

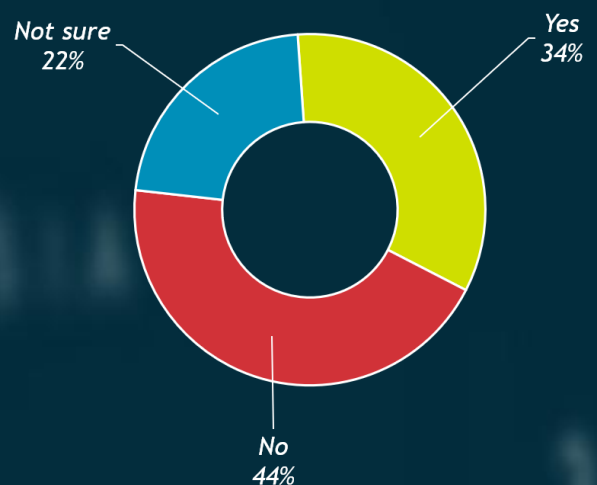
Digital Learning Realities 2026

The L&D Team - Evolving Roles and Future Skills

L&D teams believe they are not adequately upskilling to succeed in the next two to three years

With only one in three L&D teams believing they are adequately skilled to face the future over the next two to three years, it feels like learning professionals are potentially facing a looming crisis. This number has not moved over the past year and whilst those who think they aren't skilled enough to succeed has marginally fallen, that is not reflected in a growth of those who are confident about their future success. Uncertainty