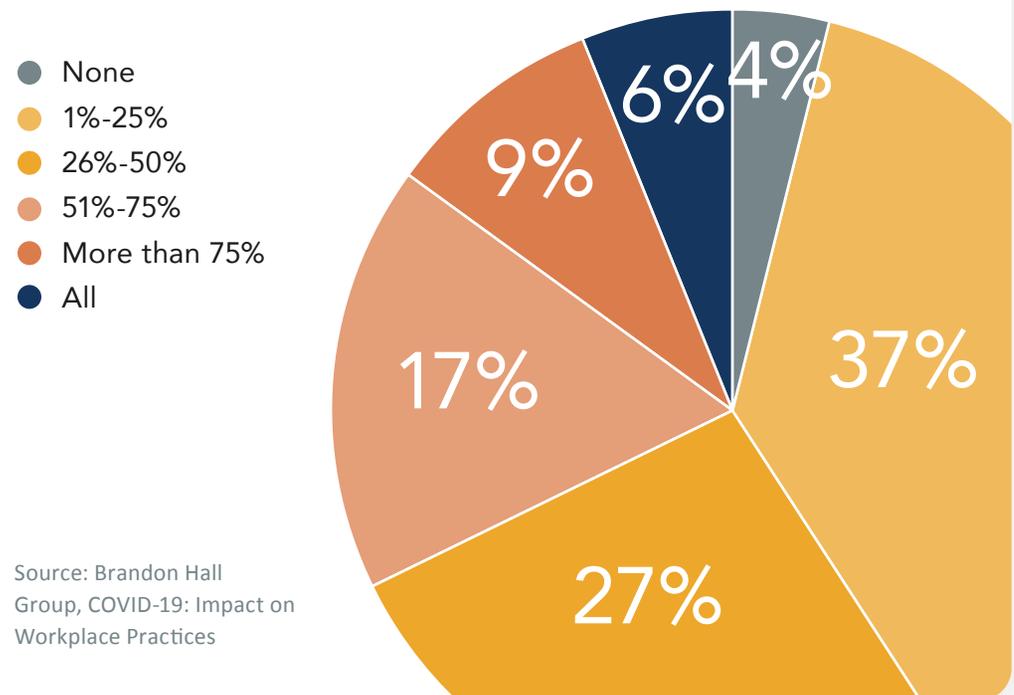
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## Executive Summary

Instructor-led classroom training has been the most commonly used method to deliver learning in the corporate environment for decades. Even as companies began to experiment with more informal and experiential learning, the majority of instruction still took place in the classroom. The pandemic removed the classroom out of the equation almost overnight, forcing organizations to come up with alternatives for a remote workforce. As the pandemic winds down, L&D teams face a hybrid learning audience with new synchronicity, communication and collaboration challenges.

The pandemic proved to be an accelerant for change. Changes that were already occurring within organizations are now moving at a much faster pace. We know that working from home is here to stay with around a quarter of the workforce working from home 3 days a week or more.

**Percentage of employees who will primarily work remotely when optimal return-to-the-workplace strategies are implemented.**



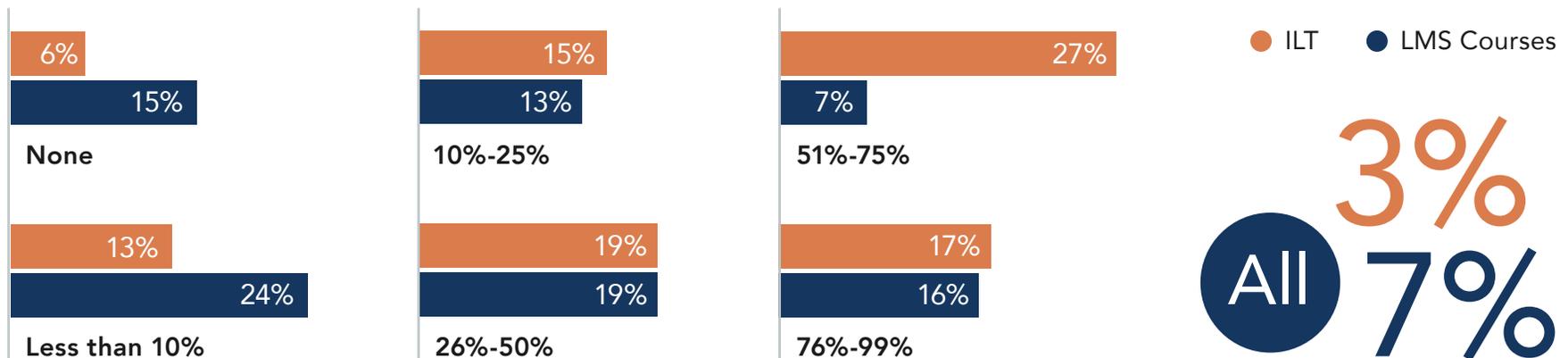
## Current State

The upheaval caused by the pandemic forced most organizations to either begin or accelerate their digital transformation. Learning & Development has not been immune. But while other parts of the organization can sit back and watch what happens with various processes,

