

# Tech Mahindra's NAD Learn Makes Upgrading Skills a Continuous Process

Tech Mahindra

Best Advance in Learning Management Technology Implementation

June 2022



## Company Background



<b>Company-at-a-Glance</b>	Tech Mahindra
<b>Headquarters</b>	Pune, India
<b>Year Founded</b>	1987
<b>Revenue</b>	\$5.2 billion
<b>Employees</b>	121,900+
<b>Global Scale</b>	Tech Mahindra is a leading global enabler of digital transformation, consulting and business re-engineering services and solutions.
<b>Customers/Output, etc.</b>	Tech Mahindra has 990+ active global clients, including several Fortune 500 companies. Tech Mahindra offers the right blend of physical and digital design, powered by technology. It uses digital capabilities to transform client's internal businesses and technology operations and delivers industry-leading outcomes. Tech Mahindra's solutions help clients accelerate their digital transformation journey by building intelligent and digital-next businesses, backed by next-generation technologies.
<b>Industry</b>	Information Technology/IT-enabled Services
<b>Stock Symbol</b>	NSE: TECHM
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.techmahindra.com">www.techmahindra.com</a>

## Budget and Timeframe

<b>Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?</b>	25
<b>Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?</b>	Five
<b>Timeframe to implement</b>	Six months

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

### Business Context

Businesses across the world are feeling the pressure of paradigm shift, popularly referred to as “disrupt or die.” Driven by “as-a-service” economy, the global marketplace is undergoing massive changes with major focus on agility, co-innovation and new-age solutions. In IT, technology landscape is changing faster than ever before with new set of technologies and skills being developed very rapidly, which in turn are catalyzing business disruptions and improving efficiencies. Also, shelf life of IT skills is just 2½ years as compared to the normal industries where it is five years. As a result, there is a need for continuous and lifelong learning. This means TechM is on a constant lookout for good talent or need to constantly up-skill their existing talent to sustain growing business. Upskilling must essentially be faster than the pace of technology development to avoid the crisis of unemployment in society. Hence, IT organizations like TechM needs to transform their workforce both at speed and scale.

### Learning Strategy

The objective of the Learning & Development team at Tech Mahindra is to transform TechMighties to be “Fit for the Future” (FIT4Future). TechM wants to develop well-rounded professionals who believe in the company’s core values, the Mahindra brand philosophy, have the right technical skills and an entrepreneurial, solution-oriented mindset. TechM has refined their organizational verticals to ensure that employees have a line of sight for their next career movement in alignment with their brand promise.

### Limitations of existing learning platforms

Traditional learning management systems were self-limiting due to lack of hyper-personalization, latest content, practice platform and deployment avenues etc. impacting scale and speed of skilling as well as deployment. For a services company like Tech Mahindra, business is people and people are business. The aggregate performance and

skills of TechM people, which is a sum of the individual abilities and performance of each TechM employee, has a direct impact on the company's performance and growth.

### **Key objectives**

A need was felt to have a new age learning ecosystem that can support and facilitate large scale, continual and hyper-personalized workforce transformation as per learner profile, preferences and business objective. The ecosystem needs to leverage latest technologies like Artificial Intelligence, internal and external content and plethora of platforms to support dynamic business environment and learning drives. The platform also needed to deliver holistic learning for employees across multiple technical as well as functional (domain), behavioral and professional skills. It will also recommend relevant career paths to the employees based on their current skillset, time to upskill and opportunities available. The #NAD Learn platform was the panacea that gave all this and more.

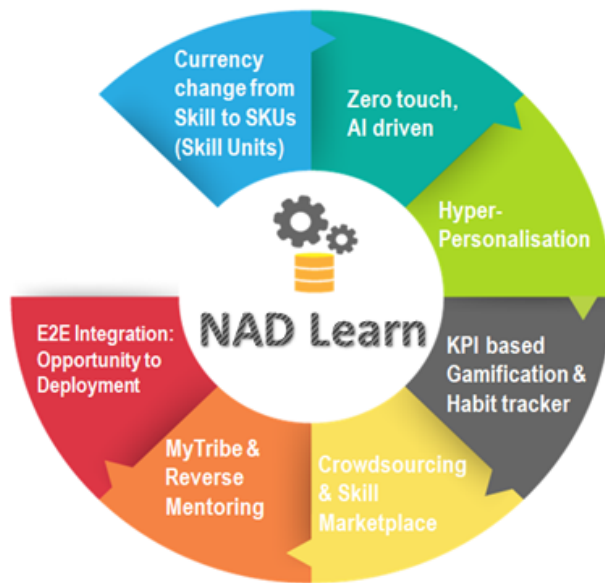
## **Overview**

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### **#NAD Learn fits the need**

