The L&D Manager's Guidebook

10 Top Tips For The Learning & Development Manager Of The Future

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The L&D Manager's Guidebook

Hello and welcome to the L&D Manager's Guidebook!

The role of the modern day L&D Manager is challenging.

You always seem to have to **"do more with less"** and at the same time prove that your training courses and interventions are working to your key stakeholders.

This special report will hopefully help you in your quest to provide the very best learning and development solutions to the people within your business.

In my research for the report I asked 50 L&D Managers what their current challenges were and then constructed the contents around those areas.

The topics range from the growth and effectiveness of eLearning and how to increase learner engagement through to catering for generational learning needs and calculating the ROI of your learning events.

I've also included some specific questions and actions for you to work through at the end of each section.

So please enjoy the report and I hope you get a lot out of it.

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The Reality Behind The Hype

E-Learning – The Reality Behind The Hype

E-learning is in the process of reinventing modern training. Using e-learning technology trainers can now provide learners with the opportunity to learn on-demand, in a highly modular fashion, via a range of mobile devices or on a PC.

High levels of functionality can also be incorporated to enhance the learning engagement and recall process, including virtual role play scenarios and edu-gaming.

Of course we know that e-learning promises to change the world of learning, but what's the current status; what's the reality behind the hype?

Rapid growth is undeniable.

Best estimates suggest that the global e-learning market will reach around 107 billion dollars in 2015, having grown from $32.1 billion in 2010, so that's nearly double digit annual compound growth over the period.

Emerging economies fuelling forward-looking growth in 2016.

Looking at it from a more regional perspective, this report from Docebo tells us that Western Europe is the second largest purchaser of e-learning products after North America.

However, the picture is set to dramatically change and Europe is set to be overtaken by Asia in 2016, which is forecast to be the second biggest purchaser of e-learning products and services in 2016.

In fact, neither Britain or the US has made it into the top 10 countries for e-learning growth. UK's growth rate is set to be around 16.9% while countries like India, (55%), China, (52%), and Malaysia, (41%) have much higher growth rates. So, e-learning growth in the UK is solid, but by no means spectacular in a global sense.

How is e-learning impacting overall training delivery?

Given all the hype, excitement and big numbers circulating around the subject of e-learning, what impact is it having in the actual class-room?

Is it really having an impact on corporate training methods? Interestingly, while there are no signs that learners are rejecting e-learning, it certainly hasn't won learners over completely and has not been accepted as a routine replacement for traditional class-room based learning.

This research from officeteam shows that class-room based training was still the preferred method of training delivery, with 55% of employees valuing this form of training the most; whereas just 18% of learners valued on-line courses the most.

Despite this preference for face to face training over e-learning, it seems that employers are offering e-learning, (62%), at a similar frequency to face-to-face learning, (67%), suggesting there may be a little disconnect between L&D strategy and learner preferences.

Are employers pushing e-learning in an environment where it is not wanted?

E-Learning – The Reality Behind The Hype

For now possibly, but as the more digitally native millennial generation become the dominant workforce cohort, we could see a sharp rise in positive sentiment and uptake of e-learning.

For now however, growth in e-learning usage is modest but not explosive and has not yet superseded class-room based learning. Yes, this study showed that 47% of training hours last year were delivered via face-to-face learning which was an increase of 3% versus the previous year, yet 28% of training was done via e-learning which was just a 2.6% increase on the previous year.

Interestingly, the usage of virtual classroom learning (with a remote instructor) decreased by 10% year on year and so this form of e-learning is not proving to be that popular.

So while e-learning is an important addition to the learning mix and is showing healthy growth, it is still secondary to class-room based learning in terms of learner preference and actual usage.

However, as the digitally native millennials start to dominate the work-place we could see the balance shift towards e-learning.

E-Learning – The Reality Behind The Hype

What method of e-learning do they prefer?

Has e-learning reduced the cost-per-head of training in your organisation?