procedures and protocols that make the business run, L&D must take a front seat. To survive, companies need a strategy to upskill their people for the digital environment. Additionally, the learning function has to undergo the transformation as well, acquiring new

skill sets that keep them ahead of the curve. However, despite the pandemic's impact, there is still a heavy reliance on ILT, with nearly half of companies saying more than 50% of their learning is ILT. Just 30% say the same for LMS delivered courses.

### What percentage of your learning is ILT or LMS courses?



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Learning for the Hybrid Workforce



## Complexities

There is growing complexity in developing and delivering learning in the hybrid work environment. This not only presents geographical challenges companies may have not previously faced but temporal ones as well. Remote workers may not necessarily be keeping the same schedules as those on-site, meaning organizations may be dealing with synchronicity issues for the first time. Rethinking instructor-led and synchronous training are critical success factors for optimizing learning.

Add to this new workforce dynamic the growth of technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning and others, and these influences are converging to make the next few years the most volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous time businesses will see.

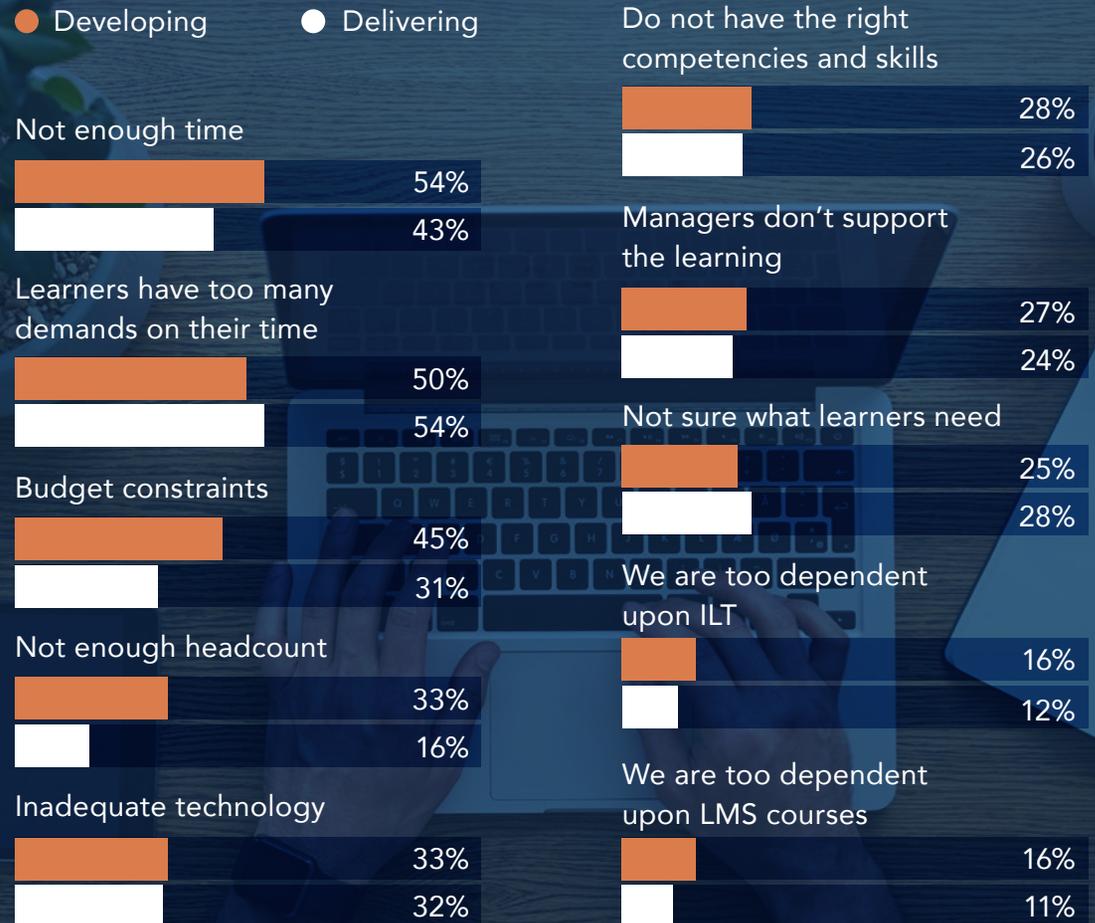
While all of this is occurring, organizations are also feeling the strain of “The Great Resignation” as talent attrition rises and new talent is hard to come by.

