

Chief Talent Development Officers

Driving Strategy and Performance

79%

of organizations have talent development leaders

89%

of talent development leaders saw increased growth in the scope of duties and responsibilities

In the past one to two years:



The CTDO's involvement in developing organizational business leaders has increased



The CTDO's influence in the company has grown



The CTDO's role in strategic planning has increased

Profiles of 4 Leading CTDOs



The participants:



543 talent development professionals

CHIEF TALENT DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Driving Strategy and Performance

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ATD Product Code: 191702
ISBN-10: 1-56286-438-6
ISBN-13: 978-1-56286-438-5
e-ISBN: 978-1-56286-450-7
Publication Date: April 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organizations—especially those that are consistent high performers in the world’s markets—recognize that talent development has become a critical discipline, and that cultivating a learning culture can provide powerful support that drives strategic execution and bottom-line business results.

Because companies recognize the business impact learning has on organizations, the talent development leadership role is experiencing unprecedented expansion in scope and responsibilities. While it goes by many names—chief talent development officer (CTDO) and chief learning officer (CLO) are among the most popular—the learning leadership role demands strong and varied skills wielded by professionals with the courage and vision to fully own and define what has become a key contributor to organizational success.

To show current and aspiring talent development leaders the changes and growth occurring in the role—and what those shifts might mean for them—the Association for Talent Development (ATD) and the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) collaborated on new research based on the experiences of learning leaders worldwide.

Most organizations (79 percent) have a designated talent development leader or leaders. Although the role is relatively new in many firms—less than a decade—organizational learning effectiveness rises as the talent development leader’s tenure lengthens. Reporting relationships matter, too. In some companies achieving high performance in learning, the talent development leader reports directly to the CEO.

The talent development leader’s role is expanding in nearly 90 percent of organizations. For nearly 70 percent of those companies this means that learning leaders are taking on responsibility for more aspects of talent management (or other business functions) in addition to learning and development (L&D). Assuming broader duties makes balance a crucial concept for learning leaders: They must avoid viewing every issue through the lens of L&D while also ensuring that learning doesn’t suffer because their attention is required to lead engagement, performance, acquisition, or other talent functions for which they might also be accountable.

In nearly 90 percent of organizations, the talent development leader’s role is expanding.

Growth in organizational stature, coupled with broader responsibilities, requires commitment by talent development leaders to continuously learn new skill sets. ATD and i4cp explored critical skills for today’s learning leaders, and this report shares the most effective self-development practices of leaders heading multiple learning and talent functions for their organizations.

The expanded role of the talent development leader and heightened emphasis on being a driver of business success reflect many of the changes in the world's market environments today. This will continue as organizations and their workforces transform to keep pace with competitive imperatives.

"We're competing in a global economy, and the world of work, and workers, is changing," observes Humera Malik, vice president of learning, engagement, and performance for digital interactive entertainment company Electronic Arts (EA). "That's redefining what learning is. We used to train people to do their jobs. Now, we help them reinvent themselves in their roles because the world is moving rapidly, and industries are transforming overnight. My role has grown much broader. I shape talent strategy and culture—who we are as a company and what we value—and that helps drive our business success. As learning leaders, it's critical that we understand how our role is evolving and what we need to do to grow along with it."

INTRODUCTION

“In some organizations I see learning leadership shifting more into talent officer roles,” says Andrea Procaccino, vice president and chief learning officer at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, one of the most comprehensive integrated academic healthcare delivery systems in the United States. Procaccino is among many learning leaders whose duties have grown to encompass multiple aspects of talent management in addition to L&D. Looking ahead, she anticipates continued role expansion for talent development leaders.

EA's Malik agrees: “There’s disruption everywhere. And it’s redefining the roles of learning professionals and learning leaders,” she says. “The acquisition of knowledge is even more important as we dive into new areas we haven’t known before. Learning leaders’ roles are becoming much broader. Studying what we are doing and how we are evolving as a function is critical.”

