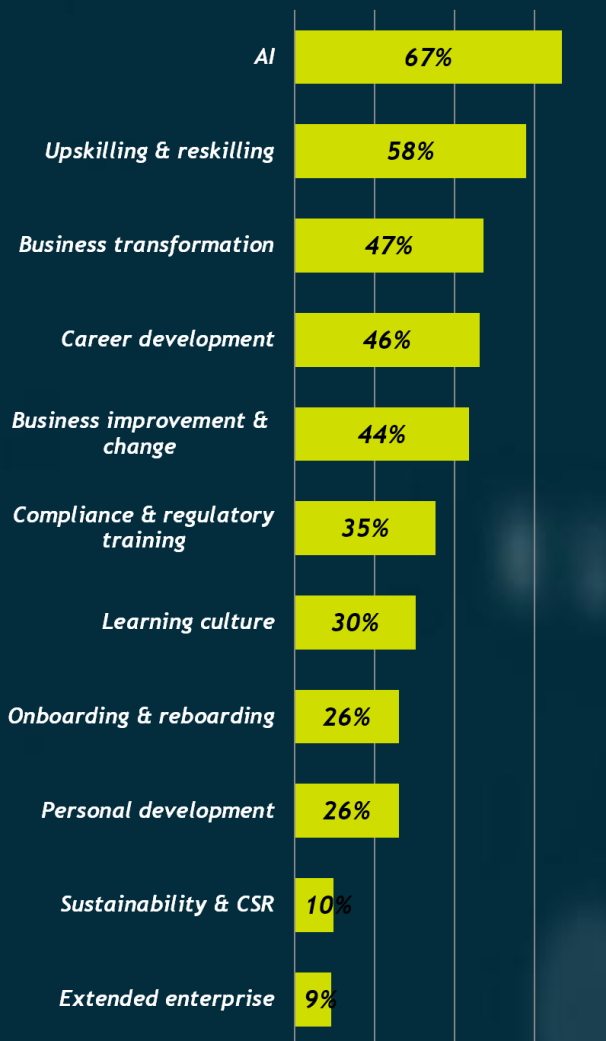


Digital Learning Realities 2026

Trends in L&D Priorities, Strategy and Execution

What are the top priorities for your learning strategy for the year ahead?



AI surges to the top of learning teams' strategic priorities

Are we seeing the decline of compliance or the rise of the need for capability growth in the fast-moving age of AI?

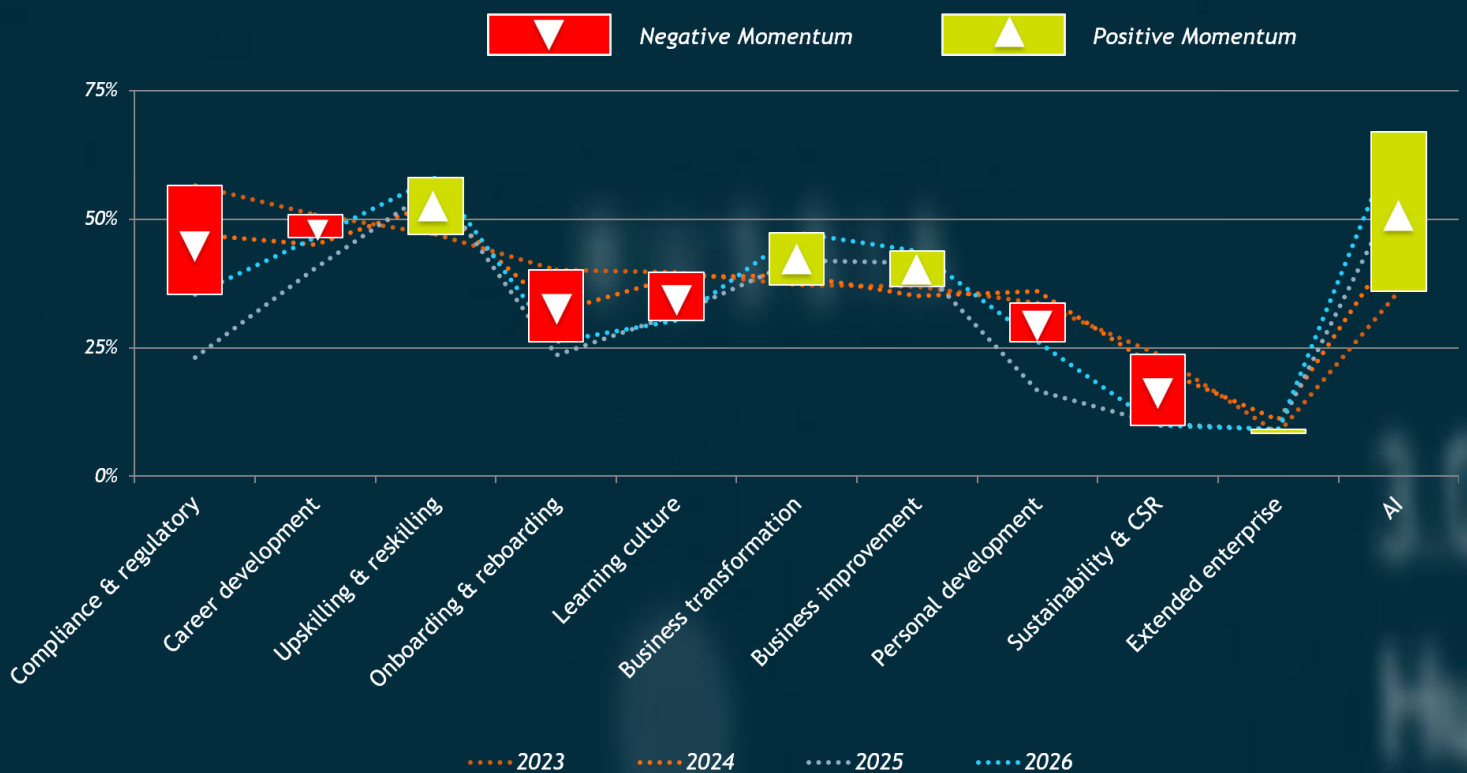
For years compliance training dominated learning teams' agendas, but that has changed significantly. What was once the primary pillar for learning teams has been pushed to the background. First, because of skills and the challenges around the availability of talent, and now with AI there has been a major adjustment in the core drivers for organisational learning. Learning professionals are now dialling into a much more value-centred agenda. When you look at the priority stack for learning, what is clear is its focus is centred on empowering personal and business transformation. Many talk about building readiness, but even that is too slow. In fact, upskilling and reskilling are an immediate accelerator, especially alongside growing workplace AI usage. What our data indicates is that this is the new normal. What this represents is the rise of learning for the new world of work, in a changing demographic and increasingly an uncertain economic climate.