Despite the flexibility that a hybrid on-site/remote workplace provides, **69% of organizations** expect employee turnover to increase over the next year.

For many organizations, the L&D skills, processes and technologies that have been in place for years may not be suitable to meet these new and changing demands.



## Challenges to Both Developing and Delivering Learning in a Hybrid Work Environment



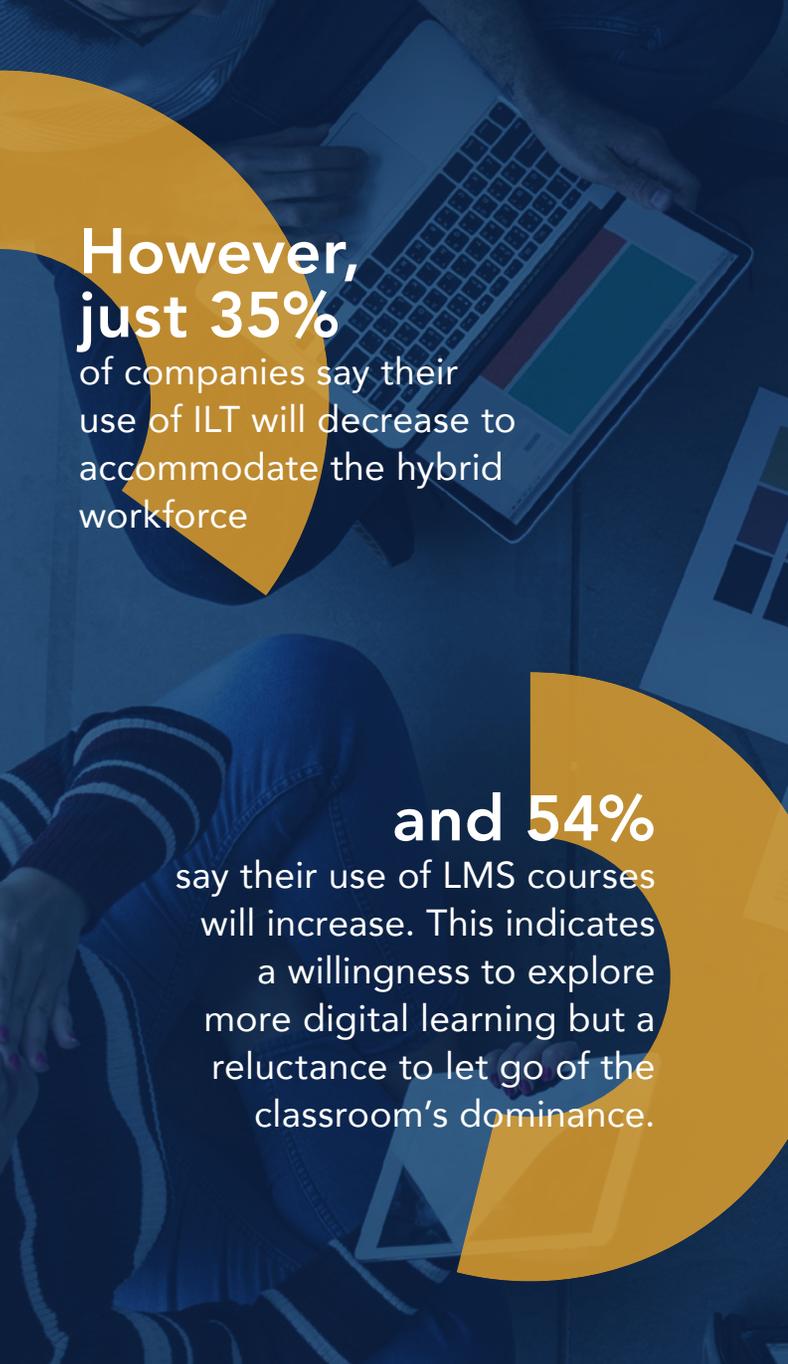
Source: Brandon Hall Group, Learning for the Hybrid Workforce

## Consequences

Companies will have to develop long-term strategies for meeting the needs of on-site learners, those who work from home and those who alternate between the two. Formal, informal and experiential learning must evolve rapidly to meet the new dynamic needs of the modern workforce. Organizations failing to consider these changes face an uphill battle in preparing for the future. As it is, currently just 36% of companies consider themselves in a good position to develop the skills the business will require in the future.