The People Function at Tech Mahindra enables their employees to realize their potential and achieve top quartile growth. To ensure that employees are future-proofed and foster meaningful work enabling innovation; drive performance orientation for individual and organization growth while celebrating every moment, TechM provides a platform for capability enhancement of individual, ensure an "employee-centric" work environment and maintain the culture of innovation and inclusion. To create a unique learning ecosystem suiting the needs of the organization, TechM launched a new-age learning platform called #NAD Learn.

Figure 1: #NAD Learn



### Features of #NAD Learn platform

#NAD Learn is an AI-based platform powered by a “New Age Delivery” engine to provide interactive, on-demand, contextual and hyper-personalized upskilling to employees in self-service mode, multi-skilling them ahead of time. Some of the salient features achieved through #NAD Learn besides its unique theme of giving the power of learning to the learner are:

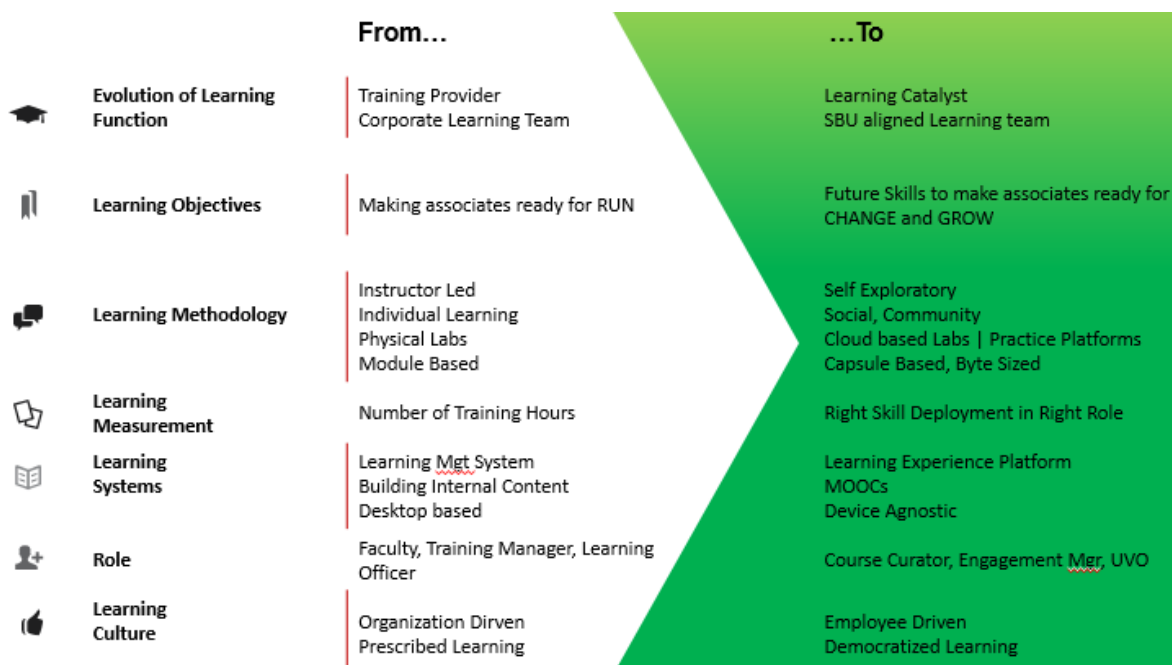
- Hyper-personalization: AI algorithm recommends possible career path based on employee’s current skill along with time to complete and opportunities available. Based on this, employee can decide preferred career path and get access to high quality curated learning content, assessments and practice environments to suit their learning style and preferences along with coaching and mentoring avenues.
- Skilling Unit (SKU) helps build holistic Full-stack (or End to End) software engineers rather than single skilled employees (e.g., Java Developers, Manual Testers, etc.). SKUs were built through a collaborative and inclusive processes involving various stakeholders across the organization.
- Zero-touch learning experience to the learner of the entire learning journey, right from identification of opportunity, access of relevant learning avenues, practice environment and deployment avenues eliminating many manual processes/approvals.
- One-Stop Shop: Provides seamless access to external world-class curated content, assessments and practice environment from across 30+ partners such as Udemy, edX, Mettl, etc.

