



How to Improve the Relationship Between Learning and Leadership

STRATEGY BRIEF
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Current State

Leadership in learning is undergoing a dramatic transformation as organizations navigate the complexities of an AI-powered future. Learning leaders must now balance technological innovation with human-centered development approaches. Forward-thinking organizations are investing in expanding their learning teams' capabilities while simultaneously developing leadership competencies that can drive innovation and performance in this new era.

Complexities

The intersection of learning teams and leadership faces several significant challenges, as evidenced by the Brandon Hall Group™ research reports, *The Learning Revolution* and *HR Outlook 2025*.

✦ Competency development barriers:

Research shows the most valuable competencies for L&D practitioners are:

77%

Consulting

74%

Design thinking

72%

Collaboration

70%

Learning agility

67%

Strategic planning
and execution

65%

Business acumen

✦ Misalignment between learning strategy and leadership vision:

75% of organizations cite improving alignment between learning strategy and business goals as their top priority for 2025.

✦ **Measurement paralysis:**

64% of organizations identify improving learning measurement and analytics as a critical focus area.

✦ **Implementation gap:**

59% of organizations need to deploy strategies to prove employees can apply learned skills on the job.

✦ **Struggle with learner engagement:**

63% of organizations prioritize improving the learner experience as a key initiative.

✦ **Technology integration challenges:**

56% of organizations are focused on leveraging AI and automation to support upskilling/reskilling the workforce.

Implications

When learning teams are properly equipped and aligned with leadership objectives, organizations experience enhanced talent retention, improved innovation capabilities, and stronger competitive positioning. The integration of AI and emerging technologies in learning and leadership development creates opportunities for more personalized, scalable, and effective development programs. Organizations that successfully bridge the gap between learning teams and leadership will be better positioned to build agile, future-ready workforces capable of navigating continuous change.

Critical Questions

Learning and leadership professionals must address these fundamental questions to ensure successful transformation:

How can we develop learning teams that effectively support leadership development in an AI-driven environment?

What competencies should learning teams prioritize to drive leadership excellence?

How can learning teams measure and demonstrate their impact on leadership effectiveness?

What role should AI play in leadership development and learning team operations?

How can we ensure learning teams and leadership remain aligned with business objectives?

Brandon Hall Group™ POV

01 Build AI-Empowered Learning Teams

Learning teams must embrace AI as a core enabler of leadership development. However, our research shows that nearly 25% of organizations have identified no real benefit to incorporating AI technology, which is concerning. Organizations need to overcome key barriers including data privacy concerns (59%), lack of AI expertise (59%), and regulatory concerns (44%). Success requires developing clear AI integration strategies that focus on reducing training costs, enabling personalized learning experiences, and improving analytics capabilities. Learning teams should prioritize AI applications that can demonstrate measurable impact on leadership development outcomes while maintaining appropriate governance and security protocols.

02 Develop Data-Driven Leadership Strategies

With 64% of organizations prioritizing improved learning measurement and analytics, the shift to data-driven leadership development is crucial. Organizations must move beyond basic metrics to establish analytics frameworks that connect learning initiatives to leadership outcomes. This involves implementing clear success indicators, leveraging predictive analytics for skill gap identification, and creating feedback loops that inform continuous improvement. Forward-thinking organizations are already expanding their L&D teams to include data scientists and analytics specialists who can translate learning data into actionable leadership insights.

03 Create Integrated Learning Ecosystems

The research indicates that 59% of organizations need better strategies to prove skills application on the job. Learning teams must create development ecosystems that support continuous leadership development through multiple channels. This means moving beyond traditional program-based approaches to integrate formal training, experiential learning, coaching, and technology-enabled support tools. Leading organizations are pioneering immersive, adaptive learning ecosystems that seamlessly integrate learning with work and innovation, creating environments where leadership development becomes part of daily operations.

04 Foster Collaborative Innovation

With 72% of L&D practitioners citing collaboration as a crucial competency, learning teams must work closely with leadership to create environments that encourage experimentation and innovation. This involves developing frameworks for rapid prototyping of learning initiatives and establishing feedback mechanisms that accelerate learning and adaptation. The goal is to create a culture where learning and leadership development are seen as collaborative endeavors rather than separate functions, leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

05 Establish Strategic Alignment Mechanisms

Given that 75% of organizations identify improving alignment between learning strategy and business goals as their top priority, establishing strong alignment mechanisms is critical. Organizations must ensure learning teams and leadership remain aligned with business objectives. This includes implementing regular strategy reviews, shared goal-setting processes, and integrated performance metrics. Learning teams must develop strong business acumen (cited by 65% of practitioners as a valuable competency) to effectively partner with leadership in driving organizational success.

The future of learning and leadership development lies in the ability to embrace these transformative approaches while staying focused on core business objectives. Organizations that successfully implement these strategies will be better positioned to build the agile, skilled workforces needed for future success in an AI-powered business environment.

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