Learning paradigms have permanently changed. The in-person classroom event

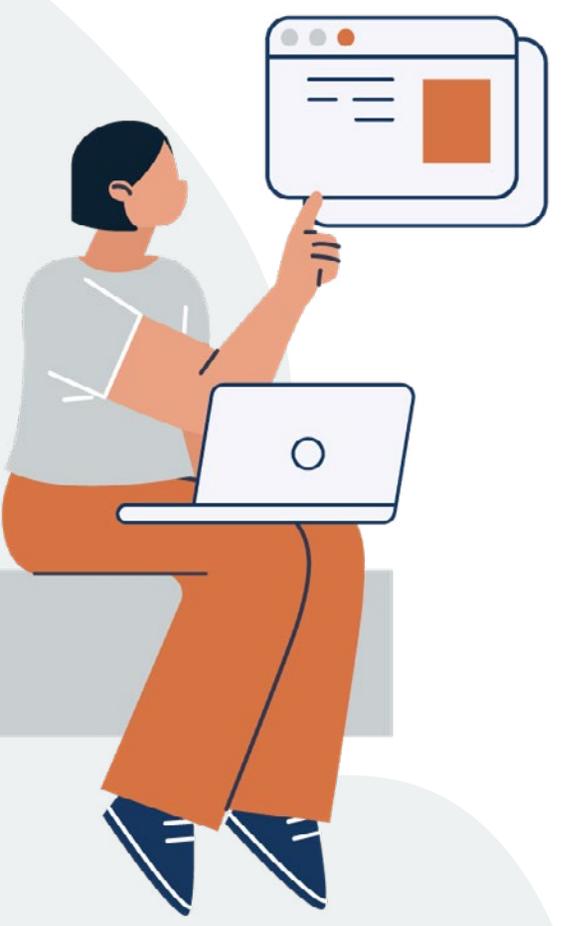
is no longer the foundation of the learning experience. Even before the pandemic, organizations were undergoing various versions of digital transformation. The pandemic shifted these plans into overdrive. As the world adjusted to new ways of working, so, too, must it adjust to new ways of learning. The good news is that the shifts in learning modalities and technologies are overall wins for the learners and the business. Learners can get more personalized, meaningful learning experiences that fit the way they work and the business reaps the benefits of continuous, impactful learning and development.



**However,  
just 35%**  
of companies say their use of ILT will decrease to accommodate the hybrid workforce

**and 54%**  
say their use of LMS courses will increase. This indicates a willingness to explore more digital learning but a reluctance to let go of the classroom's dominance.

Despite this adherence to traditional methods, organizations are attempting to diversify as they seek alternatives to courses and classes. Many informal and experiential modalities are being considered as replacements, especially peer-to-peer learning, coaching and mentoring, and stretch assignments.



## What types of informal or experiential learning are you considering as a replacement to ILT and LMS-delivered courses?