- Skills Marketplace: It uses AI and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to understand employee's profile and job description and match suitable candidates based on variety of parameters apart from Skillset such as location, years of work-experience, awards, hobbies, countries visited and other historic records and learns/fine-tunes itself based on actual selections.

### Business buy-in for #NAD Learn

The availability of key skills is becoming the single biggest challenge to business growth. Even when talent with key skills exist, the demand in the market causes high attrition and related losses in productivity for the business. The creation of #NAD Learn with its promise to provide an enriching career through continuous re-skilling and upskilling programs and leadership journeys has made learning a retention tool. In fact, #NAD Learn provides the learner a choice on when, where, what to learn. It is also rewarding the learner with a clear articulation of outcome post learning in terms of a new role, onsite assignment or financial rewards. This has ensured that attrition among employees who are actively using #NAD Learn is lesser than 50% of average organizational attrition. Additionally, since the IT industry is people intensive, the highest cost incurred is toward compensation and benefits. To ensure that TechM avoids the high cost of external hiring, it is important to focus on retaining and upskilling existing talent to ensure that margins are met.

**Figure 2: Transformation of Employees at Speed and Scale through #NAD Learn**



### **Accelerating learning evolution**

At Tech Mahindra, enabling continuous learning for the employees is part of its core strategy and recognized as a strategic differentiator. The importance of continuous learning is illustrated by this quote by Anand Mahindra, Mahindra Group — “You have to be continuously learning as a leader and to do that you have to first have the humility to acknowledge that you don't not know everything.” Learning function has evolved and transformed itself completely over past few years to enable large scale workforce transformation and meet changing business environment and needs of organization and learners can be shown in the image above.

## **Design of the Program**

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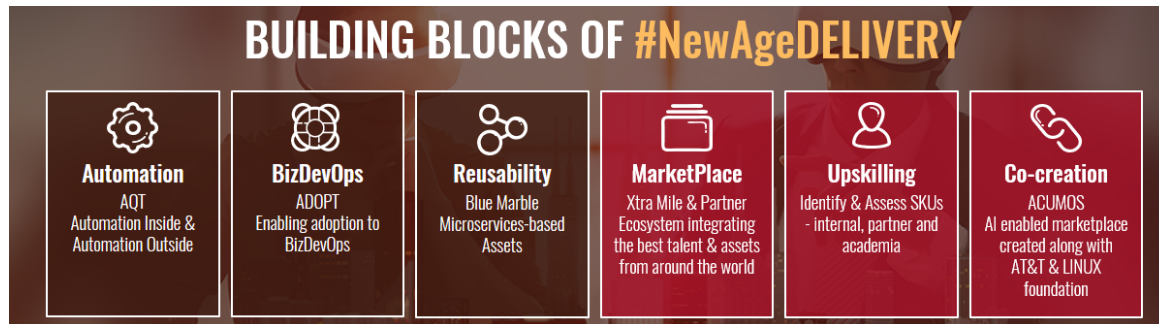
### **Inspiration behind #NAD Learn**

While the traditional spend is declining, digital spend has increased two-fold with a major focus on SMAC, automation, Cyber Security & IoT. The question was: In an age of everything-as-a-service economy, why should upskilling remain a manual process, especially when it is the most critical process for an individual and organization to survive and thrive? With TechM's skilling vision “Creating future-ready workforce today, while fulfilling employees ‘career aspirations,’” the talent team got started. The talent team dealt it through a two-pronged approach: one was to identify future skills and job roles needed through analysis of pipeline deals and futuristic trends and build learning paths mapped to these skills and job roles. Two was to build a platform ecosystem using #NAD through integration of multiple partners in the space of content, assessment, practice platforms, video and microlearning that would take learning to where the learner is, providing them choice of avenues and topics to learn from. This new platform was christened #NAD Learn.