The four-year trend is clear - learning is centring itself in powering transformation. It is realigning itself back to its most powerful roots: powering change.

AI, skills and business transformation have replaced compliance as the key drivers for learning teams

What our data shows is a steady and significant four-year shift away from compliance as the primary driver of L&D strategy. Onboarding, personal development, learning culture and career development have all lost momentum in learning team’s focus. At the same time, the momentum for building the workforce of tomorrow, upskilling and reskilling and empowering AI just keeps growing and growing. This is not the demise of regulatory training. Compliance is the price of admission for most learning teams and will not go away. But the momentum is shifting to the new world of work.

What are the top priorities for your learning strategy for the year ahead 2023 to 2026?



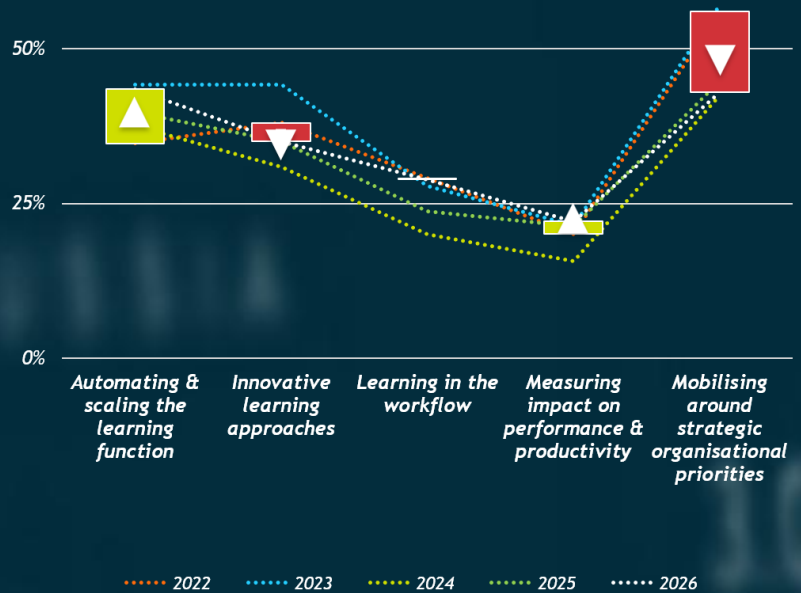
As the world accelerates, learning teams are finding it increasingly challenging to align with organisational priorities

Despite many learning teams' transformational agenda, the challenge of executing against that strategy is significant.

The five-year trend shows L&D teams are struggling. The complexity of enabling strategic learning at scale and the pace of change has weakened many L&D teams' confidence around mobilising around strategic priorities. Part of the complexity comes from L&D becoming much more reliant on the wider HR tech ecosystem. But it is also about L&D building their own expertise, all at a time when the pressures to reduce headcount are making their resources more stretched. There is a clear need for learning professionals to upskill themselves to seize this opportunity effectively, but also to find more effective ways to engage their stakeholders around their teams' critical learning needs, when organisations themselves are increasingly fragmented and time poor.

