



# Global Learning Festival Ignites 24-Hour Development Goal for 10,000+ Colleagues

Mercer

Best Unique or Innovative Learning and Development Program

November 2024



## Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
<b>Headquarters</b>	1166 Avenue of the Americas, New York City, New York
<b>Year Founded</b>	1945
<b>Revenue</b>	\$5 billion
<b>Employees</b>	25000
<b>Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)</b>	130 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America and Australia
<b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>	Mercer helps clients around the world advance the health, wealth and performance of their most vital asset – their people. Clients include international companies of all sizes serving Leaders, HR Managers and employees with the solutions, services and insight they need to make the most of their benefits.
<b>Industry</b>	Consulting and Benefits / HR Administration
<b>Stock Symbol</b>	MMC
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mercer.com">www.mercer.com</a>



## Budget and Timeframe

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Overall budget	Zero (internal)
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	15 core working group plus wider L&D
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	12 + 13 (May and November 2023)
Number of contractors involved with implementation	3 (external providers as guest presenters)
Timeframe to implement	6 months, rolling
Start date of the program	January 2023

## Fit to the Needs

In May 2022 the Marsh McLennan enterprise, for which Mercer is one of four operating companies, introduced a new global Learning Experience Platform (LXP) with an aim to:

- bring together robust learning resources using artificial intelligence
- suggest learning to help build skills for current and future roles

40% of Mercer colleagues globally sit within the Operations and Technology (O&T) line of business. At this time some teams were struggling to balance self-development with their day-job and needed better direction to achieve the minimum expected 24 hours of learning per year. O&T management also had different expectations as to how much time colleagues should spend on their development, and how this could be accurately measured.

The O&T Learning and Development team were subsequently tasked with promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing the learning experience, using the LXP, to grow and track colleague participation in self-initiated learning in a simple and intuitive way.



The 'Hit the Target' program was developed to meet this request but for the purposes of this submission, focus will be on the benefits and outcomes delivered for the 'Live' program in 2023.

## Overview

The L&D team needed to originate a program to achieve the following goals:

1. Signpost people to activate their LXP profile
2. Increase visibility of 24 hours minimum expected learning time
3. Provide focused learning opportunities specifically to benefit O&T colleagues

A working group of eight Learning and Development professionals came together to consider how to achieve these goals, in the short-term to take advantage of the LXP implementation, with the long-term view to instill a self-initiated learning culture in O&T.

The program had to have a strong, sustainable identity to grab attention, and be instantly recognizable. The name 'Hit the Target' was initially used as a call for action but is now an established part of the learning calendar and continues to evolve.

In June 2022 the program was offered as a selection of themed on-demand LXP pathways, curated with the current skills and interests of our colleagues in mind, to be used as a catalyst to help people become familiar with the learning platform whilst boosting self-directed learning time.

Over two weeks LXP pathways were curated for each topic. Most of the learning content came from existing material the wider team had previously presented i.e. webinar videos, with the inclusion of optional learning linked to existing resources such as LinkedIn courses and supporting material.

Marsh and McLennan occasionally hold all-company virtual learning festivals. These events are available to over 80k colleagues, so the topics are generic in nature and often do not resonate with the core of our O&T, administration-based business.

After reviewing the necessity to continue to provide focused learning opportunities, in November 2022 Hit the Target was offered as an extension of the Marsh McLennan learning festival. Working with various internal stakeholders and subject matter experts, the live, bite-sized virtual sessions ran over three days for all Operations and Technology colleagues.



The live events were a success, with over 1500 registrations across 18 sessions. All attendances were reflected in the Learning Management System (LMS) records which went some way to increase the number of learning hours, from 9 hours to 12.8 per person in 2022. But the Learning and Development team wanted to do more, to better engage learners, plan and execute an established learning program across a full year to achieve the requirement of 24 hours of learning for everyone.

By end November 2022 planning for the 2023 Hit the Target Live program had already begun; L&D were to deliver two live learning festival events in April and November. A project manager was appointed to coordinate timelines and stakeholders. Subject matter experts, including external providers, were approached months in advance to discuss topics and secure their time to present.

To increase consistency across the program the working group transformed the process to deliver the event, including a strict communications plan. Data analysis post-event increased to more accurately reflect the uptake of not just the live events, but also the impact of using a LXP as an on-demand learning portal.