### **Leveraging existing technology — NAD**

TechM created a #NewAgeDELIVERY Platform engine brings together the latest technologies, frameworks, methodologies to design, build and deploy the products/applications faster, cheaper and better than ever before. The engine embraces key tenets of massive reuse, collaboration with the best minds in the world, bite-size right skilling, principles of Design Thinking and automated governance built on a sophisticated micro-services architecture to disrupt the way it delivers projects for customers.

Figure 3: The Six Building Blocks of #NewAgeDELIVERY



The #NAD (New Age Delivery) platform is designed with six independent PoDs (MePS, CaaS, UaaS, DTaS, DiCD and APW) that interact with each other using AI and analytics. The PoDs work like a federation of empowered business units, it supports PoD-specific digital marketplaces and specialized ecosystem partners for each PoD. With crowd sourcing and reusable digital assets readily available, project teams are able to reduce delivery cycle time and avoid reinventing the wheel. Also, maintaining an unbroken and continuous delivery model.

- **MePS (Microservice Enabled Portfolio Services)** — AI-powered community rated and ranked reusable digital assets & flight paths help address project level requirements, available from past projects
- **CaaS (Capability as a Service)** — AI enabled recommendations to build faster SCRUM teams with Best Output Gamification of employees and partners based on their expertise and work delivered.
- **UaaS (Upskilling as a Service)** — From the traditional classroom trainings TechM have moved to contextual learning, basis project needs through MOOC (Massive open online courses) sites. This PoD was used to develop #NAD Learn.
- **DTaS (Design Thinking as a Service)** — It has led to creation of Design Thinking Rooms that are a new way to collaborate and build solutions from client's perspective
- **DiCD (Digital Inside Continuous Delivery)** — It lets project teams reduce delivery cycle time and avoid reinventing the wheel while maintaining an unbroken and continuous delivery model.
- **APW (Active Program Workplace)** — Gamification, has enabled employee engagement to a great extent. Now employees and Partners complete with their peers and improve their scores.

### Skilling units that drive #NAD Learn

The learning function at TechM is delivered through two teams. The Technical Learning Services team caters to the Technology, Domain and Professional needs while the Leadership Learning Services team builds the Behavioral and Leadership skills for the Sales and the IT delivery teams. The competencies needed for an employee to deliver at work can be categorized into four areas: Technology, Domain, Professional and Behavioral. To bring #NAD Learn to life, these teams created the unique Skill Knowledge Unit (SKU). Each SKU is a logical combination of skills in a specific area of competence across delivery life cycle having full stack flavor. It is a combination of courses mapped to skills needed and assessment for each course. SKU design is aimed at creating multi-skilled employees across role boundaries and phases of delivery to achieve long-term business benefit, improved versatility of deployment and career growth for employees. Each SKU is reviewed, validated, approved by the SKU Control Board (SCB) to ensure adherence to the SKU design principles. The SCB comprises of senior business leaders and is chaired by a senior vice-president. More than 1,000 SKUs have been created, covering 90+% of skills across technology, domain, behavioral and professional competencies. TechM invested significant amount to make this possible.

## Delivery of the Program

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### Delivery of #NAD Learn

At TechM, the Learning function is looked upon as partner instead of support function due to its strong role and contribution in business strategy and initiatives. The business learning consultant helps facilitate the creation of new programs based on the passive and active requirements of the business unit. #NAD Learn was deployed by offering Learning and Development programs through key initiatives like Project Skilling, Future Skilling, Ascend, Transcend etc.