is growing. That's not to say that there is any need to panic. But in the light of this realisation L&D teams do need to seriously plan and develop their expertise if they want to thrive in future organisations. There is clearly a significant need for upskilling L&D and most are not preparing adequately for the future. Do we expect to see much movement in 2027? No, but this is not a time to be passive. It's a time to be proactive, build capability, reshape, explore innovation and seize opportunities.

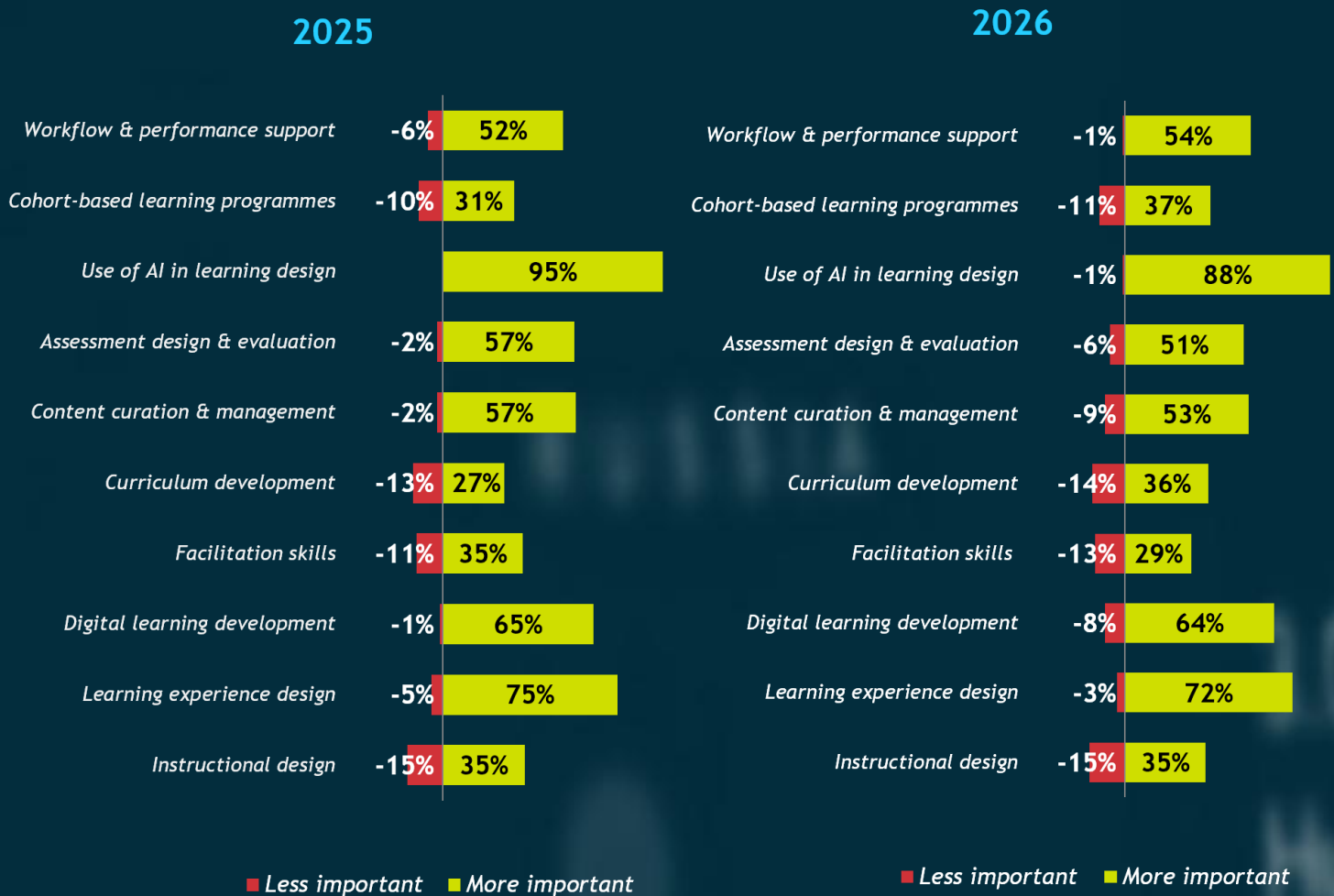
Do you think your L&D team today is adequately skilled to succeed in the next two to three years?



