**Title A: Top Learning & Development Trends for 2025**

Subtitle A: *We explore 9 emerging trends in L&D for the coming year, from the popularity of microlearning to the advent of AI-powered development. Then, we discuss how to successfully respond to them.*

**Title B: 9 Key Learning and Development Trends for 2025**

Subtitle B: *We discuss the emerging L&D trends for the coming year. Then, we explore how to leverage them to stay competitive.*

**Title C: 9 Essential Learning & Development Trends for 2025**

Subtitle C: *Learn how to effectively respond to emerging L&D trends to enhance your organization's competitiveness.*

In the modern workplace, the skill sets required for many roles are rapidly changing. But often, learning and development doesn't keep pace with these emerging needs. This makes focusing on employee growth a key imperative for every business.

According to Gallup, just 47% of employees believe their skill set allows them to thrive in their current role. Individual contributors are the least likely (at 26%) to say their company supports them in cultivating new abilities. And, though mid-level employees have a bit more guidance in growing skills for their current role, their skill set may not prepare them for advancement—or to meet emerging demands.

Let's examine the top learning and development trends shaping the future of work in 2025. Then, we'll share tips for effectively implementing them in your organization.

# Current State of Learning and Development

Let's briefly examine the current landscape of employee learning and development, discussing key factors that shape today's L&D trends.

## Shift to Hybrid and Remote Work

This significant shift has reshaped how organizations approach employee learning. It has also given rise to more flexible development options. Rather than expecting learning to take place in a physical classroom, organizations have access to a plethora of hybrid and remote options.

## Increased Focus on Skills Over Roles

A growing preference for skills-based hiring and internal mobility is also shaping L&D trends. By helping employees cultivate skills that adapt to emerging needs, organizations can build a flexible talent pool. Employees can then assume project-based roles that respond to these needs.

Unilever has pioneered this type of approach. By creating an internal talent marketplace, and connecting employees with opportunities to upskill in preparation for new roles, it grew their capacities and connected them in new and exciting ways. "Within 90 days, the company had resourced over 700 projects—with 60% of projects drawing people from different functions or geographies," writes Mercer. Plus, 90% were glad to have learned something new and would do it again.

## Technology as a Key Driver

Technological changes are transforming learning and development strategies. As the capabilities of AI-powered tools and predictive analytics have grown exponentially, training options have become more sophisticated.

## Changing Engagement Levels

Employee engagement plays a pivotal role in any company's success. But engagement reached an 11-year low in 2024—what Gallup calls "the Great Detachment." So, organizations need to take smart measures to increase it. Enhancing learning and development opportunities should top the list of priorities, as focusing on employee growth can greatly boost engagement and motivation.

Given these considerations, we've identified 9 critical L&D trends for HR and company leaders to address.

# Top Learning and Development Trends for 2025

Let's now dive into the most cutting-edge development trends for the coming year. Consider how to integrate some of these L&D trends into your training initiatives to maximize employee success.

## 1. Personalized Learning Experiences

Today's employees expect learning to be customized to their needs and preferences. Hence, organizations must prioritize worker-centric personal growth, taking a "choose your own development adventures" approach.

"Workers expect to be able to choose individual paths for professional development, that is specific to their strengths, passions, and goals," Deloitte explains. "Ultimately, workers want experiences that interest them, and they want to consume them any way they want, whenever they want."

## 2. Microlearning

The desire for easily accessible learning experiences translates into a need to prioritize microlearning. We're witnessing the rise of short, focused learning modules that fit into busy schedules.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 70% of employees prefer self-paced courses over traditional training formats. They want to be able to access learning opportunities at their own convenience. Self-paced options can be organized into bite-sized modules that feel more approachable. Plus, it's often easier to remember and immediately apply the lessons from microlearning experiences.

## 3. Immersive Learning with AR/VR

Teams using AR see productivity rise by 32%, while the time needed to complete tasks drops by 46%, the IBM Institute of Business Value reports. We will likely see similar effects for the use of these technologies in employee training.

Already, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are being used to simulate real-world scenarios to promote effective learning. AR overlays digital elements over the real world, while VR uses a headset to provide an immersive experience.

Both AR and VR can foster more meaningful training experiences. For example, they could offer the sense of being physically present with a remote instructor and peers. Or, they could allow employees to practice using new skills in a hands-on way while receiving smart guidance on their efforts.

After Bank of America launched VR training solutions, they found that [97% of employees](#) felt more confident in performing tasks they'd practiced during these simulations. By replicating real-life situations, these sessions prepared employees to enhance the customer experience.

## 4. Upskilling for Emerging Technologies

Equip employees for the use of cutting-edge technologies that can ramp up productivity. For instance, [blockchain technologies](#) can be used to boost security and efficiency across various dimensions of work. By decreasing the need to manually perform repetitive tasks, they can improve productivity, PwC writes.