What % of face-to-face versus e-learning do you provide to your staff?

Are staff allowed to choose between e-learning and face-to-face options?

Something to think about...

What is the demographic make-up of your organisation?

Have you found it easier to track knowledge gain using e-learning tools than when using face-to-face training methods?

Has e-learning increased learner engagement and attendance levels?

Has your e-learning programme met its original goals?

Do certain age groups have a stronger preference for e-learning?

If you were starting an e-learning programme again, what would you do differently?

2. How To Maximise Learner Engagement & Recall

How To Maximise Learner Engagement & Recall

One of the biggest challenges that learning and development professionals face, be that in-house or consultancy side, is maximising learner engagement and recall.

In the age of the highly distracted learner it's becoming harder to engage learners long enough for them to assimilate and properly retain knowledge.

This can lead to reduced learner recall and ultimately poor learning outcomes, which will reflect badly on your training programme or organisation.

That's why progressive L&D professionals know that much more is needed than a bums-on-seats strategy to training.

There needs to be a greater focus on optimising learner engagement in this increasingly distracted learner generation, where the average person alternates between/checks gadgets up to 20 times an hour.

We can't solve this problem in such a short report but we can make some simple recommendations to help boost learner recall:

Bite-Size.

We'll just skate over this topic as we touch on this in more detail later in the report.

Research shows that delivering a one day training session as a series of one to two hour chunks over a few weeks will lead to higher levels of learner engagement, understanding and recall than if it was delivered in one day.

These bite-size training sessions, as they are called, are a great way to engage the typical distracted learner who may be captive in body but not in mind.

Reward.

It can feel like a cheap tactic, but if L&D professionals want to maximise engagement and recall, they should consider incorporating some element of reward for learning.

Yes, research from the Max Planck Institute – and other academic sources – have shown that people who are rewarded for making correct decisions learn faster.

Can you build quizzes, games, contests and leaderboards into your training programmes with incentives and reward? Done well, this will help to maximise learner engagement and recall.

Rehearsal.

It's vital that you build in some kind of detailed rehearsal and/or review of what has been learned during the session (at some point during the session) to maximise learner recall.

Research shows that learners who get an opportunity to practice and rehearse their learning during the training session forget less and recall far more information and learning after the training event.

Relevant & Meaningful Content.

It's a given for most trainers to deliver relevant content, but classroom based learning with multiple learners can inevitably lead to some dilution of content and a more generic approach.

However, it is vital that trainers adopt strategies to tailor the course and maximise the level of personalisation so the course is very applicable and relevant to each learner's individual challenges.

How To Maximise Learner Engagement & Recall

This will not only mean they are more engaged, but studies show they will actually remember more.

Yes, this landmark research study by Bahrick, H.P, & Phelps, E (1988), into forgetting, showed that learners are much better at remembering personal, relevant or emotionally salient information (meaningful content) than content that is less meaningful.

Do you measure learner engagement?

How do you ensure that learners remember and recall what they have learned?

Have you ever used rewards to incentivise learners and what rewards did you use?

Do you measure learner knowledge gain and recall?

What other factors not mentioned here do you think affect learner engagement?

Something to think about...

Do you find that your learners are distracted by intrusive gadgets and business commitments?

Did the rewards work? Did they actually encourage more learning to take place?

Are you evaluated on learner recall?

How do you get the modern distracted learner to switch off and stay focussed on your course?

Are you required to demonstrate learner recall and engagement to stakeholders?

3. Why Is Bite-Size Learning Becoming So Important?

Why Is Bite-Size Learning Becoming So Important?

It's not that easy to estimate the size of the bite-size learning industry – as it's an emerging phenomenon – but what should not be under-estimated is the importance of this new model of learning in this age of time-pressurised corporate learners.

It is a new model of learning that will allow learners to be educated across a sequence of small bite-size, compartmentalised and on-demand learning sessions that could occur over weeks, months or years.