How advanced is your L&D function in executing the following?

'Very advanced' - 2022 to 2026



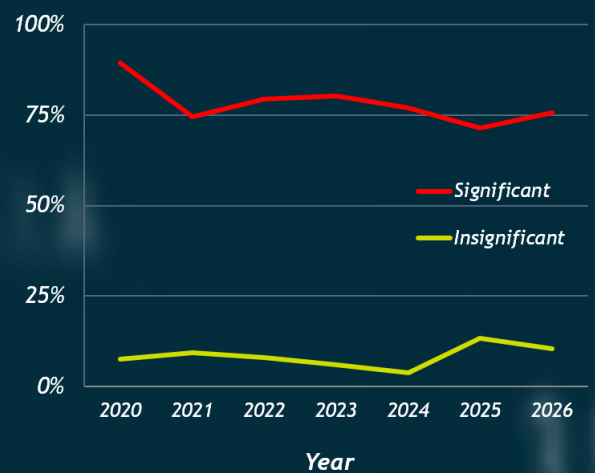
Skills gaps have cemented their position as the most significant opportunity for learning teams

75% of organisations report their organisation has significant skills gaps. Whilst this is down on the COVID-19 high the trend for the past five years has been consistent. Equally, building skills has been consistently seen as a key part of organisation’s foundations of future success and those who place skills building as a priority have dwindled to practically zero. Skills is the issue of the day for learning. But it’s not a challenge many L&D teams have risen to face.

How much of a priority is building skills becoming to the future success of your organisation?



Overall, how significant are skills gaps in your organisation today?

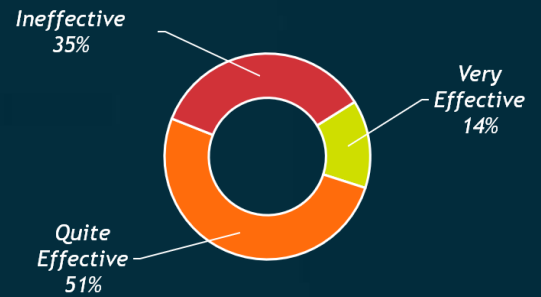


Organisational skills building continues to be a weakness for most learning teams

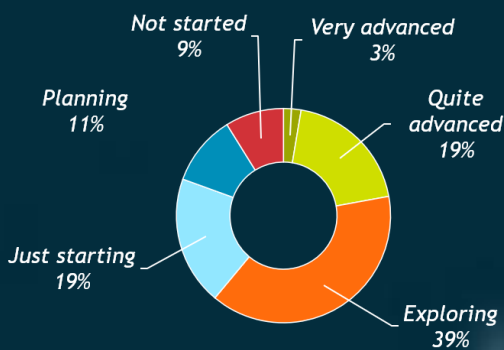
Upskilling and reskilling is a systemic weakness for learning teams with less than one in five reporting they are ‘very effective’ in building skills. In an age when skills development is so critical to organisations’ long-term success, this is a strategic deficiency which is also compounded by an immaturity in measuring impact and learning in the flow of work. Without measurement there is no tangible value. And without workflow-based learning there is limited agility - both of which are crucial for L&D in the modern world of work.

How effective is your learning strategy at delivering the following?

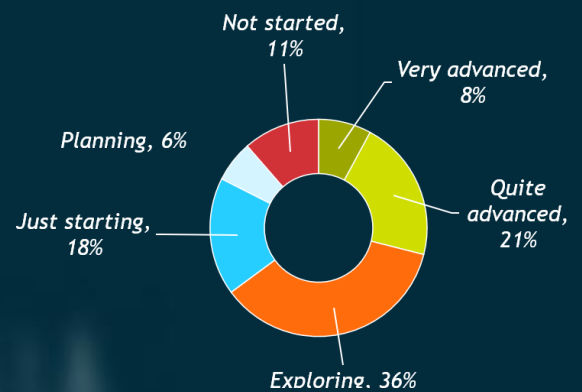
Upskilling and reskilling



Measuring impact and value



Learning in the workflow



Sources of Information & Background
As Europe's #1 HR industry analyst, Fosway is uniquely positioned to help the industry with independent research on these issues. More information and insight on our research will be made available on www.fosway.com

Fosway Group conducted the survey of its corporate research network and Learning Technologies Show conference attendees in partnership with Closer Still between February 2026 to April 2026. Responses were gathered from CHROs, Talent & L&D Directors, Managers and Learning, Talent & HR Technology professionals.

Results are drawn primarily from enterprise organisations in Europe and the survey includes responses from 334 individuals. Over 77% of respondents are based in European organisations, and over 62% have a global role.

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