



3 ways learning and development programs improve employee engagement

While strengthening your employer brand



Introduction

In today's always-on digital landscape where demands are high and changes come fast, successful learning and development programs are arguably more critical to organizations than ever.

Some are reluctant to make the investment in L&D, unsure of its returns. Many HR professionals, however, see a link between L&D and another increasingly important metric: employee engagement (and by extension, retention).

In this guide, we'll explore 3 ways L&D programs help drive employee engagement, and offer some additional tips for strengthening your own programs.

01

L&D programs support professional growth

02

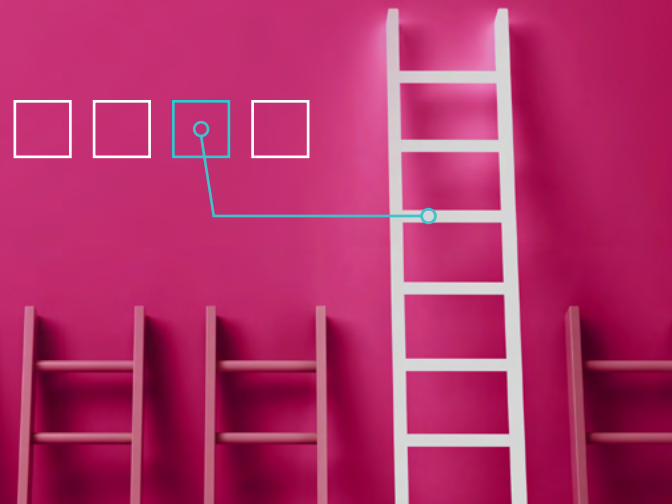
L&D programs create an environment of continuous learning

03

L&D programs help attract and retain both younger and older employees

01

L&D programs support professional growth



Why employees leave:



Work not enjoyable



Strengths not utilized



No career growth

It's become something of a cliché that you don't quit your job—you quit your boss. And in many cases this rings true. But in a [recent HBR study](#) of Facebook employees, researchers found something interesting: the decision to leave was because of the work. Employees were more likely to leave “when their job wasn't enjoyable, their strengths weren't being used, and they weren't growing in their careers.”

What about employees who tended to stay? You guessed it: the opposite of each condition tended to be true.

Learning and development programs play an influential role in employee engagement (and by extension, retention) because they provide opportunities for employees to develop their strengths—or build entirely new skill sets.

L&D: an investment with big returns

Putting money into L&D programs is a worthwhile investment for two reasons. The first is obvious: employees who learn more job-relevant skills are able to function at a higher level than before, getting better results and providing greater value.

The second: when you develop your staff, they feel like they're being invested in, and their commitment to your organization often grows too. As former Xerox CEO Ann Mulcahy once said: “Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person—not just an employee—are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability.”

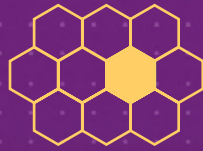
Watch the video



See how we use our own purpose-built solution to create a happy, healthy, productive workforce.

02

L&D programs create an environment of continuous learning



Growth mindset

Everyone can learn and grow



Fixed mindset

Everyone's ability is innate

Another way L&D programs boost employee engagement is by creating an environment of continuous learning.

With some claiming that the “4th Industrial Revolution is upon us”—driven by artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and other hallmarks of the digital age—job markets and skills are subject to rapid, and sometimes dramatic, shifts. Employees will expect employers to offer learning and development programs if they’re going to survive (and hopefully thrive in the face of) these changes.

The growth mindset

Environments of continuous learning also help to foster a growth mindset. Simply put, a growth mindset is a cultural belief that anyone can learn and grow, and that the act of learning and growing is key to people’s happiness and success. This is in contrast to the fixed mindset, which posits that everyone’s ability is innate and does not change much, if at all, with development.