Learning teams continue to shift their capabilities to AI-enabled learning experience design and expanding performance support

A pattern for AI supporting learning design is a clear trend for learning teams from our 2026 survey. And whilst the number increasing their adoption of AI in design has waivered a little - this is more a reflection of this moving into mainstream rather than a tangible decline in intent. Workflow performance support also maintains a strong focus for 2026, whilst there is a real sense of the decline in content curation as a L&D capability. The advent of AI for personalisation is displacing curation as a human-centred task for the learning team, and this seems borne out in this year's data.

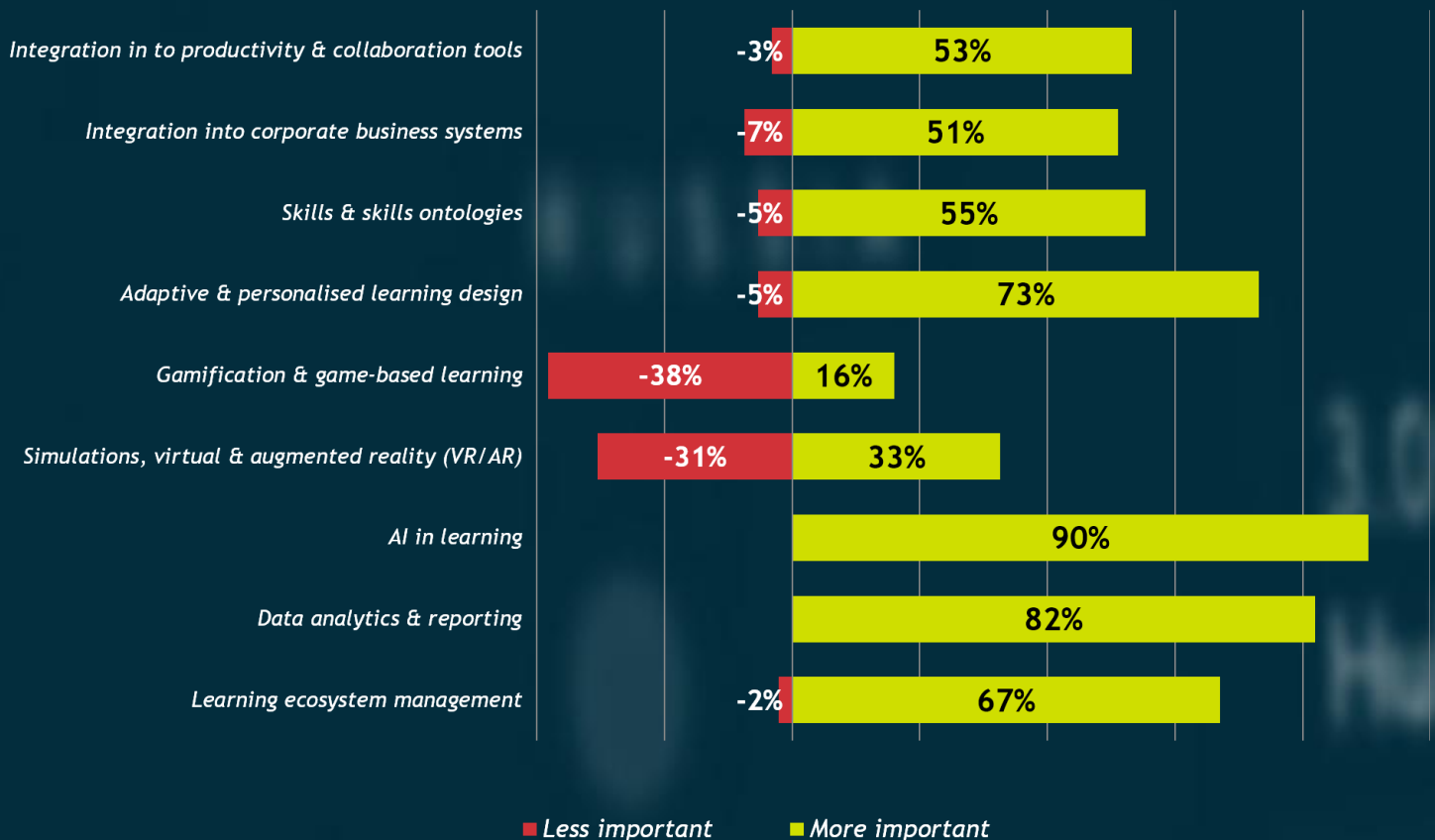
Future capabilities for 'Design & Delivery'



L&D teams are prioritising AI, analytics, personalisation, skills and connecting the learning ecosystem as their springboard for success

With the exception of gamification and VR/AR, all areas of learning technology are themes of capability growth for learning teams. As with our results from 2025, the message remains the same. Learning teams who fail to seamlessly connect learning across the employee experience risk becoming marginalised. That’s because in the new world of work it’s contextual data that informs the most valuable learning decisions. And that important data for learning resides in the systems of work, employee listening, performance, workforce intelligence and business results. Real personalisation is not driven by learning preferences - it’s driven by understanding people in their work contexts. As a result, L&D teams are prioritising building out expertise in systems integration, because accessing business data sources is make or break for the learning experiences of the future. And it’s then the use of that data for adaptive personalisation, skills development and understanding the value of learning that enables learning teams to thrive - by delivering development at the right time, on the right skills, with clear measures of success.