- **Project Skilling** framework was developed and implemented to increase overall skilling index along with saving/growth potential in existing projects/business which was not getting tapped in effective manner earlier. As part of the “Project Skilling” initiative, Project Managers analyze existing skilling index of projects, identify white spaces and skill gaps and map relevant Skilling Units (SKU) to multi-skill employees. As part of this initiative, 3,000+ projects have identified skilling and savings opportunities.
- **Future Skilling** program is helping the organization transform skillset of existing employees (who are well versed with domain, customer and TechM culture and processes) to New-age/Future-skill competencies thereby fueling business



- growth while minimizing need to hire employees from external market at much higher cost. As part of this program, 17+ future competencies were identified based on internal and external inputs and for each of these competencies, Career paths, Skilling Units and learning paths were defined and curated content/ assessments were mapped. Post training and certification, deployment of employees in relevant opportunities is tracked to ensure reduction in external hiring and further grooming of employees with real life exposure.
- **Ascend** program's objective is to upskill young high potential employees in house to take up stretch roles and next level of progression, by reducing cost in external hiring. Ascend is currently based on selection through a screening process by the LLS team post nomination by the SBUs. This program is an all-round journey-based program including sessions including self-learning on #NAD Learn, virtual sessions and coaching sessions. Ascend spreads over four months to allow the participants to apply the learnings on the project as they go. Ascend has groomed a total of 95 young delivery Managers, 72% of whom have moved into new or stretched roles.
  - **Transcend** program's objective is to sharpen leadership and business capabilities of TechM's Senior P1's & P2's (brand/grade) and assist them to take on leadership roles in the organization. Transcend is run based on business demand from different business units. This program is an all-round journey-based program including sessions both virtually, face to face including coaching sessions as well. Transcend spreads over five months to allow the participants to apply the learnings on the project as they go. Transcend has certified 50 Managers who have led to savings of \$3.7 million in Automation vertical alone. They have also taken new portfolio responsibilities worth \$10 million.

### **#NAD Learn makes a difference**

#NAD Learn is empowering employees to take charge. Putting them in control of their own learning paths is part of company's strategy to become "future ready." NAD Learn enables employees to access world-class content and assessments from across 30+ partners along with cloud-based practice platforms and deployment avenues. The platform empowers employees for seamless transition to digital jobs. The platform is also helping Tech Mahindra tide COVID-19 pandemic facilitating 2x learning interventions accelerating skill development as per changing business landscape.

## Change Management Efforts

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### Key enablers for the success of #NAD Learn

Bridging the learning gap of the employees is essential to meet the evolving customer needs re-skilling and right skilling the employees is the differentiator of a motivated employee who imbibes the company's Rise philosophy. The Learning Function at TechM has become a key pillar of business success by catalyzing employee skill transformation to meet evolving needs. Some of the key change management initiatives that led to the success of #NAD Learn are given below.

- **Onboarding on learning partners and tools:** As technologies and skills keep on changing in the IT world, to keep the platform and learning ecosystem current, TechM endeavored to onboard some 30+ learning content and platforms like partners like Udemy, edX, Mettl etc. as they become available in the market to deliver continuous value to its employees.
- **Publishing testimonials and success stories:** To recognize employees and motivate them as well as other employees to take extra step/ efforts to upgrade themselves as multi-skilled/ end to end professionals TechM publishes testimonials and case studies via newsletters, blogs, MyTube, emailers, screensavers and social media posts.
- **Sustained Learning Campaigns:** To create habit of everyday learning and make employees aware of latest additions, continual feedback and improvement of system various learning campaigns are rolled out with continual leadership involvement in learning interventions. For example, during the Ignite campaign (pre-pandemic) there were 100+ Floor connect sessions, Leadership talk sessions and eChat sessions conducted to ensure last mile reach which led to 15% increase in SKU allocation.
- **Participation of SMEs and creation of new SKUs:** Quality and coverage of skills by SKUs is very critical to adoption and continued relevance of the platform. Today, there are over 1,000 SKU's present for employees that were created mainly through consultation with internal subject matter leads.
- **Proactive POCs to customers:** #NAD Learn gives employees the ability to work on proof-of-concept projects during their upskilling sessions. This provides implementation avenues for employees to pick up new roles and suggest ideas to customers. This also gives customers confidence about the new skills being acquired.
- **Sustained evolution of learning:** There was a need to recognize the shift from "learning" outcomes to "optimum working" outcomes for employees to change

and grow. With learning courses evolving into skilling units, learning methodologies have also evolved to incorporate employee drive and exploratory learning. Traditional classrooms have evolved into virtual learning communities connecting people based on common interests and not geographies. Training measurement has evolved from “check in the box” measurements of training hours completed to include tangible business outcomes. This has embedded learning in the flow of work and helped employees grow in line with the TechM’s strategic goals.