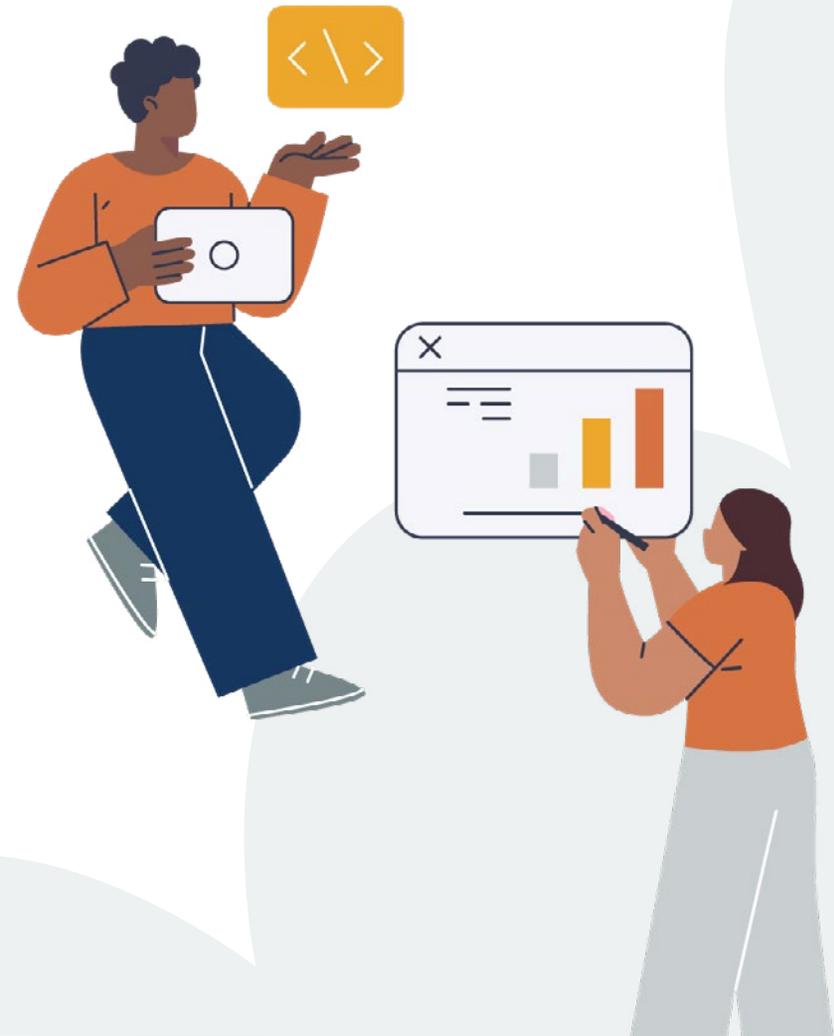


Source: Brandon Hall Group, Learning for the Hybrid Workforce

## Critical Questions

As organizations seek to develop and improve the learning strategy with an eye on the future of work, they must answer several critical questions, including:

- Do we have the L&D skillset internally to develop and deliver an engaging learning experience for both remote and on-site learners?
- Do we have the technology to successfully meet the needs of a hybrid learning audience?
- If we bring back in-person learning, should we redesign programs to include more technology-based learning?
- What learning experiences will work best when replacing previously in-person programs?
- Are we leveraging enough informal and experiential learning?



## Brandon Hall Group POV

### High-Level Strategies for Hybrid Workforce Learning

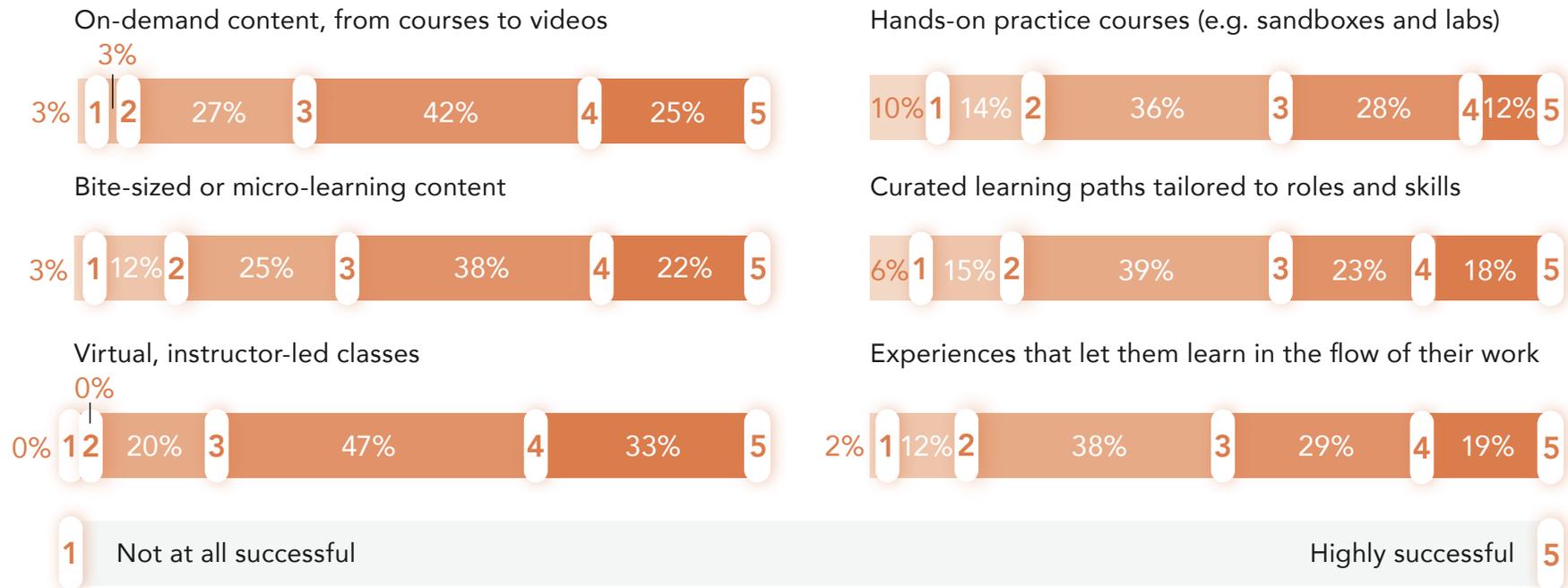
Evaluate what worked well during the pandemic and continue to use and improve those approaches.

