

Growing together: Collaborative online learning emerges as key solution to skills crisis

The State of Online Learning Report surveyed 2,500 employees in the US, UK, and France to understand their perspectives on digital learning methods at work.

Temps de lecture : minute

7 June 2024

Personal growth rhymes with company growth.

Apart from the fact that they end with similar words, those two notions go hand in hand.

The same way a tall person wouldn't fit in a small room, or an encyclopedia on a tiny bookshelf, one's desire to know more and ambition to better themselves cannot be contained in a tiny company.

But far from materialistic needs, one needs to be in a big, successful company to discover their full potential. By desiring and learning more, one makes the world around them bigger and more beautiful, and at the same time, the brand they work for. This phenomenon is revealed in a survey of over 2,500 employees in the US, UK, and France carried out by collaborative learning platform [360Learning](#). Respondents said they are acquiring new skills and improving at their jobs due to useful online learning.

The rise of online learning

As spending on learning and development (L&D) has risen, estimated to cost ~£955 per employee worldwide, online learning has gained prominence as a scalable and effective solution for employee development, particularly for remote and globally dispersed teams. Yet in the past, it has been considered less effective than in-person training, business leaders were skeptical about its impact, and L&D teams have been under pressure to prove their return on investment for new programmes, and training schemes. Until now.

According to The State of Online Learning Report 2024, most learners find the online learning provided by their employees effective, giving it four out of five stars. Over two-thirds (68%) reported that it directly improves their job performance, whilst employees say they benefit from online learning when it is convenient, flexible, and where content is contextually relevant.

Critically, online learning is emerging as a powerful tool in addressing the skills crisis. With 74% of CEOs expressing concern about the availability of key skills amongst their workforces, 66% of respondents said online training had helped them acquire new skills necessary for their roles. Additionally, learning new skills ranked as the top priority for employees in the US and France, underscoring their drive for professional growth and development.

Collaborate and ameliorate

The study reveals that online learning has proven to be the most effective when combined with collaborative learning – when peers learn from one another. When asked what helps learners to do their job better, ‘learning from my colleagues’ was the most chosen answer by 92% of respondents, over other options including mentorship programmes and self-directed

learning.

As well, when asked what was helping teams to upskill, the second most popular was 'learning directly from my colleagues' from over half of respondents (53%). This was higher among US respondents (58%) compared to employees in France (46%). The appetite for collaborative learning and the benefit this brings for companies in enabling employees to share knowledge means it is one of the most effective ways to close skills gaps at scale.

New light on knowledge

The report shone a light on the value that employees see in L&D as a whole. Three-quarters of respondents said that they can see the impact of the work their organisation's L&D team does, which rose to 79% for smaller companies.

However, it also identifies areas for improvement to further enhance the effectiveness of online learning. One-fifth (20%) said they wanted a more interactive and engaging training experience whilst 15% said they wanted relevant content with a focus on practical skills and knowledge. Whilst 91% of respondents said they have knowledge to share, only 60% have been asked to share their knowledge to inform learning, whilst only 21% regularly collaborate with L&D teams. To truly harness the value of online learning, L&D teams can also turn to subject-matter experts in their organisation to access the expertise necessary to create contextual and impactful courses.

"L&D teams used to worry about the lack of engagement when it came to online learning. Our findings show a promising shift in how employees perceive the effectiveness of online learning and L&D. They no longer see online learning as a secondary option but as a crucial component of their professional development." says *David James*, Chief Learning Officer at

360Learning.

"The skills crisis requires innovative solutions, and collaborative learning stands out as a key strategy."

"By leveraging peer-driven and collaborative approaches, organisations can not only close skills gaps but also drive significant business growth." adds David.

Article écrit par Paul Ferretti