These bite-size learning sessions can last anything from 90 seconds to about 2 hours.

Bite-size learning is becoming as important as the days when we could rely on learners to come and sit and pay full attention for a 2 day intensive learning course are long gone.

Learners are finding it harder to engage with the learning course as they are required to maintain business continuity throughout the learning session via their intrusive mobile devices.

Of course, mobile devices (tablets, phones, wearable technology), can be banned from learning environments, but there is a sense of King Canute holding back the waves.

Thankfully, there is a third way and this is bite-size learning.

This does not mean that we are about to see the death of classroom based, instructor-led learning as research by Office Team shows that on-site, instructor-led workshops are still the most popular form of training.

However, with all the good will in the world, the modern time-pressurised corporate user cannot, if they are honest, engage as effectively as they would like with 1 to 2 day corporate learning programmes. Thankfully, bite-size learning represents a 'third way' of learning that may be advantageous to both trainer and learner.

In this model, trainers might deliver a 8-16 hour course over a series of multiple, bite-size and high impact sessions of perhaps 30, 60 or 90 minutes.

This does yield more benefits than simply being flexible enough to fit around a busy executive's working life, it actually increases learning. Apparently, bite-size learning has been shown to be able to increase learning transfer by 17%, according to a 1999 paper in the Journal of Applied Psychology.

Also, the BBC conducted an in-house study of bite-size learning versus traditional longer training and found that the bite-size learners had greater understanding, application and retention than day long learners.

Additionally, this study by Sales Crunch shows that learner engagement levels can drop from 91% attentiveness in the first 15 minutes, down to 84% after 30 minutes, to 73% after 45 minutes and 64% after 60 minutes. The longer training lasts, the less attentive the learner is.

As you can see, bite-size learning allows trainers to more effectively engage with the modern, time pressurised business user, potentially increasing uptake and attendance levels. However, it also enables trainers to get access to learners in their most receptive state of mind and will ultimately lead to a significantly higher rate of learning versus longer, 1 to 2 day learning sessions.

Why Is Bite-Size Learning Becoming So Important?

Have you thought about using smart-phones to deliver your bite-site learning programmes?

Do you think your organisation is ready to accept bite-size learning?

Do you plan to use any bite-site learning interventions this year?

What barriers are there to introducing bite-size learning in your organisation?

Something to think about...

How do you manage attention and energy levels in traditional day long training settings?

Are you competitors making use of bite-size learning?

What type of content is best suited for bite-size learning?

Are certain demographics or geographies more receptive of bite-site learning?

Do you insist that mobile devices are switched off during training?

In your experience has bite-size learning proved more effective than traditional class-room learning?

4. Latest Methods To Evaluate Training

Latest Methods To Evaluate Training

Modern training evaluation is a combination of the very old and the very new. At the one end of the time continuum we have Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation first developed in 1959 which still sits at the heart of modern training evaluation.

While at the other end of the continuum we have bleeding-edge LMS technology, Tin Cap API, which promises to take training evaluation into the third dimension.

However, we should put our feet on the ground for a second and start by reviewing the modern Kirkpatrick based training evaluation systems. Kirkpatrick outlined 4 levels of training evaluation which many of you may be familiar or have seen in one form or another on your travels:

1.Reaction – what participants thought and felt about the training (Happy sheets)

2.Learning – the resultant increase in knowledge

3.Behaviour – resultant change in behaviour (measured 3-6 months after training)

4.Results - final results, e.g. increased productivity, better customer service etc...

You'll probably recognise these types of training evaluation and will have seen some or all of these training levels deployed in organisations you have worked with or been employed in.

However, training evaluation is rarely flawlessly executed, and anecdotal evidence suggests that most training evaluation, especially in SMES, does not get far beyond level 2.

In many organisations, a positive set of results from the training satisfaction survey, **(Level 1 Reaction),** can be enough to secure a seal of approval from many of the key stakeholders in the training process, hence training evaluation momentum can stop here.