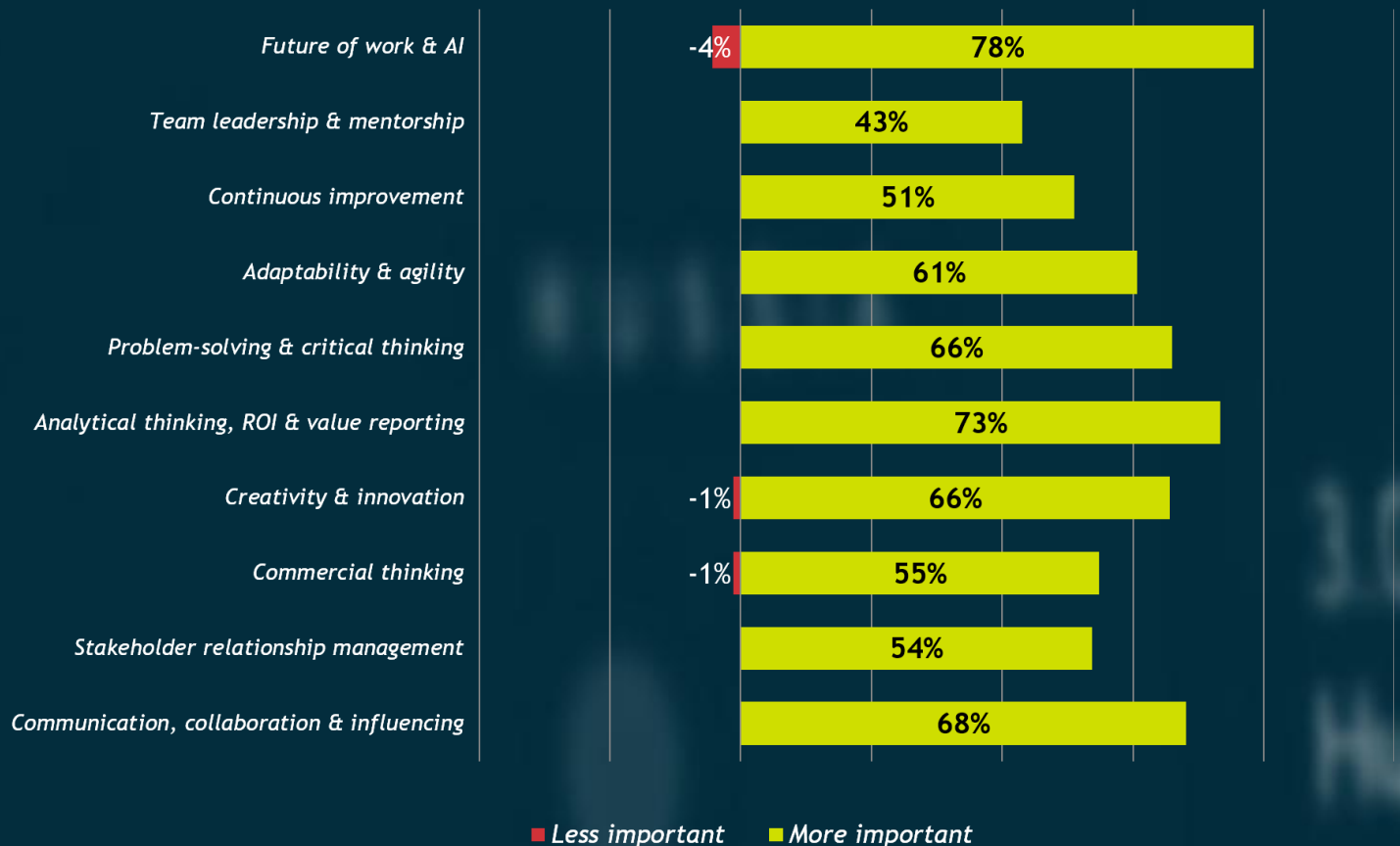
Future capabilities for 'Technology & Innovation



Increasing all aspects of L&D's business acumen are seen as critical to its future success

Smart learning teams increasingly understand that in the age of intelligence and the changing shape of work, they can secure a more influential position in their organisations if they are closely associated helping accelerate their company into future of work. This means learning teams need to sharpen both their business acumen and their influencing strategies to be successful. Core to this is the use of analytics and data to help stakeholders understand today's needs, help personalise individuals' learning journeys and prove the value of learning. Rich data not only shapes the learning experience, it is also the springboard for mobilising commitment, garnering investment and ultimately showing the speed of progress. And perhaps it's the growth expectations around the capabilities for communication, collaboration and influencing that best illustrate the interconnectedness required to succeed in L&D today. Influencing is up 11% on our results from 2025, showing that being proactive and having a stakeholder management strategy matters in today's world of work. Collaborating across functions is even more important today than it has ever been.

Future capabilities for 'Business Acumen & Strategy'



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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