The early days of the pandemic put organizations through their paces when it came to rethinking in-person learning. Many alternatives were tried, some with less-than-stellar results. Organizations quickly found that they could not simply take in-person content and instructors and put them in a virtual environment. Virtual classrooms require a different approach, content and skill set.



It is critical to focus on the learning elements that resonated with learners and delivered expected results and avoid things that did not make the grade. Instructors, designers and even admins got a good hard look at their strengths and weaknesses in the pandemic environment. The post-pandemic learning experience should leverage the strengths, while avoiding or mitigating the weaknesses.

## How successful were the following learning formats in meeting your learning goals for your workforce during the pandemic?



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Learning for a Hybrid, Post-Pandemic Workforce

## Ensure learning cohorts include remote and on-site learners to mitigate segregation and isolation.

One of the biggest challenges with the immediate shift to remote work is that many employees felt disengaged and disconnected. Using learning tools and technologies to keep people connected, communicating and collaborating will be critical to keeping remote staff from becoming isolated. Learning experiences can go a long way toward driving community and culture, even when people are not in the same place.



### Strategies rated as important or critical during pandemic recovery



Source: Brandon Hall Group, COVID-19: Impact on Workplace Practices

## Leverage in-person learning for hands-on, collaborative exercises, rather than delivering information.

Prior to the pandemic, in-person ILT was essentially a catchall for learning. Now that in-person time is a scarce and precious resource, organizations should only use it in scenarios where they can make the most of people being together. It would be a waste of time and energy to gather people in a room simply to tell them the information they need. Instead, they should absorb the information ahead of time and spend the in-person time collaborating and sharing, starting on the same page. Find out from learners what they missed most about learning in person and begin there.

At the same time, leverage technology that can bring remote learners into the environment synchronously. If you use breakout groups, make sure they include on-site and remote learners. It

can be a challenge meeting the needs of both groups simultaneously, but it helps to set ground rules ahead of time for how learners will contribute and communicate so no one is left out.

## Consider reallocating in-person budget (travel, accommodations, etc.) to virtual/digital tools.

Budget constraints come in as the number-three challenge in developing and delivering engaging learning to the hybrid workforce. One-third of companies underwent a reduction in the L&D workforce and 42% had a reduction in the L&D budget. Given that many companies will be dealing with at least some kind of hybrid workforce moving forward, some of the L&D budget that was allotted to in-person learning and put on hold due to the pandemic may be allocated elsewhere. Now that people have been connecting and communicating virtually for some

time now, it doesn't make sense to spend a lot of resources on travel and accommodations — at least not as frequently. This can free up resources for tools and technologies better suited to the hybrid workforce.





## Build or acquire new skills within L&D to meet learner demands.

L&D has been challenged to upskill and reskill the workforce in the dynamic wake of the pandemic. It only makes sense that the L&D function must do its own upskilling and reskilling. Taking stock of what the future learning ecosystem should look like, then running a skills-gap analysis, learning leaders can begin to identify places where they need to move, promote or hire people. Skills building next-gen content, analyzing data and better business acumen will continue to become increasingly critical.

**Which of the following will be the most important step to successfully develop and deliver highly engaging learning in a hybrid work environment?**

**61%**

Retrain learning organization

**39%**

Choose new technology

Source: Brandon Hall Group, Learning for the Hybrid Workforce

## Authors and Contributors



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# About Brandon Hall Group

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