As a result, in 2023 L&D successfully delivered 48 live virtual sessions (across 6 days) with over 2000 people attending at least one session, a total of 1130 hours additional self-development. This contributed to all O&T colleagues achieving the minimum of 24 hours of learning time by the end of the year. We had hit our target!

## **Design of the Program**

A Learning and Development live event of this scale had never been organized before, not within Operations and Technology or wider across Marsh and McLennan. It was important to relay plans to leadership teams, receive their support and ensure every possible channel to inform colleagues was made available.

As such, before committing to run Hit the Target Live in 2023, the L&D team consulted with Internal Communications to secure their support and confirm dates that importantly did not clash with other important business communications and possible conflicts for our colleagues. This also ensured maximum opportunity for registration. A strict communications plan was agreed (and group members aligned to compile and coordinate).

With dates agreed, a project delivery plan was created in January 2023 allowing a four-month window to prepare and develop the Hit the Target Live program for delivery April 25-27. This was subsequently reviewed and adjusted for the



November offering. Tasks were grouped into sections and owners identified to take that task through to completion. Weekly working group calls were arranged for the year and a Teams channel created for sharing updates and documents.

Right from the start it was important for the working group to focus the learning needs analysis for this program on two key areas:

1. What learning content was missing or not easily accessible for our population based on their current skills, for example, a Process Manager.
2. What the future of work looks like and upcoming skills requirements for the type of roles being performed, for example, a Pensions Analyst.

With this in mind, the group of experienced L&D professionals partnered closely with business leaders, for both the April and November events, and it did not take long to brainstorm an extensive list of skills and subjects. This list was reviewed against six O&T strategic pillars assigned by leadership and each topic categorized appropriately:

- People
- Enhancing Efficiency
- Client Satisfaction & Business Growth
- Driving Agility & Innovation
- Data & Digital
- Delivering Simplification

The L&D team had already been in discussion with many subject matter experts, through existing projects or initiatives. The experts were mostly internal contacts, but in November two external providers were invited to present. The L&D team is unique in how it fosters these partnerships throughout the year and the Hit the Target Live event is a way we can support and promote the work undertaken in all areas of the O&T business and beyond.

For over a month diaries were coordinated to placeholder two webinar sessions with presenters. Ideally, the sessions were on different days, at different times, to allow for flexible working patterns and global time zones. For example, a session at 11am UTC/UK time suits someone working in India, but not in the US so to offer a second session later in the day allowed for a greater chance of participation.

L&D consulted with each presenter to understand what the learning outcomes were for each session. A title was agreed alongside a brief description of the session, usually a couple of lines to capture the imagination and interest to register.

Hit the Target Live sessions are usually 30 minutes long, sometimes up to one hour if the topic warrants a deeper dive. This allows colleagues to enroll and feel



they are not taking too much time out of their day-to-day commitments in learning something new. A shorter session is also appreciated by the audience, the presenter has full attention, especially when coupled with real-life examples, demonstrations and interactive activities.

Before moving forward the working group agreed a strong visual identity for 'Hit the Target - 24 hours of learning' played a big part in sparking learner interest, getting people brought the concept and signed up to learning festival sessions. The '24' imagery was produced in partnership with the company branding team. The image was then inserted into visual aids the group, wider L&D team and various stakeholders could use in preparation for and during the event. Examples included Zoom backgrounds and PowerPoint slide templates shared with Presenters, email headers and an animated GIF, useful in social media promotion and for advertisement videos.

Each live session required a separate Zoom Webinar to be arranged. Through investigation and practice two of the team discovered that a webinar template could be created to allow certain fields to be standardized for administration ease and so the participants received a consistent experience upon registration.

Adjustments included:

- All sessions having the same passcode
- A central mailbox contact for queries
- Edits made to personalize invitation email to Registrants, issue a reminder to attend one day prior and one hour before the session, follow-up email to attendees to include a link to the feedback survey and thanks for attending
- The Hit the Target banner imagery to keep on brand

Next, the group spent some time discussing how to get colleagues to register for sessions. In making this a simple process for the end user, it meant some of the group had to take additional actions to enable L&D to sufficiently track learning time. The group were also interested in recording how people registered to determine the most effective communication method.

Each of the 24 webinar links were cloned three times resulting in separate traceable links for use in email communications, social media posts and on the L&D O&T intranet site page. Before official communications commenced the wider L&D team and presenters were encouraged to informally share the registration schedule to generate interest with their colleagues and business partners.

