Brandon Hall Group

WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE?

L&D and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic
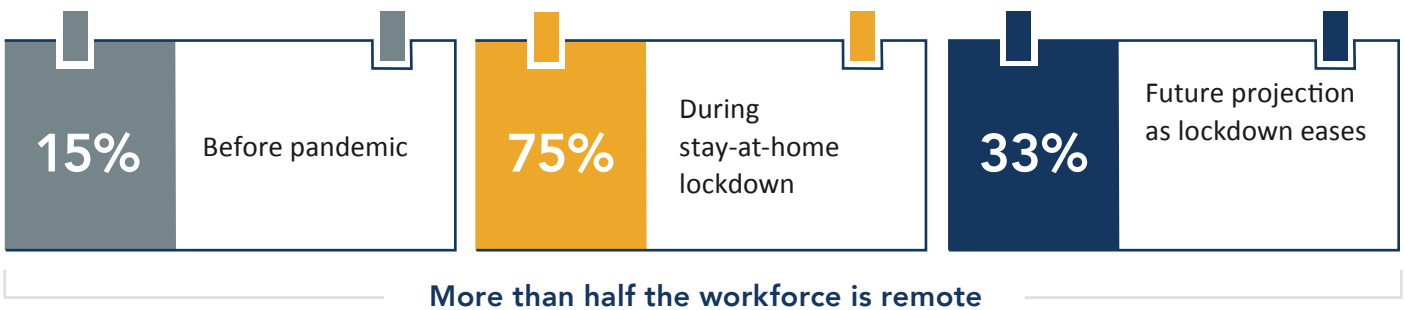
2020

Table of Contents

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic is leaving an indelible mark on the way organizations operate. Workforces have become remote, business priorities are shifting rapidly and companies must figure out how to keep their people engaged, connected and on task.

A New Remote Workplace

| **15%** Before pandemic | **75%** During stay-at-home lockdown | **33%** Future projection as lockdown eases |

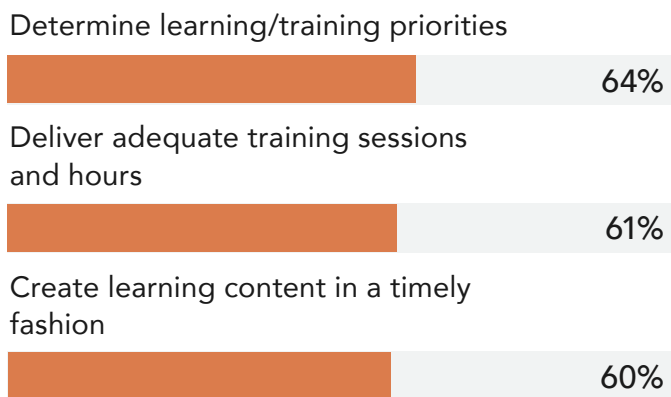**More than half the workforce is remote**

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group, Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience, 2020

Learning and Development is facing its own challenges in this environment. From a business standpoint, 56% of companies rank determining upskilling and reskilling priorities as one of the most important business transitions as the pandemic environment evolves. For many organizations, other L&D challenges also rank high among people-related functions and processes.

Important People Functions During Transition

(Rating of 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

Determine learning/training priorities
64%

Deliver adequate training sessions and hours
61%

Create learning content in a timely fashion
60%

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience
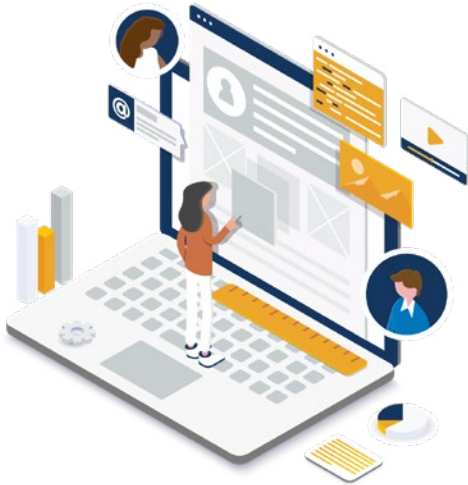
Probably the biggest challenge the pandemic has posed to corporate learning is the sudden unavailability of live, instructor-led classes. For many organizations, ILT is the cornerstone of their learning strategy. In fact, 96% of companies still use ILT to at least some degree.

96% Most organizations use ILT to some degree to deliver learning

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group

When the reality of the pandemic was settling in and stay-at-home orders were first enacted, organizations needed quick solutions to replace existing ILT learning. What we saw was a rush to take ILT content and reuse it in webinar and virtual-classroom settings. Unfortunately, this often results in less-than-ideal learning experiences. Live content may not work in a webinar and an effective in-person instructor may not have the necessary skillsets to be an effective virtual facilitator.