Such views inspired *Chief Talent Development Officers: Driving Strategy and Performance* (hereafter, the Study). In fall 2016, ATD and i4cp fielded a survey to 543 learning and business professionals. Sixty-two percent of participants represented organizations with workforces of 1,000 or more. Nearly 75 percent of those companies were global and multinational enterprises operating in a wide variety of industries. Section 5 provides detailed profiles of four talent development leaders based on telephone interviews.

Key Findings

- ▶ High-performance organizations clearly designate a talent development leader or leaders. Overall, most companies assign accountability for learning—43 percent to one person; 36 percent to multiple people. Top performers are more likely to designate a single individual to lead learning, reinforcing talent development as an organizational priority. Formal accountability for learning is strongly correlated to better market performance and learning effectiveness.
- ▶ Talent development leaders’ tenure and reporting relationships strengthen enterprise learning. As the tenure of learning leadership rises, so does overall talent development effectiveness. Reporting relationships also matter. Talent development leaders most often report to chief human resources officers (CHROs), but greater organizational learning effectiveness characterizes organizations in which the learning leader reports to the CEO.
- ▶ In nearly 90 percent of organizations, talent development leadership roles are expanding. Major drivers of those changes include evolving workforce plans, organizational restructuring, and the challenge of transforming corporate cultures. For many learning leaders, expansion means taking on duties across the wider talent spectrum, which is also fueled by pressure to improve talent management integration and effectiveness.

- ▶ Three increases in learning leaders' duties are linked to better market performance. Heading larger talent development teams, developing more business leaders across the organization, and involvement in diversity programs were the three talent development leadership responsibilities associated with stronger organizational performance.
- ▶ Most talent development leaders are (or will be) talent management leaders, too. Almost 70 percent of learning leaders are taking on accountability for one or more additional talent management components beyond learning. Those areas are most likely to be leadership development, performance management, succession management, or organizational culture.
- ▶ Leadership development skills are the most crucial capabilities for learning leaders, said 85 percent of survey respondents. More than 75 percent also cited coaching, integrated talent management, and change leadership as critical skills.
- ▶ Only 20 percent of organizations have formal succession plans for talent development leaders. Even among market-leading companies, formal plans were affirmed by a scant 25 percent.
- ▶ High-performance organizations are more apt to promote talent development leadership talent from within. Only 45 percent of survey participants said their companies would look internally for a successor to the learning leadership role, while 30 percent chose to source externally and the rest chose "I don't know."

Some Talent Development Functions Help Achieve Business Objectives

Every ATD and i4cp research collaboration includes ATD's Talent Development Effectiveness Index, or TDEI. To provide a snapshot of organizational learning, the standardized query asked survey respondents to rate their talent development functions in six key areas. The assessment addresses the extent to which talent development functions help meet learning and development goals, organizational business goals, and leverage newer technologies to help achieve those objectives. Also included are statements rating the efficiency and effectiveness with which learning is delivered. (Averaged responses provide an index of talent development effectiveness).

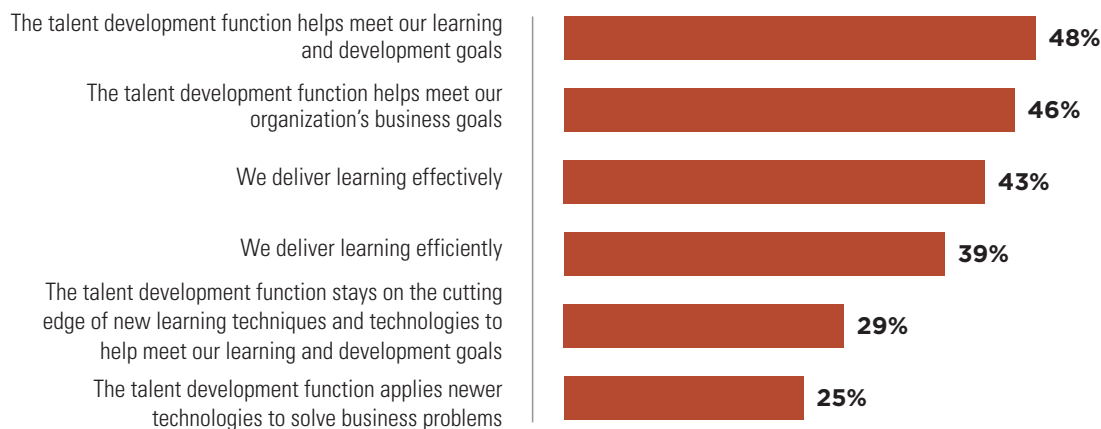
Those surveyed rated their talent development functions highest at helping meet both L&D goals and organizational business goals (48 and 46 percent, respectively). Nearly as many respondents said they deliver learning effectively, and 38 percent described their learning delivery as efficient.