Employees also need clear training in how to use AI tools to enhance their work. In 2024, fewer employees felt prepared to use AI than in 2023, Gallup reports. A recent study by Randstad found that just 1 in 10 employees have been offered training in how to use AI. By providing [AI literacy training](#) and tailored support, you can coach them in the responsible and effective use of these tools.

For example, at Booz Allen Hamilton, employees receive in-depth training on how to use generative AI within specific tasks, reports SHRM. Before using GenAI, they gain certification through these internal training programs. This allows them to confidently increase productivity without sacrificing quality of work.

## 5. Focus on Emotional Intelligence

Place a strong focus on "soft skills" like communication and collaboration, rather than just emphasizing technical skills. By [cultivating emotional intelligence](#) (EI), employees will prepare for leadership positions and become more effective team members. EI encompasses [four key components](#):

- Self-awareness

- Self-regulation

- Awareness of others' emotions

- Relationship management

Where to begin? In one-on-one coaching conversations, guide employees in developing self-awareness through self-reflection. You can also use the technique of visualization to enhance self-awareness, as Barrett Williams says in *The Power of Emotional Intelligence*. In this exercise, ask an employee to imagine a particular scenario transpiring and to notice how they feel as it occurs. By taking note of emotional triggers and discussing how they would like to respond, they can prepare to react in thoughtful ways rather than impulsively.

## 6. Gamification

Enhance engagement through a mix of rewards, and interactive game-like environments. For example, leaderboards can serve as a platform that turns sales work into a friendly contest, coupled with cash incentives or prizes. Encouraging healthy competition in such ways can make work more dynamic and inspiring.

"Gaming is exciting and helps the material stick," writes Duncan Wardle in *Harvard Business Review.* "Gaming can also improve memory and cognition in older adults, as well as increase productivity on new teams and improve collaboration on virtual teams. At its essence, gaming is fun and makes learning less tactical and more experiential."

## 7. Acceptance of AI as a Training Tool

Increasingly, employees are accepting the use of AI as a training and development tool. Many perceive AI-powered software as reducing bias, according to Gartner.

Importantly, AI-driven platforms are allowing companies to tailor learning paths to individual needs and career goals, too. (This supports the worker-centric development mentioned above.) AI can analyze employees' aptitudes along with organizational skills gaps, then make personalized training recommendations.

Further, AI technologies enable adaptive learning that responds in real time to employees' needs. Chatbots, or "virtual coaches," can also provide customized guidance as employees progress through training or apply their knowledge.

## 8. Prioritizing Resilience and Adaptability

Becoming resilient and adaptable will help employees adjust to any changes that occur. By embracing change, they'll help the organization transform in positive ways.

Leverage social learning to build resilience collectively, which tends to prove more effective than approaching it individually. Through shared learning experiences that deal with approaching change and handling uncertainty, you can also foster a culture of resilience. For instance, one pharmaceutical company implemented a three-tiered training program for cultivating resilience, says McKinsey. From workshops where senior leaders could discuss lessons together, to peer-supported learning experiences complementing training modules for individual contributors, the program enhanced adaptability and well-being throughout the company.

## 9. Creative Career Pathing

Instead of taking a rigid approach to career planning, adopt a flexible mindset. Today's employees want to design their own career trajectory rather than following a prescribed formula. Hold in-depth conversations with individual employees about their goals, and then customize a training plan that meets their needs. Use these discussions to inform your organization's succession planning, with the aid of predictive analytics that highlight future areas of need.

# Tips for Responding to Emerging L&D Trends



*Image source*

Follow these strategies to effectively respond to today's learning and development trends.

- **Assess organizational needs:** Identify which trends align most closely with your company's goals and workforce challenges. Set 3–4 areas to prioritize.

- **Leverage technology strategically:** Begin by choosing one or two tools to adopt. Then, roll them out in a thoughtful manner, providing introductory workshops and follow-up coaching. You can use performance management software to guide employees to success, for instance. Goal-tracking platforms can help them monitor their own progress and feel more invested in their growth.

- **Embark on strong goal-setting:** Help each employee set individual SMART goals or OKRs. This will create a foundation for success in all your training initiatives.

- **Foster a culture of continuous learning:** Encourage employees to take ownership of their development by seeking out resources, asking questions, and requesting support as needed. Create a practice of sharing things you've learned in team meetings to build enthusiasm for ongoing learning.

By employing these strategies, you'll effectively respond to emerging learning and development trends. In turn, you'll give your company a powerful competitive advantage. Continue studying and responding to the latest L&D trends throughout the year to stay ahead of the curve. Your employees will find their work more engaging and rewarding because of your efforts!

*Find out how software can enhance employee learning and development—demo our [performance management product](#).*