Cultures of learning will not only improve employee resiliency and encourage innovation: they’ll also help the company staff for growth by developing candidates that they can hire from within. This has a multiple benefits:

- Increased retention (because employees see a path to growth)
- Lower recruiting costs (it’s often cheaper to promote existing employees)
- Faster onboarding time (quicker to place, and institutional knowledge is built in)

Culture of Genius Template

1. My company believes that people can always greatly improve their talents and abilities.

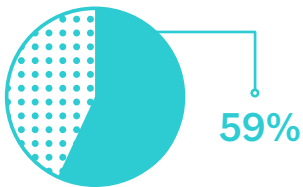
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

0 of 10 answered

[Check out this template >](#)

Curious what kind of culture your company has? Check out SurveyMonkey’s free culture of genius survey template.

03 L&D programs help attract and retain both younger and older employees



59% of millennials say opportunities to learn and grow are extremely important when applying for a job.

As a group, millennials make up one of the largest percentages of the American workforce. And 59% of them say that opportunities to learn and grow are extremely important to them when applying for a job.

The earlier you are in your career, the less you know. Therefore, learning and development opportunities become critical to your (and your organization's) success. Not only is your organization training new employees that could one day reach senior leadership positions within the company—it's showing candidates in the recruiting pipeline that you're invested in their future.

Older employees also benefit from L&D initiatives. Workers who are looking to learn new skills, shift into a different role, or simply stay relevant amidst constant change reap the rewards when your organization makes training a priority. They'll be more likely to stick around, keeping their institutional knowledge with them.

L&D and employer brand

With today's emphasis on training, learning and development programs have the potential to boost an employer's brand perception. The byproducts mentioned above (such as an environment of continuous learning and a growth mindset), given time to take root, send a message about a company's values. This helps to retain existing employees while attracting new ones.

Highly engaged—and educated—employees will, in turn, become your organization's best brand ambassadors. As Igloo Software [CMO Mike Hicks wrote to HR Dive](#), "You can create a positive internal culture, which will be reflected in a positive customer experience and help build your company's brand."



Career Development Template

1. I am satisfied with the investment my organization makes in training and education.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

0 of 6 answered

[Check out this template >](#)



Becky Cantieri

Chief People Officer
SurveyMonkey

Pro tip: Creating better L&D programs

Learn what people at your company think about the career development options that you offer. Are they satisfied with the level of job training and education? Do they feel like their skills and expertise are being put to use? Do they see a chance to grow themselves professionally? Use a [career development survey](#) and find out.

You can also use [quizzes](#) to assess the effectiveness of your learning and development programs. See how much material is being absorbed by employees, and analyze the data to see if specific topics require more attention. Apply these techniques to company-wide trainings and initiatives.

Expert's corner

Hear from our own Chief People Officer, Becky Cantieri, how SurveyMonkey used surveys to solve some of its own development-related challenges.

“We do a number of different surveys for cohorts as well as individuals to measure the impact of our development programs for the year.

“One good example of this was with regards to manager training. We asked leaders across the company what we could do to help them be more effective in their roles. A lot of leaders said they had new managers [reporting to them], and told us what we needed to help them with.

“So we created two separate curriculums: manager onboarding (aka ‘Management 101’) as well as a more advanced curriculum for how to create high-performing teams.

“The big takeaway here is that, to be successful in development, **you need to meet people where they are.**”

Conclusion

Like almost anything related to employee engagement, there are no magic bullets or immediate fixes.

Implementing impactful learning and development programs takes time, effort, and experimentation.

One of the best ways to track the success of your L&D programs is to measure the effect it has on employee engagement. Does that sound daunting? Just another item on a long list of things you already have to do?

Spoiler alert: it doesn't have to be.

Check out [SurveyMonkey Engage](#), our comprehensive business solution built to help you holistically understand and improve employee engagement. It's as "out-of-the-box" as it gets, so you can get your program running fast and start measuring and improving engagement.

[Schedule a demo today!](#)