E-learning technology is making it possible to fully automate learning evaluation by incorporating assessments at the start and end of e-learning programmes to assess knowledge gain, meaning **Level 2 evaluation** should gain some real traction once e-learning becomes a more prominent feature in the corporate training mix.

E-learning's ability to automate training evaluation may be one of its biggest selling points.

Perhaps the hardest stage of training evaluation are level 3 and 4. An organisation needs to be extremely disciplined in order to be successfully carrying out level 3, learned behaviour evaluation, 3 or 6 months after the excitement about training has died down.

As a result, momentum can be lost here and it may be only the most disciplined organisations that get anywhere near level 4 evaluation.

However, Tin Can API, which is a new LMS technology platform, has now introduced an enhanced and highly automated level of learner tracking which can make level 3 and level 4 training evaluation far more practical and less resource intensive.

Tin Cap API enables you to link job performance data with training data to help you understand the impact that training is having on performance. This kind of deep-level training evaluation is not possible in the current generation of SCORM based LMS, which is why in order to make more advanced training evaluation possible L&D practitioners need to migrate to TIN Can API based LMS.

Latest Methods To Evaluate Training

What level of training evaluation do you do in your organisation?

Are you expected to demonstrate ROI in order to secure budgets?

Has training evaluation and ROI reporting enabled you to secure a bigger training budget?

What level of training evaluation do you need to secure funding?

Something to think about...

What are the barriers to training evaluation in your organisation?

How effective is the training in your organisation in terms of engagement and recall?

Do some forms of training deliver a better return on investment than others?

Are certain demographics more receptive to certain forms of training?

Are there some forms of training that it is not possible to evaluate?

Do you use any technology to help you evaluate training and has it made evaluation easier?

5. Selecting A Learning Management System

Selecting A Learning Management System

L&D professionals are fortunate enough to have an extremely wide selection of learning management systems to choose from on the market today.

Capterra, the well-known business software directory, currently lists 324 LMS software tools!

However, with so much choice and with so many features to evaluate it can feel like a bit of a jungle, and working through the choices can be a project in itself. Well, try this simple road-map we've set out below to guide you through the complex process of LMS software selection:

Establish your learning and development goals first:

Clearly establish what your L&D objectives are.

What skills and competencies are you expecting to deliver via the training system? Do this in detail, making sure to clearly establish the 'must have' versus 'desirable' features.

Set your budget.

It's really not worth entering the market-place without at least a ball-park budget or else you may waste valuable time investigating LMS options that you have no chance of being able to contract with.

Go to the market.

By now you should have a budget and a detailed set of requirements that make you perfectly prepared to go to the market place

There are hundreds of LMS software comparison articles, but one of the most efficient ways to investigate software and develop a short-list is Capterra.com, perhaps the leading software comparison tool.

They have 324 LMS listed and have around 20 search filters, making it easy for you to quickly create a short-list of LMS with the right features and that matches your requirements.

Create A Selection Matrix.

It can help to create a selection matrix at this point in excel which will make it much easier for you to compare system features and functionality and make a final decision. Include some kind of scoring system to help you evaluate and grade systems.

Making your decision.

Sites like Capterra are great for developing your initial short-list of about 4 to 6 systems, but to start making your selection you'll need to make direct contact with each vendor to find out which one really is the best fit. This deeper analysis is ideally broken down into about 3 areas

Selecting A Learning Management System

1. Check to what extent each LMS on your short-list offers the 'must have' and 'desirable' features of your system and update your selection matrix. You will find that if you have built a scoring system as suggested in step 5, you can quickly rank your LMS in terms of how well they fit your needs.

2. Look at the level of support that is offered by the vendor, e.g. is it phone, e-mail or face to face support? Is it a free-phone, standard or premium phone line for support? How many hours support do you get a year? What are response times etc...? Favour systems with good support.