As a result, we've seen a shift as companies branch out into other learning solutions to take up the slack left by halted ILT. More companies are using videos and eLearning and less are using webinars, conference calls and VILT.

'Go-To' Tools for Converting Live-ILT Learning

● Now   vs.   ● April 1

71% / 38%
Video learning

71% / 37%
eLearning modules

63% / 86%
Webinars

47% / 81%
Conference calls

44% / 29%
Social/collaboration tools

42% / 22%
Microlearning

34% / 67%
VILT

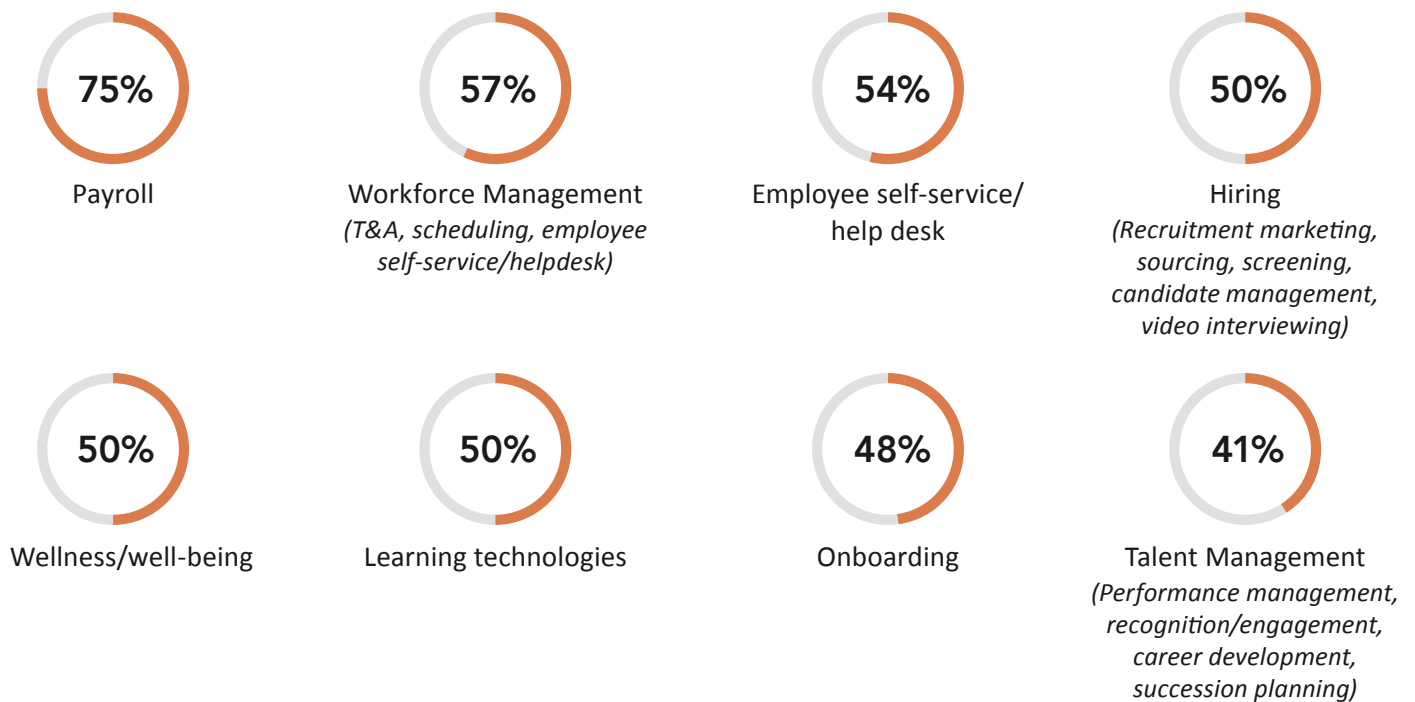**33% / 19%**
Podcasts

17% / 3%
Online games/simulations

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience

And while companies have been including more digital-learning opportunities into the training environment, many have been caught short in the wake of the pandemic and how it affects the workforce. When Brandon Hall Group asked organizations how ready they are for a remote workforce from a technology standpoint, only half rated themselves a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale of readiness.

