



# Training a human-centric, hybrid workforce for a new digital world

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Suit and tie. Shorts and t-shirt. Two-hour commute. Two steps and you're at your desk. Virtual and office-centric workplaces are now part of most employee's daily routine with statistics indicating that more than 70 percent of U.S. workers<sup>1</sup> would prefer to take a hybrid or fully remote approach to work. While there are challenges in managing, training, and serving a workforce that is no longer merely defined by time or space, there are opportunities to ensure that in-office, remote, and hybrid workers are personally and professionally happier, more productive, better skilled, and more committed to helping the enterprise realize greater business outcomes. Achieving this requires a differentiated learning experience that's available in the flow of work, available at all times, from everywhere and anywhere.

KPMG commissioned a Learning effectiveness research study with Training Industry to assess how learning and development (L&D) and training executives see their training and skills programs delivering value and optimizing productivity in this new hybrid world. Of those surveyed, more than half indicated that their learning programs were frequently or always effective in improving employee productivity. Approximately half also found that their organization's learning program, whether it applied to strategy, reporting, curriculum, or delivery, was continually being monitored and improved for optimal employee benefit. Yet, at the same time, nearly one in three respondents found that their organization's learning capabilities, when it came to the same criteria, were often insufficiently defined and not always applied with any systematic approach.

On the next page are some of the key findings garnered from this research study.

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<sup>1</sup> KPMG American worker survey | Summer 2022, [read.kpmg.us/AmericanWorker](https://read.kpmg.us/AmericanWorker)

# Key findings

## Organizations have fully embraced a hybrid work structure with employees working both in the office and remotely, resulting in higher employee satisfaction and productivity.

More than one-third of those who were surveyed saw significant benefits from a hybrid work approach with 35 percent seeing a decrease in training costs and 53 percent saying the model enables staff resource flexibility. Beyond productivity gains, organizations see positive trends in their ability to attract talent—as one L&D executive from the banking/finance industry stated, “Allowing for more flexible workforce hours has increased our talent pool with the hybrid model.”



Statistic: **45 percent** of employees in high-performing organizations have positive self-esteem and satisfaction working in a hybrid work environment.

## HPOs find their learning programs drive greater employee productivity while LPOs find their programs are less effective in delivering value.

Almost nine out of ten high-performing organization (HPO) executives surveyed feel their learning programs drive greater productivity from their employees. However, only half of their low-performing organization (LPOs) counterparts feel their learning efforts are generating positive productivity from their employees. This gap may be attributable to several factors gleaned from the research: first, HPOs plan to spend more over the next fiscal year than LPOs on learning and training

programs. Second, HPOs report much higher employee satisfaction than their LPO colleagues acknowledge (i.e., based on the maturity of their learning programs) when evaluating the full spectrum of learning capabilities.



Statistic: **86 percent** of HPOs find that learning programs are frequently or always effective in improving employee productivity.

## Organizations continue to invest in learning technology to fuel corporate initiatives and accelerate digitization among their workforces.

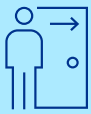
A majority of L&D and training executives have invested in a broad range of learning tools, platforms, and products for enabling their hybrid workforce. Of those planning to expand usage in the short and long term, 60 percent believe their actions will improve employee satisfaction and well-being, while 46 percent feel their organizations will gain better insights into employee performance. More than 40 percent see this expansion as a competitive differentiator, allowing everyone in the organization “to be at the top of their game.”



Statistic: **44 percent** of L&D and training executives are investing in learning technology to expedite the training of a remote and digital workforce.

**The increase in organizational growth over the past two years has not been matched by increases in employee retention, with training and learning programs also underperforming.**

Seventy-five percent of L&D and training executives say market share and profitability has remained the same or grown over the past two years (since the advent of COVID-19). Customer satisfaction has also increased during this same period. Nevertheless, many executives have seen employee satisfaction and retention efforts worsen during this same timeframe. This paints a picture where training and employee performance remains either stagnant or at its lowest levels even as enterprises are rewarded with rising financial and share value.



Statistic: Employee retention, recruitment, and satisfaction has gotten worse or is at its lowest point over the past two years, according to **33 percent** of surveyed L&D and training executives.

Employees are more satisfied and productive when organizational management supports and provides access to learning technologies.

Happy employees, happy work life. Nearly half of those surveyed ranked leadership buy-in as a critical factor when creating and maintaining a strong organizational learning culture. Ninety percent of those representing companies with 10,000–50,000 employees believe learning technologies contribute to improved employee productivity. According to one training executive when addressing the impact of learning technologies: “We have improved our onboarding process significantly... our best practices have triggered innovation... and there’s a lot of enthusiasm among employees.”