- **Continual enhancements to #NAD Learn:** Often specific business units require specialized training programs to get up to speed on new products, processes or customer requirements. The Learning team has been adding new features and updates to the platform as per user feedback and business needs. For example, earlier #NAD Learn only had technical domain related learning modules that has now been expanded to have SKU’s across technology, domain, behavioral and professional competencies.

## Measurable Benefits

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### Impact of #NAD Learn

The #NAD Learn program is helping employees successfully complete future skill certifications along with their work responsibilities, making them FIT4Future. Since its launch the #NAD Learn platform has become the most popular way to learn at TechM. the #NAD Learn platform has accelerated new-age skill development improving employees’ capabilities in segments like 5G, robotic process automation, cloud, and big data. Employees now have access to world-class content and assessments from over 30 partners along with cloud-based practice platforms and deployment avenues which gives them an edge in their career and increases their retention potential. The increasing trend of customer projects towards digital technologies has seen employees make a seamless and efficient transition to digital jobs. This is also complemented by increased confidence among customers on the ability to deliver on projects. The platform also offers holistic learning approach for employees across multiple technical as well as functional (domain), behavioral and professional skills which speaks volumes about its flexibility. The AI driven engine recommends employees relevant career paths based on their current skillset, time to upskill, and growth opportunities available which has led to increased self-learning and learning reach as well as freed up the bandwidth of learning staff.

### Adoption of #NAD Learn

An AI engine is built into the platform to recommend customized, employee-level upskilling paths and forecast skills of the future. This accompanied by the employee driven learning methodology has led learning reach to improve to 93%. #NAD Learn offers 1,000+ SKU created covering 90+% of skills (across technology, domain, behavioral and professional competencies)

### #NAD Learn has enabled learning interventions

After the launch of the #NAD Learn platform, it has been the base to launch campaigns to improve learning adoption within the organization. Two of those campaigns are #FutureSkilling and #ProjectSkilling the results of which are given below.

- **FutureSkilling** – Aimed to upskill associates on future technologies and business
  - 10,000+ certified, 25,000+ undergoing upskilling
  - 10% increase in digital revenue in FY20
  - Listed among the Top 5 companies in Career Management by GPTW, India
- **ProjectSkilling** – Aimed to upskill associates for current business requirements
  - 50,000+ associates underwent upskilling

The key improvements seen through the eyes of key stakeholders are articulated below

Employees	Customers	Business Leaders	Learning Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowered to choose and fulfill their Career aspirations by being given a charge of their own learning and aspired career growth with self-learning increasing to 82%</li> <li>• 12% improvement in Employee engagement scores</li> <li>• Increased Multi-skilling and employability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The platform is helping TechM deliver value to customers and increased customer's confidence in TechM's ability to fulfil their Digital Transformation needs.</li> <li>• Few customers have shown interest in #NAD Learn implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #DoMoreWithLess – Increase in operational efficiency</li> <li>• Reduction in external Hiring  65% Internal Fulfillment</li> <li>• Digital revenue mix increased by 10% to 44% in FY20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30%+ bandwidth released for customized learning interventions and self-skill upgradation</li> <li>• Learning Team were able to ideate and launch new initiatives designed to give back to society by enhancing employability through Gift a</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75% associates certified on digital skills   600+ Young/ Women Leaders groomed</li> </ul>	for their organization		Career, Elevate, SMART Academies/ Centers, etc. benefiting 1 lac+ youths & 75% placement
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## Overall

### Success of NAD Learn platform

The #NAD Learn platform is an example of industry first innovation that has made an impact on both business and people at TechM. The key reasons for this are highlighted below.