Technology Readiness for Increased Remote Work
(4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

75%
Payroll

57%
Workforce Management
(T&A, scheduling, employee self-service/helpdesk)

54%
Employee self-service/
help desk

50%
Hiring
(Recruitment marketing, sourcing, screening, candidate management, video interviewing)

50%
Wellness/well-being

50%
Learning technologies

48%
Onboarding

41%
Talent Management
(Performance management, recognition/engagement, career development, succession planning)
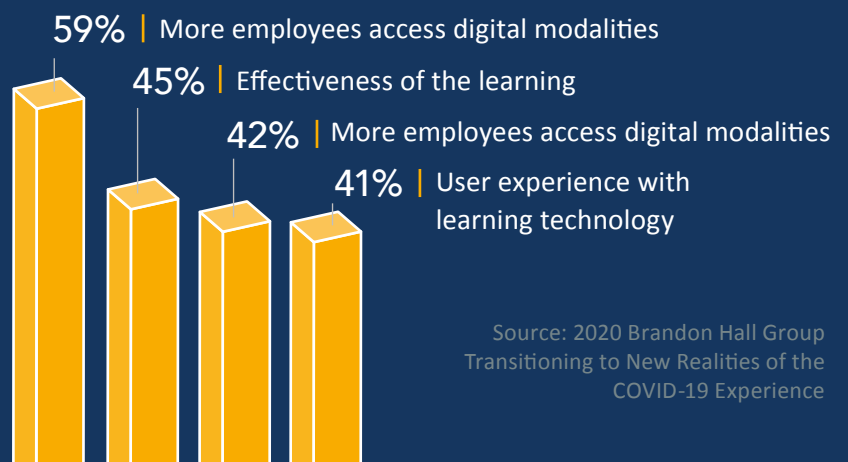
Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience

Even those companies that can deliver digital learning are having trouble with the scope, reach and effectiveness of their efforts. We asked organizations to assess several aspects of their digital learning on a 5-point scale, from poor to excellent, and the results show just how challenging the current environment can be:

Effectiveness of Digital Learning
(Rating 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

59% | More employees access digital modalities

45% | Effectiveness of the learning

42% | More employees access digital modalities

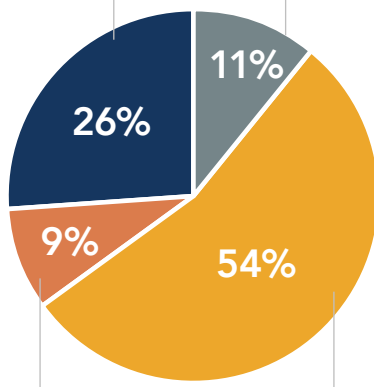**41%** | User experience with learning technology

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience

Role of Digital Learning as Pandemic Eases

Use of digital learning will decrease slightly but remain well above pre-pandemic levels

Use of digital learning will return to about the same levels as before the pandemic

26%

11%

9%

54%

ILT will be used even more than before the pandemic

Use of digital learning will remain the same or perhaps increase

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience

companies need leaders who can show the way forward through the pandemic environment — and beyond.

Learning Priorities as Pandemic Eases
(Rating of 4 or 5 on 5-point scale)

Training in skills needed now

71%

Development of existing leaders

69%

Coaching and mentoring

67%

Emotional intelligence

64%

Leadership specific to teams

63%

Longer-term competency and skills development

63%

Team development

62%

High-potential leader development

62%

Coping skills

62%

Diversity and inclusion

62%

Unconscious-bias awareness

59%

Technical skills

59%

Compliance training

54%

Sales

52%

Source: 2020 Brandon Hall Group Transitioning to New Realities of the COVID-19 Experience

One thing is clear, however. This situation will permanently increase the amount of digital learning that is occurring. For 80% of companies, their post-pandemic use of digital learning will remain higher than it was at the beginning of the year, even if it drops from current levels.

The pandemic has not only shifted priorities for how learning is being delivered, but also the priorities around what learning is being delivered. There is a clear focus on the skills people need right now as business focus has shifted, but there's also a renewed interest in leadership development. Companies are prioritizing developing high-potential leaders and fostering team leadership. Leadership skills such as emotional intelligence are also critical as

The Way Forward

It is critical that organizations take stock of their learning strategy in this new climate. They need to determine their priorities for what they want learning to deliver, how it will be delivered and to whom. One aspect is crystal clear, however: technology is how to make it happen. Whether it is adding a new functionality, replacing a poorly performing functionality or making new use of what is already available, a re-examination of the learning-technology ecosystem is required to ensure the organization has the tools required to meet the needs of the business.
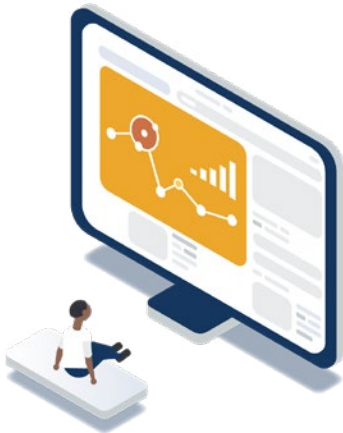
As companies seek to drive short-term performance, there are some key considerations:

Focus on Employee Well-Being.

The transition to the "new normal" remains stressful for many employees and there could be multiple transitions as organizations recover from the loss of business and other consequences of the pandemic.

Prepare Instructors and Learners for Sustained Remote Learning.