3. Future development. Ask to look at their product development road-map as you ideally want a vendor who will be automatically updating their functionality so you always have a cutting edge system.

You should now be ready to make a selection decision.

Selecting A Learning Management System

Do you use a learning management system to deliver your training content or do you use a more ad-hoc system?

Had you heard of TIN CAN API (before reading this articles) and its potential to enhance training evaluation?

When did you last review your learning management system and benchmark it against the market?

Has your current LMS met your original expectations?

Something to think about...

If you had a magic wand, what's the one thing you'd like your LMS to be able to do tomorrow that it can't do now?

Has an LMS made training more effective than without it? Have you got the return on investment?

Do your L&D staff find your LMS user-friendly?

What LMS and learning technologies are your peers using?

Are your L&D staff satisfied with the functionality in your current system?

Do your learners find the LMS user-friendly?

6. Why Mentoring Should Have A Greater Prominence In L&D

Why Mentoring Should Have A Greater Prominence In L&D

Mentoring as a long term means of spiritual guidance, personal growth and decision support has been around for a long time, but it's probably fair to say that it has struggled to find its place within the learning and development delivery framework.

It can be seen as a little too intangible and as a result, it's perhaps just the more enlightened organisations who make special budget provision for mentoring programmes.

In many circumstances, mentoring schemes are ad-hoc, self-generated affairs.

This has suited the environment to date, but there are crucial changes happening to the work-force which has created the perfect climate for mentoring to be delivered on an industrial scale.

And so what are these mysterious changes?

If you hadn't guessed already, we are talking about the multi-generational work-force which presents one of the biggest challenges and opportunities for the HR and management professions.

Yes, research from Pew shows that in 2015 the millennial generation, (between 18 and about 35 years old), will become the biggest working generation, bigger even than the mighty baby boomer generation.

With 4 generations working alongside each other, (and soon to be 5 with the imminent arrival of Generation Z), possessing similar but at times unique outlooks on life and work, we are seeing an inevitable rise in intergenerational tension and conflict, manifested in the rise in ageism, reverse ageism and discrimination.

However, with every problem comes an opportunity, and this situation is no different.

Mentoring is an excellent tool which has the ability to build bridges across generations by sharing knowledge, expertise and building mutual respect in the process.

And quite fittingly our modern multi-generational work environment not only has an abundance of mentors in the form of the maturing generation X and the evergreen boomer generation, it also now has a massive pool of young mentees who are now taking up challenging managerial positions and who are in the perfect career stage to receive mentoring.

It could be a marriage made in heaven, allowing generations to see the value in other generations, building team spirit, increasing cohesion and improving all-round business effectiveness.

Of course, multi-generational relationship building is just one of the important reasons for why mentoring should have greater prominence as an L&D device at the moment, the other key reason is that it has powerful, career boosting effects no matter what your age and whether you are the mentor or mentee.

For confirmation of the effectiveness of mentoring on career progression take a look at the findings of this 5 year study of 1,000 employees at IBM. They found that both mentors and mentees were about 20% more likely to get a raise than those who had not been mentored. Mentored employees were promoted 5 times more often and mentors were 6 times more likely to be promoted. Mentoring boosts career progression and development dramatically.

It's clear that due to its very timely multi-generational cathartic effects and its timeless but under-recognised career boosting effects, mentoring programmes should have a much greater prominence in L&D.

Why Mentoring Should Have A Greater Prominence In L&D

Do you have a formal mentoring programme in your organisation?

Have you ever been mentored and do you currently have a mentor?

Do you feel you could benefit from a mentor now in terms of personal development?

Does mentoring occur on an ad-hoc informal basis?

Something to think about...

Are certain demographics and age groups more enthusiastic about mentoring than others?

Have you mentored someone in the past and are you mentoring someone now?

Do you believe in the power of mentoring?

What are the barriers to mentoring in your organisation?

Why have you or have you not started a mentoring programme in your organisation?

