

WHITE PAPER

**WHAT'S THE COST
OF PROCRASTINATING
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
IN L&D?**

In the world of corporate learning, innovative modalities like online collaborative learning and digital blended learning have often been challenged by an institutional reluctance to embrace the new. Even with the forced shifts due to the coronavirus in 2020, many L&D departments moved their 8 hour ILT into 8 hour VILT, rather than rethinking their approach to embrace true digital transformation. L&D's hesitation to invest in collaborative innovations that nurture human capital is not only disconnected from the larger trend of corporations viewing technology adoption as crucial to the future of business and the desires of corporate learners – it's a growing liability.

Gartner defines Digital Business Transformation as “the process of exploiting digital technologies and supporting capabilities to create a robust new digital business model,” essentially automating and streamlining processes by leveraging cloud-based technologies to drive new productivity and efficiency where available. In the context of L&D, a digital business transformation initiative might entail an organization embracing a blended learning approach, in which they transition (let's face it, not only out of the question right now but tedious to begin with) Instructor Led Training (ILT) onto an online platform. Upside? The platform can leverage data to assess if the learning is actually driving new behaviors like the adoption of new skills that can potentially transform the business. An effective collaborative learning platform can enable broader scale and on -the-job application by bringing learners together in the flow of work to share insights and solve real-world professional challenges, with the added benefit of reducing travel time and costs. This also means an easier story to tell about the link between learning and business outcomes.

L&D IS STUCK IN A NEW RUT

The data for L&D is clear: both before, and during, the pandemic challenge of 2020, there has been a consistent strong desire for both learners and CLOs to align with the rest of the corporate world in terms of adopting newer, digital technologies to improve performance and better equip employees moving forward. Intrepid's annual High Stakes Learning Survey found in 2019 that over 87 percent of CLOs lamented that they were still using ILT for high-stakes training. As a result of this reliance on old-school ILT mindsets, organizations were sacrificing scale, analysis and efficiency—among other things—to stick with a flawed but familiar method of instruction. Tellingly, 79 % of the same surveyed CLOs indicated that, in an ideal world, they would prefer to transition digitally to an online program. The Intrepid survey also uncovered that 59% of CLOs found resistance to change being the biggest obstacle to digital adoption, followed by lack of budget and lack of clarity on what a digital culture should be.



Telstra Discovered that transitioning away from ILT led to:

- **\$2.8 million in savings in just two days with additional programs in progress**
- **All sales training modules were consolidated into a single tool with transparent user activity reporting**

[Watch the webinar >>](#)

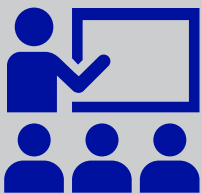
Organizational readiness appeared to be a mixed bag with slightly over half of CLOs saying they were ready to tackle high stakes learning challenges on a digital platform with the other half apparently taking a wait and see approach.

Then came COVID-19, and change was forced. But, to judge by the many lamenting articles posted online about how to rapidly convert your ILT course into a VILT course, a great many corporations have taken the path of least resistance to solving the challenges raised by the lockdowns resulting from the pandemic, rather than seizing the chance to pivot into digital transformation in a meaningful way.

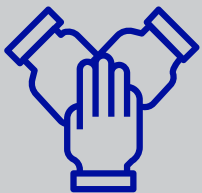
Where does the learner fit in all of this? In 2019, 2020 before COVID-19 hit hard, and in April of 2020, corporate learners indicated a high preference for collaborative online learning in general, and specifically post-pandemic, a real desire for L&D departments to keep training online rather than shifting back to the classroom. Advice from real learners to their L&D departments included comments like “This is a good time to think outside the box” and “Keep things simple. Some of the trainings have been too long and make it hard to do the training and get my work done.” And everyone is experiencing “Zoom fatigue”, meaning that straight-up hours of VILT is the worst way to convert your formerly classroom-based learning to have an impact today

2019 FINDINGS

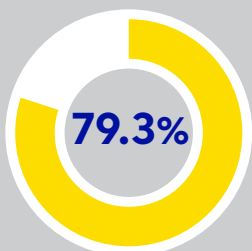
Learners want more collaborative and personal learning—and leaders want to give it to them



While **87%** of learning leaders currently use classroom learning to deliver high-stakes training, given the choice,



82% would prefer to use collaborative learning



of leaders say leadership/management skills is one of the most important business issues related to training—and this is 6x higher than all other answers (innovation, digital disruption, compliance, etc.)