Supporting the presenters was critical to the success of the events. Many of the wider 50 strong L&D team are experienced with virtual facilitation so the group put a call out to request their availability to act as co-host for each of the proposed 24 live webinars. In the role of 'Producer' their role was to ensure the



technology works and that presenters were comfortable in using certain tools, such as screen-sharing a whiteboard or switching to other applications.

A pre-briefing was arranged with all Producers taking them through expectations and gave the group the opportunity to pilot a webinar scenario. Producer guidelines were also drafted, based on feedback from the 2022 live event, and shared.

All Presenters were contacted at least two weeks before the live sessions confirming their unique panelist link to connect to the Zoom webinar and the name of their Producer (and back-up if assigned). This direct contact allowed the Presenter to ask any questions, review the content and hold a practice session if necessary. A Presenter guidance document was also offered outlining pre-requisites, expected procedure for the session and how L&D will support the presenters throughout the event.

As part of any program design, it is important to measure the success of delivery and prove that the organization's learning objectives have been effectively applied. One of the group, with strength in L&D analytics, designed a Hit the Target impact survey. This was replicated for each topic and unique links generated, read to be provided to the learner for completion at the end of each session.

## **Delivery of the Program**

Although the live event was delivered over 3 days, kick-off in terms of delivery started three weeks in advance, i.e. beginning of April. Working with the internal communications team, email communications were drafted, reviewed and issued weekly to all O&T colleagues, over four weeks which included ([Appendix E](#)):

- Welcome video from the L&D global leader explaining the purpose of 24 hours of learning target prompting colleagues to sign up for sessions. This was scripted and recorded in advance, aligned to 24 hours of learning goal but also wider business strategy.
- A one-page document containing a schedule of all sessions to enable colleagues to easily see what was available and click on the linked button to directly find out more and register ([Appendix E](#)). These buttons included the 'Email' links generated by Zoom. The webinar details were then pushed through directly to the participant's Outlook calendar. This document was uploaded to the L&D publicly shared library and linked in all email communications.
- A request that if colleagues hadn't already done so, they activate their profile in the LXP and follow the Hit the Target plan.





- Post-event summary and thank you, including link to LXP plan to access recorded session videos and supporting material, and headline registration and attendance figures.

Following each email a supporting post was submitted to the internal social media platform for O&T colleagues, with a link to the schedule of sessions to register, buttons edited to instead include the ‘Social’ links generated by Zoom. This document was also uploaded to the same library to be linked in all social media communications.

At the same time the group created a section within the Mercer Intranet O&T L&D site page for Hit the Target ([Appendix G](#)). This enabled all sessions to be individually uploaded, using the ‘Site’ links generated by Zoom, into the central L&D events calendar. Any colleague looking to extend their learning could register for a live opportunity via the site or access a recording on the LXP to increase their 24 hours of learning anytime.

A week prior to the event, the group monitored the registration rates and over the three days attendance reports were immediately downloaded after each session. Capturing the learning time for the live sessions required a manual intervention in the LMS as the Outlook calendar function at that point was unreliable i.e. the learner had to click to request an invitation if part of a course offering. The group therefore decided to create 12 blended courses in the LMS but enroll learners after each session using the Zoom webinar attendance report, which was collated daily for all sessions. This gave an accurate account of people who attended, for over 10 minutes, and their time learning recorded centrally.

As a direct result of the feedback received in the first live series, each webinar recording was edited, and the video uploaded as a digital course to the LMS. These courses were subsequently attached to one ‘Hit the Target’ LXP plan. If a colleague was unable to make the live session, we wanted them to quickly be able to access a recorded version. This therefore needed a quick turnaround to get the video into the LXP plan accessible on demand.

After the second live session had completed the Project Manager and presenter decided which session presented better, minor edits to the recording were made and uploaded to Mercer’s internal video-sharing platform. A unique link was then used to create a learning item in the LXP catalogue and added to the LXP plan ([Appendix H](#)). This plan is now the single point entry for colleagues to access all on-demand content from the O&T learning festival events.

The project manager was available throughout to support any last-minute glitches, especially if the session had no back-up producer. They kept in contact with the producer to provide any follow-up items, such as additional learning materials or site links, directly to participants. These were also attached to the LXP plan to extend the learning experience.





The learner feedback from surveys was monitored for two weeks post-event, highlights captured, future suggestions and improvements pulled into a review plan with the Hit the Target group. Constructive commentary was shared with Presenters and Producers, who also had their contribution acknowledged by the Global L&D Leader.