Can mentoring also benefit the mentor?

7. Generational Learning Styles (Gen Y vs Gen X Versus Boomers)

Generational Learning Styles
(Gen Y vs Gen X Versus Boomers)

For the first time ever, we will soon be facing a work-force with 5 different generations working alongside each other: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z.

As if this situation wasn't hard enough for workers – in terms of the inter-generational collaboration challenges – L&D professionals are faced with a whole new problem as they seek to engage with an audience that has a diverse range of learning styles.

How do L&D professional engage with such a diverse audience? Well, it's about taking into account and not ignoring the generational learning styles and developing L&D strategy that resonates with each individual generation.

Now, while of course the different generations share many similar outlooks in many areas, research from Florida Institute of Technology suggests there are some distinct generational preferences in learning style that L&D professionals should be aware of when planning and delivering training:

Generation X.

They differ from Baby Boomers in that Generation X tend to be more cynical and sceptical meaning more persuasion may be needed when communicating a message than with other generations.

They are quite 'reality driven' and want to know how training will help them in the real world, that is, if they are to engage with it.

They tend to reject 'touchy feely' teaching methods. To connect with Generation X researchers advise that training should includes games and case studies and assignments with a "real world" feel. Clear instructions should be provided and trainers should get to the point quickly.

Generation Y.

They tend to be more optimistic, want immediate feedback but are not used to receiving negative feedback.

They have a short attention span, unsurprisingly are wired 24/7 and arguably more accepting of authority than generation X. They are thought to be highly visual learners and while generation X enjoy and are comfortable with technology this generation expect technology to be incorporated in their learning.

Their short attention spans means that bite-size learning might be a more favourable training option for them.

These two generations (X and Y) share a lot of similarities in their learning as they both grew up using technology in one form or another, and both generations will respond well to technology based visual learning.

Boomers

This generation is markedly different from Gen Y and Gen X in that they were brought up pre-technology and as a result tend to prefer tactile learning.

They like facilitated, instructor-led learning and enjoy taking in information using books and handouts.

Now, these generational differences are not hard science, they are broad generalisations across generations, but what we can be sure of is that there are a range of preferred learning styles in existence.

Even if you don't believe in this broad generational classification of learning style, the existence of multiple learning styles in the work-place at least calls for a more blended approach to training which combines traditional approaches to training with more modern and cutting edge training delivery methods.

Generational Learning Styles
(Gen Y vs Gen X Versus Boomers)

Does inter-generational conflict occur within your organisation?

Do you use a blended approach to training?

Do you see broad differences in the way that different generations wish to learn?

Have you measured the generational make-up of your organisation? And what is it?

Something to think about...

How much is your organisation able to tailor its training delivery to suit the preferred learning style of students?

Have you assessed the preferred learning style of your staff members?

Has accommodating preferred learning styles led to greater learning recall?

Are there any areas where a one-size-fits all approach to training works?

Have you evaluated the effect of tailored approaches to learning according to generation?

8. Generational Learning Needs (Gen Y vs Gen X vs Boomers)

Generational Learning Needs
(Gen Y vs Gen X vs Boomers)

Of course, one of the most effective ways to establish learning needs for staff is to do an individual training needs analysis from which you can identify individual training requirements.

You can also use this data to do a cluster analysis to see if there are any particularly weak competency areas which affect your organisation as a whole or which affect specific departments or demographic groups.

One interesting way to segment your work-force in order to analyse specific training needs is by age or generation as there is research to suggest that learning needs do tend to cluster according to generation. This means you could more effectively target training content to staff according to their demographic.

Millennial learning needs

It's not surprising that the thirst for knowledge and learning may be strongest in the millennial generation.