Statistic: **72 percent** of those surveyed believe learning technologies increase technical proficiency and skills in employees.



# Key steps to organizational learning growth

Based on the survey's findings, KPMG has identified four areas where L&D and training executives can adopt Learning as a Service (LaaS) and learning technologies into their organizations to build a differentiated learning culture that results in greater productivity, performance, and personal satisfaction for the new hybrid worker. As a [recent KPMG insights paper highlighted](#), LaaS providers can extend a company's learning organization in developing and delivering learning capabilities, which is essential for ensuring that a motivated and highly skilled digital workforce operates with speed and agility.

Let's look at these four areas for L&D success:

1

## Embrace the new world of work.

With a large percentage of workers moving to a hybrid model, [learning at the point of need, or in the flow of work](#) is critical not only to employees but to organizational learning leaders. Sixty percent of surveyed leaders believe the use of learning technology, which can be delivered when and where employees perform their jobs, increases the quality of service and products organizations develop and deliver to their customers and constituents. Nearly half of all HPO respondents agree that a hybrid workforce positively impacts employee satisfaction and delivers greater self-esteem. "Having hybrids allow us to do things at much quicker speeds... leaving our customers happy and satisfied," according to a training executive from a large multinational technology provider. To better provide employees with access to learning, it's necessary for organizations to evaluate implemented technologies against new technologies to find improved ways to implement learning in the flow of work.

2

## Upskill in times of rapid change.

Organizations continue to accelerate their digital transformations due to economic, political, and societal disruptive forces. To help employees perform better, produce more, and learn in the most effective manner possible, enterprises are relying on new approaches for learning effectiveness. As one respondent said, "We need to adapt to changing client needs." That is why more than 45 percent of those surveyed plan to expand their learning offerings by embracing more of the learning platforms and tools available in the market. Right now, nearly two-thirds of HPOs are effectively optimizing or managing their organization's utilization of learning technologies through ongoing monitoring, innovation, and quality control processes. LPOs know they need to keep up with this rapid pace of change in the digitization of learning tools and platforms, with one in four planning to change their strategic LaaS partners in the next 12 months. A [thorough needs analysis](#) can assess any digital skills gaps and lay out a learning strategy and plan so organizations can adapt and proactively react to the rapid pace of change impacting employees and employers.



### 3

#### **Grow training processes for future innovation.**

For learning programs to be successful, employees must feel they have the support of their senior leadership. Seventy-eight percent of those HPO respondents felt that independent and innovative thinking was encouraged by supervisors. For LPOs, this percentage dropped significantly, with less than half of those respondents having the same positive feedback. For an employee from an LPO, this belies the fact that nearly 60 percent of those LPO respondents say management still expects continuing excellence and competence from their employees. What both types of organizations do expect (nearly three out of four surveyed) is that employees are provided with the resources necessary to acquire and use new knowledge and skills. As learning organizations become challenged with implementing advanced learning tools, LaaS providers can provide additional knowledge and experience to optimize and build on existing learning processes and tools to better deliver against business goals.

### 4

#### **Build a learning culture that supports performance and productivity.**

Let's start with this simple statistic: 53 percent of those surveyed ranked employee direct access to training as a major factor in creating a learning culture. Personalized, easily digestible learning at the point of need is an earmark of an HPO. An L&D executive from a large manufacturing company says that the organization needs to "learn more about how we can become learner-centric." Across the board, research demonstrated that the maturity of an organization's learning practices aligned with the strength of their learning culture. By implementing a learning maturity benchmark analysis, organizations can compare their maturity to others higher on the maturity ladder. In doing so, organizations can learn what they are doing really well and also see what gaps need to be addressed.

# Next steps for enabling, energizing, and equipping your new human-centric, hybrid workforce

While many companies are embracing new L&D technologies and processes as a means to drive greater productivity from their employees, there still exists a sizable gap in how these programs increase employee performance and satisfaction. Some have defined and documented their processes but not applied them with rigor. Others have immature, ad hoc programs that are not repeatable or results driven. By working with an established LaaS provider, it is clear from the research that many organizations can successfully obtain and retain skilled employees who drive ongoing value for the business.

## About the research

In late 2021, KPMG and Training Industry partnered on a research survey to explore what it takes for companies to optimize their approach to learning. The study examines responses from 317 medium-to-large organizations to determine how learning contributes to improved employee productivity and organizational performance.



## About KPMG

KPMG Learning Services integrates learning into the everyday flow of work, accelerates the upskilling process, and allows organizations to offer relevant resources and programs to employees at the time of need, helping to increase productivity through curated learning paths and customized content that is personalized, relevant, and meaningful to learners.

For more information, visit [kpmg.us/learningservices](https://kpmg.us/learningservices)

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