- Empowerment** — Ability to learn will be the single most important skill for future of workforce. As Bill Gates has said, “curious learner” will thrive in future. The #NAD Learn platform was designed to empower employees to take control of their learning journey. The core of its’ appeal is its ability to recommend learning courses based on the employees defined skillset, time availability and previous learning preferences. This has led to increased self-learning and learning reach as well as freed up the bandwidth of learning staff. This makes the learning hyper-personalized in line with TechM’s HR brand promise.
- Modular** — The unique Skill Knowledge Unit (SKU) based learning has given both content creators and learners the ability to pace learning delivery and consumption. There are over 1,000 SKU’s across covering 90+% of skills across technology, domain, behavioral and professional competencies created by in-house business and HR employees. Having a logical combination of skills in a specific area of competence across delivery life cycle having full stack flavor with the assessment for each course makes it easier to track levels of proficiency.
- Automated** — The #NAD Learn platform recommends relevant career paths and SKUs to the employees based on their current skillset, time to upskill and opportunities available. With the AI-driven mapping of an employee’s learning journey, there is no need for any manual interventions from the Learning team. The system has also streamlined the approval process by providing deemed approvals for learning courses that are aligned to the learning journey.

- **Wholesome** — The #NAD Learn platform offers access to external world-class curated content, assessments and practice environment from across 30+ partners like Udemy, edX, Mettl, etc.
- **Scalable** — Given the flexibility of the #NAD Learn platform being built upon the #NewAgeDelivery framework, efforts are on to roll out #NAD Learn to Customers as commercial offering, Academia to help college students become future ready by the time they graduate and for portfolio and Mahindra Group companies.
- **Complementary** — The NAD Learn platform complemented existing platforms at TechM such as Extra Miles, Talex and Makers lab. The Extra Miles platform is a crowdsourcing tool that connects skills with opportunities within the organization. Talex, a first of its kind AI driven Talent Marketplace that uses AI and NLP to understand employee's profile and job description and matched right candidates to jobs, helped employees find the right roles after they had upskilled. Maker's lab is the Thin-q-Bator division at TechM where employees certified in #NAD Learn can work on cutting-edge technologies (such as AI, ML, IoT, Robotics, AR and VR, Quantum Computing and Blockchain) and create IPs, frameworks and accelerate ideas that could help the customers at the end.

### Going Forward

Thus, the #NAD Learn platform is critical to TechM's "Fit for the Future" agenda it equips employees with the necessary skillsets in areas including leadership, technical, functional, domain and role-based skilling programs. Employees have access to world-class content and assessments from over 30 partners along with cloud-based practice platforms and deployment avenues which gives them an edge in their career and increases their retention potential. It has accelerated new-age skill development improving employees' capabilities in segments like 5G, robotic process automation, cloud and big data. The increasing trend of customer projects toward digital technologies has seen employees make a seamless and efficient transition to digital jobs. This is also complemented by increased confidence amongst customers on the ability to deliver on projects. The platform also offers holistic learning approach for employees across multiple technical as well as functional (domain), behavioral and professional skills which speaks volumes about its flexibility. The AI-driven engine recommends employees relevant career paths based on their current skillset, time to upskill and growth opportunities available which has led to increased self-learning and learning reach as well as freed up the bandwidth of learning staff.

### **Concluding Remarks**

One of the key leaders behind the development of #NAD Learn platform, Vaishali Phatak, who is the Head of Technical Learning Services & Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) had this to say: *"NAD Learn is enabling our employees to continuously upskill and take charge of their growth and relevance to business throughout their journey with Tech Mahindra. The platform is helping us deliver value to our customers by grooming employees into full-stack, end-to-end professionals for current projects as well as future assignments. TechM plans to extend the platform to academia, thereby helping college students become future ready by the time they graduate."* To be prepared better for post-pandemic situation, businesses need to focus on the upskilling of employees in the emerging technologies. With #NAD Learn, Tech Mahindra is developing employees who can cross skill, upskill or future skill in response to customers' evolving needs crafted in line with their own career aspirations with renewed passion and confidence.

## 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.



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