This survey by PwC titled 'Milennials at Work', shows that the most influential factor by far on why millennial accept jobs is the opportunity for personal development and access to training and development programmes. The types of training that they were most in need of and that were most valued by millennials were:

- Working with strong coaches and mentors to help them develop the skills to lead, manage and make better decisions and progress (28%)

- Changes/rotation of role to gain experience (21%)

- Support for further academic training (19%)

- Collaborating with inspiring colleagues on key projects (18%)

- Formal class-room training (6%)

- E-learning (5%)

Millennials have an especially strong need to have some experience working abroad, (71%), as they see this as vital to a successful career in a globalised economy.

This SHRM study indicates that millennials are more in need of well-defined assignments clear benchmarks and continual feedback and discussion as a means of personal development and learning.

Generation X learning needs.

Let's face it, Generation X will be approaching middle age now and will possess a slightly different set of priorities, possibly based around consolidating their corporate positions or even making mid-life career transitions.

Being perhaps the most independent generation they are not in so much need for feedback as the younger generations. Having born the brunt of recent recessions they are driven by job security and looking to build a transferable career by developing a range of skills.

Boomers

The least technologically native and comfortable of all the work-place generations, boomers, would benefit from reverse mentoring and training in the areas of new technology and its application. Also, since research suggests that boomers are particularly interested in technology if it helps them live longer, boomers could value training in technology assisted, well-being related areas.

Generational Learning Needs
(Gen Y vs Gen X vs Boomers)

Have you measured the generational make-up of your organisation? What is it?

Does inter-generational conflict occur within your organisation?

Do you see broad differences in the learning needs of different generations?

How much is your organisation able to tailor its training content to suit the generational make-up of the audience?

Something to think about...

Do older, more experienced workers still benefit from training?

Do older workers tend to be less receptive to training than younger workers or vice versa?

What is the most commonly requested training type for millennials?

What is the most commonly requested training type for generation X?

What is the most commonly requested training type for babyboomers?

Which is the most well received training content across the board?

9. The Arrival Of Generation Z & The Impact On Learning

The Arrival Of Generation Z &
The Impact On Learning

Not much is known about the new, up and coming generation that the media have labelled Generation Z. What we do know is that this is the cohort of people born after the now famous, free thinking millennial generation, but, what else do we know?

It's hard to pinpoint the birth period of generation Z, but it is thought to be the late 1990s onwards, which means the first or second batch will soon be hitting the work-place and entering corporate L&D processes.

Is there really a need to single this generation Z out?

Will they just feed quietly into the existing organisational and L&D framework?

It seems that this generation needs special attention as they are unique in many ways in that they will be the first of the true digital natives to hit the work-place.

This generation has never known a world without the internet, social media, and downloadable music; they are true digital natives.

Generation Z will consume content and information, learn and interact with the world in a different way to the generations that have gone before them and learning and development professionals need to be aware of these trends if they are to engage effectively with them in the real or virtual classroom. So what is it that sets generation Z apart from their forefathers?

According to this report by Sparks and Honey, Generation Z wants to change the world, e.g. 60% of them want to have an impact on the world compared to just 39% of millennials.

They are less interested in advanced degrees, with 64% considering an advanced degree, compared to 71% of millennials, but they are more entrepreneurial with 72% of them wanting to start a business, compared to 61% of millennials, (who were already thought to be the most entrepreneurial generation).

Being digital natives, they are unsurprisingly and unashamedly over-connected with the typical Generation Z representative multi-tasking across 5 screens daily and spending 41% of their time outside school on computers compared to 22% 10 years ago.

Of course, this quirky, always-on, independent, entrepreneurial generation will be hitting your corporate training rooms soon and you'll need to adapt your style in order to engage with them.

The research from Sparks and Honey gave several recommendations on how to engage with this generation. These included things like: talking to them in images/pictures/videos/symbols, and communicating with them more frequently in short bursts of "snackable" content, across multiple-screens.

This shows that generation Z will be big consumers of bite-size learning.

Since they love to change the world and love learning, community based, volunteering type L&D assignments with some kind of social cause at the heart of it may go down very well with this generation.