Continuing a trend noted in ATD and i4cp studies over the past several years, fewer than 30 percent of participants gave high ratings to the talent development function's ability to stay on top of newer technologies or to apply those technologies to solving business problems and meeting L&D goals.

FIGURE 1:

THE STATE OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS ALL ORGANIZATIONS

To what extent do you agree with these statements about your organization?



Percent of respondents indicating high or very high extent.

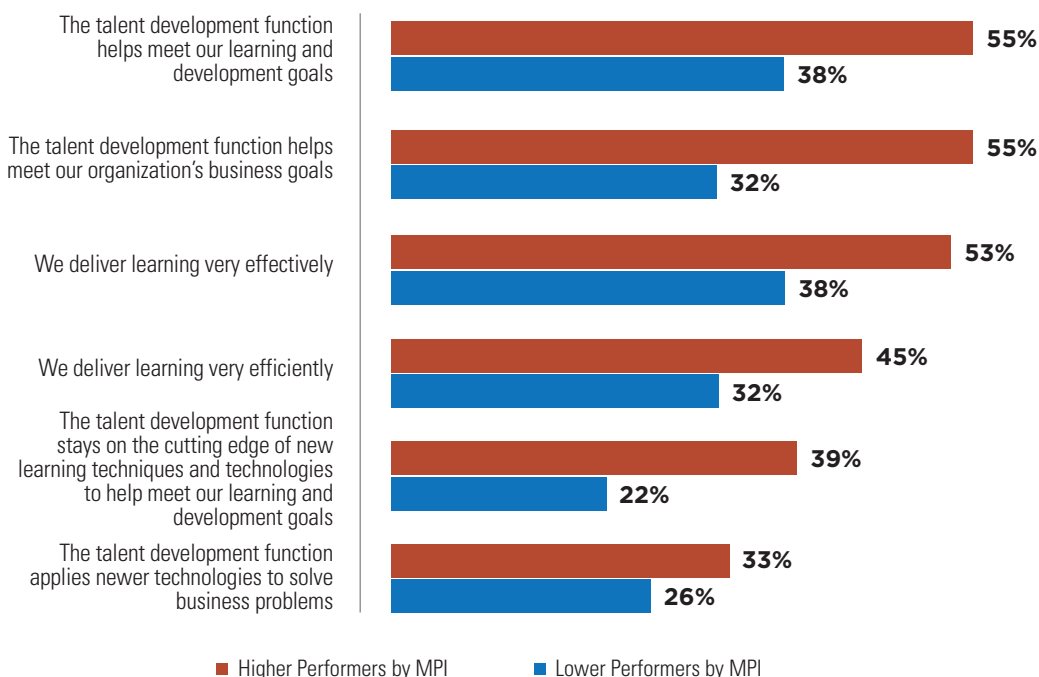
MPI Demonstrates the Better Learning-Better Performance Link

The Study also includes i4cp's Market Performance Index (MPI). Survey respondents were asked to assess their organizations' performance over time in four key competitive areas: revenue growth, market share, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Averaging the responses creates an index segregating top, bottom, and midrange companies. Analyzing and contrasting the responses of participants representing high- and low-performing firms then highlights talent practices that differentiate market-leading organizations. Business and learning leaders can apply those strategies in their own firms to positively affect performance and business outcomes.