For years, organizations over-relied on instructor-led training (ILT). Then came COVID-19 and digital learning surged. People adapted well and 65% of organizations say their employees are ready to continue with heavy digital learning. However, that does not mean instructors' live-training skills are easily transferable without additional preparation. And some learners, especially digital immigrants who relied on ILT for decades, may need more orientation. In the rush to create learning assets, take the time to offer some "pre-learning" to lay a strong foundation for increased and sustained digital learning.

Focus Training on Critical Skills/ Competencies Needed Now.

It's important to remember that employees have been under unprecedented stress. Health and financial concerns will not instantly disappear and people's capacity to learn new skills on top of managing their jobs and personal lives will be limited. Certainly, some training will be necessary, but in the short term we recommend limiting it to the essential skills required to meet immediate needs. (This, of course, does not include mandatory compliance training.)

For the longer term, there are several things to consider:

Build a Growth Mindset.

In a growth mindset, people believe their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Talent is just a foundation. This creates a focus on learning and resilience that drives ongoing improvement in even the most difficult conversations. In the short term, you may have limited resources available for strategic competency development such as this, but a growth mindset will also provide more impact than individual skills development because it is relevant to the entire workforce and helps build a strong workplace culture.

Build a Team Mindset.

Like a growth mindset, a team mindset is a competency that helps build a strong workplace culture. The idea is to leverage the myriad skills, competencies and abilities in cross-functional teams to drive business performance. The mindset is: "We *can* do it better together and we *will* do it better together."

Invest in Team-Development and Team-Leadership Training.

More than 70% of organizations perform more than half of their work through teams; 52% said team-driven work will increase moderately or greatly in the next two years, according to our research. However, 79% of employers said they are not investing enough time or money in team development. With businesses under unprecedented stress and disruption, increasing the competency of teams to drive business results is a wise and safe investment to leverage complementary talent. Team-leadership training, which is also lacking, should

be prioritized. Any team member can take a leadership role at any time, depending on the project and their skills and competencies.

Build Learning Agility.

Learning agility is the ability and willingness to learn from experience and then apply that learning to perform successfully in new situations or conditions. People who are learning agile:

> Seek experiences to learn from
> Enjoy complex problems and challenges associated with new experiences

Learning-agile individuals excel at absorbing information from their experiences, then extrapolating from them to navigate unfamiliar situations. They are often described as flexible, resourceful, adaptable and thoughtful. In short, they are an ideal fit for mission-critical roles. Having agile learners is critical for organizations to build capacity for change and evolution as business needs progress. It is also essential for increasing internal mobility in critical roles.

Build Digital Skills.

The use of digital and virtual tools increased substantially almost overnight because of the pandemic. There is no going back. Digital natives either have the digital workplace skills they need or are adept at learning. Digital immigrants, typically more veteran workers, must have these skills to optimize performance as digital transformation progresses. To have a performance-driven culture, workers of all generations and backgrounds need at least basic competency in digital skills, from managing data, to moving between multiple devices, to internet research, to basic data security and digital troubleshooting.

Authors and Contributors

David Wentworth (david.wentworth@brandonhall.com) wrote this report. He is Principal Learning Analyst at Brandon Hall Group, focusing on all aspects of learning and the technology that supports it. David has been in the human capital field since 2005 and joined Brandon Hall Group as senior learning analyst in early 2012.

Mike Cooke (mike.cooke@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is CEO and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Mike has more than 20 years' experience in human capital management and the research, software and technology industries. Before running Brandon Hall Group, Mike was co-founder of AC Growth, a research and consulting firm, and VP and General Manager of Field Operations at Bersin & Associates, a global analyst and consulting services firm in all areas of HCM.

Rachel Cooke (rachel.cooke@brandonhall.com) is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 15 years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.
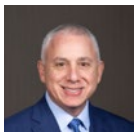
Michael Rochelle (michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. He is Chief Strategy Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Michael leads a wide range of advisory support and strategic engagements for Fortune 1000 and small-to medium-sized organizations as well as leading and emerging solution providers across the HCM industry. Michael has more than 30 years' experience in HR, IT, sales, marketing, business development, and strategic and financial planning in Fortune 500 and venture-backed start-up organizations.

Richard Pachter (richard.pachter@brandonhall.com) edited this report. He is the Content Manager at Brandon Hall Group and is responsible for editing all types of content related to research. He has experience as a journalist, copywriter, editor, marketer, blogger and social media marketing manager. He also served as the business books columnist for the *Miami Herald* for more than a decade.
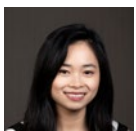
Emma Bui (emma.bui@brandonhall.com) is the Graphic Design Associate at Brandon Hall Group. She created the layout and graphics for this report.

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

Advisory Offerings
Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards
Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM
uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.