Try to ensure your learning programmes tap into their entrepreneurial spirit which means that, 'The Apprentice style', L&D programmes may go down very well with this generation too.

The Arrival Of Generation Z &
The Impact On Learning

There is no question that generation Z will have markedly different expectations than the generations that came before them with regards to L&D, which is why it's time for the training profession to start incorporating the needs of this generation into their training strategies.

Has generation Z entered your work-force yet?

How much do you know about generation Z, the next generational cohort after generation Y?

Is your training system already flexible enough to accommodate generation Z or will it need modifying?

Are you planning to change your training strategy to accommodate generation Z's learning style and learning needs?

Do you think that generation Z will be receptive to training that isn't delivered via technology? How receptive do you think they will be?

Do you think generation Z are easier to train than millennials?

Something to think about...

Will generation Z have a different management style to their predecessors?

How will you train generation Z?

How can you leverage generation Z's entrepreneurial spirit during training?

What kind of training content will generation Z be most in need of?

10. Social Learning & Social Media

Social Learning & Social Media

Let's face it, social learning is not a new thing. It has been around for decades, and the most well-known theory of social learning was put forward by Albert Bandura in the 1970s. It's surprisingly simple and confirms what most of you probably guessed in that people can learn in a social context.

This social learning is achieved by observing other's behaviour and the resulting outcomes.

Social learning has been used as a means of training and educating in corporate and educational contexts for many years, and the reason that it has become newsworthy recently is through the arrival of social media and applications that promise to reinvent social learning and take it to a new level.

This social media-social learning revolution is about to happen and L&D professionals may wish to get on board.

This raises the question of how exactly can the ecosystem of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, blogs etc... contribute to social learning. Well, how about this an as example of how social media can take e-learning to the next level.

At Georgetown University in the US, they pioneered an exciting new social learning via social media system. They had been inspired by other programmes where students re-enact historic events day by day, and they decided to use Twitter to facilitate this learning process.

All the students were given access to the username and password for Chaucerland, (the course's twitter account), and the class were encouraged to post new dialogue that wasn't part of the story, but which could have been.

This kind of social media enhanced social learning not only helped to engage the learners more, it also served to help them to think more critically and have a deeper understanding of the material.

In truth, this was the beginning and things have progressed dramatically since then and now there are range of social learning applications out there which provide a means for L&D professionals to easily construct a social media learning environment for their learners, be they students or employees.

These tools will allow L&D professionals to promote collaborative learning as they facilitate interactions between learners, between learners and educators and between learners and content. Also, with generation Y and generation Z digital natives set to be the numerically dominant work-force generation, the relevance and need for social media based social learning delivery is set to grow.

Below you can find a couple of well-known and relevant social learning tools that L&D professionals could be using to make social learning a reality in their organisations today. The first one is aimed at larger organisations and the second is more suited to SMEs.

Yammer.

This is a fairly well-known private social network used by plenty of the major blue chips which enables teams to learn and collaborate across departments, geographies and even with clients. It is a great way to facilitate social learning in your organisation.

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Socialcast.

This one is free for up to 50 users which makes it a great option for SMEs, but, you still get most of the features of the premium/pay for option. It has features like: conversation, groups, org chart, notifications, user polls, external contributors, ideas management and file sharing.

Are employees allowed to use social media while at work?

Do you have a social media usage policy and is it regularly updated to keep up with new developments?

Which is the most effective external source of social media learning for your staff?

Do your employees use social media resources for learning and is this learning measured or quantified?

Something to think about…

What is the best kind of knowledge or skills to be learned via social media social learning?

Do you actively encourage staff to use social media for learning?

Do you have an internal social learning ecosystem supported by a specialist software tool?

Has this tool made it easier to evaluate the effectiveness of social learning in your organisation?

How much of the knowledge transfer in your organisations takes place via social learning?

Has youtube proved itself a useful source of social learning content for your staff?

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