APRIL 2020 FINDINGS



Learners want online learning — during the pandemic and beyond (and they wish they’d had it before, frankly)



Learning is seen as a good thing to do during this time, either because of downtime or as way to keep business moving forward



Soft skills, leadership, and “looking towards the future” are in demand



Employees want learning to remain a seamless part of work life through the next “what if” disruption



There is currently tremendous opportunity to deliver high-quality online learning both for immediate needs (WFH, Covid-19 information, well-being) and longer-term business goals (leadership, how to propel business forward, new technology, etc.)

THE SOLUTION

It's clear there are many deep-rooted barriers keeping L&D on the technological sidelines, even now. Fortunately, there is a solution and good business sense for pursuing it.

Scale, engagement, dynamic reporting, innovative social tools that surface key insights and enable contextual learning in the flow of work—we could go on, but really, when it comes to collaborative learning solutions and the boundless functionality constantly emerging, it's getting harder to defend conventional learning methods or their "shoved online" counterparts just for the sake of familiarity and ease. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, "collaboration can increase employee productivity by up to 25%, which translates into nearly \$600 billion value across commercial sectors alone." A fall 2020 [PriceWaterhouseCoopers](#) survey of CHROs found that "Lack of tools to accelerate collaboration, creativity, and coaching" was one of the biggest obstacles to delivering on workforce priorities. Extrapolating these findings into collaborative learning further reinforces the notion that digital transformation in L&D solves key business problems by boosting productivity and enhancing the overall skillset of the workforce, all in a manner that's palatable to today's learners and today's world challenges. Collaborative learning leverages reporting via real-time analysis across the learning experience to drive valuable insights into whether or not behaviors are actually changing for the better. This

functionality provides tremendous value in helping soberly determine the effectiveness of the overall L&D culture within an organization. By empowering organizations with a credible level of transparency, they can more effectively draw a link between learning and real business outcomes—and in so doing demonstrate the critical connection between learning and on-the-job performance. Given that 85 percent of executives surveyed by CLO Magazine in 2019 see upskilling the workforce as crucial moving forward, and the fall 2020 PwC survey found "Reassign/upskill workers to other parts of the organization to meet critical needs" to be an initiative 40% of CHROs are planning in the next 12 months, there is no better or more credible method available to efficiently achieve these goals.

One [Intrepid customer](#) saved \$2.8 million alone in a single quarter from switching to blended learning for their sales enablement program last year. Collaborative learning easily curates and makes available learner activity for quick reference - comments, likes, project participation, etc. can all easily be captured in reporting dashboards or a learner's social profile so the administrator doesn't have to rely on informal impressions or the loudest voice carrying the most sway. Credibility and programmatic transparency are part of the package. In the digital world, there is a "paper trail" of accountability that digital reporting delivers comprehensively in real time in addition to the myriad cost and time savings.



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McKinsey Global Institute

THE FINAL WORD

Well, there is no “final” word as the upheaval we’ve all experienced continues, but the longer an organization neglects a consistent approach to technological investments in L&D, the worse off they’ll be even if things “return to normal.” The longer an organization neglects a consistent approach to technological investments in L&D, the greater the likelihood that the three costs of procrastination will come back to haunt them. Treating L&D with an inferior fiduciary urgency relative to the larger organization can no longer scale. Human capital must align and evolve with technological progress before the disconnect becomes a competitive disadvantage. This requires a newfound consistency for CLOs to treat their human assets with the same urgency that CIOs are increasingly treating digital transformation initiatives elsewhere. In the ever-competitive corporate landscape, leveraging collaborative digital capabilities to demonstrate how learning drives better business outcomes is becoming a must. Failure to adapt spells time wasted, quality diminished and money lost as competitive advantage is sacrificed on the altar of procrastination. To reiterate an earlier point; innovative, thought leaders don’t hide from technological advances, they embrace them. In the tough world of corporate America during a pandemic, the sooner the better.