## Measurable Benefits

By the end 2023 the Hit the Target program had:

- Delivered 46 live webinar sessions, a total of 1712 hours of additional learning time.
- Increased the LXP activation rate significantly to 83% (compared to Mercer-wide activation rate of 76%). People were us
- Reached the annual target of 24 hours learning time per person, an average increase of 15 hours per person since 2021.

These benefits were detailed in the one-page executive summary to Leadership and presented at the 2024 Q1 Global Townhall ([Appendix I](#)) as part of a promotional advertisement. In addition, O&T contributed 21% of all learning time across Marsh McLennan in 2023, despite only making up 12% of the enterprise's population.

The O&T Learning and Development team had not only hit the original goals, but they had also exceeded expectations, setting a standard for future global learning festivals and events. O&T are now leading the way for other parts of the organization through this core model.

Importantly the L&D team has provided valuable, future-ready business learning experiences. This is evident from the positive colleague feedback received, on how the Hit the Target program has benefitted their learning journey. Some examples of typical quotes below.

“The Presenter was conversing and not presenting. Her energy was high, and her enthusiasm transpired.”

“Here is someone who not only recognized the importance of managing people change in alignment with business technical change, but they also explained the reason why.”

“The trainer's attitude towards the future and how AI will only get stronger really impacted me. I had not received any training prior to today, so this was very helpful.”



“I did not really have an understanding of (the subject) and was kind of fearful of it, but it was explained easily, and I know how helpful it can be.”

“This session really kick-started my interest level to get a step further to look into how it applies to my daily work.”

“The session was well planned with sequenced dialogue and data facts. Really insightful.”

“(I liked) The professionalism of the producers and how the content was presented in clear, understandable way.”

“Thank you so much for everyone involved and special thanks to our latest winner for Q3- Brighter Award - Learning & Development Team - You People are doing amazing work and helping us to gain more knowledge and expand our horizon.”

Further praise was quoted by our Leadership team:

“Hit the Target Live is now a recognized learning event within Marsh McLennan. Our colleagues look forward to learning something new, not just to extend their required learning hours but because the sessions are a catalyst to inspire interest in developing skills and really make a difference when applied to the roles they perform in.”

Steve Ogle, Global L&D Leader, Operations and Technology

“The Hit the Target program offers colleagues the opportunity to get to know our business better and accelerate their learning, so they are equipped with skills for the future. This program empowers people to own their learning time, decide what is important to them and is helping build a fantastic learning culture, one our LD team should be very proud of.”

Anita Lefebvre, Senior People Partner, Mercer COO

## **Overall**

Evaluation for a program like Hit the Target is cyclical; it provides the best opportunity for the L&D team to obtain insight from colleagues, at all levels, across the globe on a regular basis. The analysis undertaken provides a steer for how the L&D team can improve, what has been delivered well and why, indicates trends, in addition to reinforcing the 24 hours of learning directive.

In planning April 2024's event the working group will take forward the following:



1. Allow for global events to maximize the opportunity for registration and participation. In November the group encountered a conflict with celebrations, such as Diwali and Thanksgiving, which reduced the prospective audience size.
2. Deeper business partner conversations pre-event to ensure an understanding of the learning outcomes, limiting chance of duplication and increasing learner engagement.
3. Adapted calendar functionality is now available in the LMS which will allow the group to create courses prior to the events, and attach the webinar links to offerings, making the registration process slicker. This will also involve less manual administration. If learners are themselves enrolling in the LMS and accepting the invitation to their calendar they may be more conscious to attend.
4. The Learner Impact survey issued in November was too long and arduous, completion rates dropped to 10%. The group are set to review the questions and make the form quicker and easier to populate, without losing key insights.

For the first time all colleagues have a set goal to achieve 24 hours of learning in 2024. This reinforces a clear intention from Leadership that they are invested in L&D and that people are enabled to manage their learning time, and managers can allow team members to take this time. The culture of learning is slowly shifting. From configuring their own skills profile via the company internal LXP to exploring the wider O&T business by attending a Hit the Target session, learning and development is not just about completing prescribed role related or mandatory training.

The Hit the Target Live working group continues to meet and discuss the program throughout the year, and it is now the highlight of the L&D global calendar. An exciting development for 2024 will be inviting colleagues from Mercer's operating subsidiary Marsh to participate in attending the live sessions and support the delivery to provide coordinated, cross-enterprise learning opportunities for an additional 9000 colleagues.





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