Respondents in high-performance organizations rate their talent development functions as more effective across all six areas of responsibility, and significant gaps separate levels of talent development effectiveness achieved in high-performance companies compared with their lower-performing counterparts (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2:**TALENT DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS IS GREATER IN HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATIONS**

To what extent do you agree with these statements about your organization?



Percent of respondents indicating high or very high extent.

A Note on Correlations

This report includes data from correlations. Correlations measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The closer a correlation is to +1 (-1), the stronger the positive (negative) relationship between the two variables. Correlations do not imply a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables involved. Rather, when a correlation between two variables is found to be statistically significant, it means that the measured relationship is not coincidental. Statistical significance is represented by p-values. For instance, a correlation with $p < 0.05$ implies a less than 5 percent probability that the measured correlation is a result of chance. A correlation with $p < 0.01$, which represents the majority of correlations reported in this study, shows a 99 percent confidence that these results represent a statistical relationship.

The Role of the Talent Development Leader: Changing and Growing

Learning leadership roles are in place in most organizations, and multiple aspects of those roles exert significant influence—on the individuals who hold talent development leadership positions, on the organizational learning they oversee, and on the overall business performance and results companies achieve. The Study quickly made it apparent that the structure of the talent development leadership role is important, as are reporting relationships, tenure, and other factors.

Further, learning leaders' roles are far from static. Most are undergoing extensive changes, and for many leaders, change equals added responsibilities.

Most Companies Designate a Talent Development Leader or Leaders

Affirming the important role of talent development in today's organizations, 79 percent of respondents said their companies assign specific accountability for talent development. The differences lie in whether that role falls to one person or to multiple individuals. Slightly more than 40 percent of survey participants reported a single individual heading talent development, while 36 percent worked at organizations with multiple leaders. However, another 19 percent said no specific leader or leaders were held accountable.

Strong correlations to market performance and organizational learning effectiveness were linked to assigning formal accountability for learning leadership, whether to one person or more than one. However, market-leading companies are more likely to invest authority in a single talent development leader.

Tenure and Reporting Relationships Make a Difference

The Study found that most organizations have a learning leadership role in place, but it also revealed that talent development leadership is a young position. In more than 60 percent of companies with talent development leaders, the role had been in existence for five or fewer years. Only 15 percent of firms reported having the position for a decade or more.

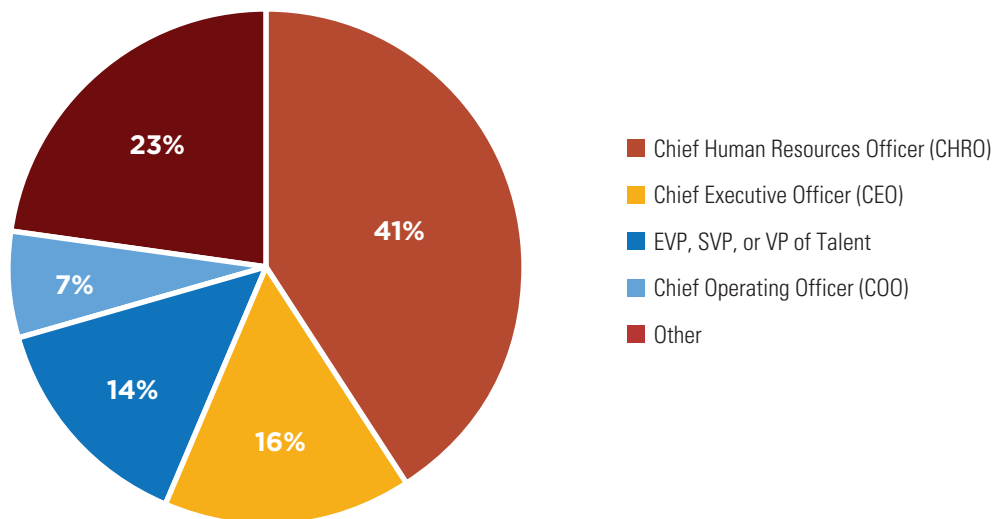
Despite its relatively short history, the talent development leadership role is one that accrues strength as it ages. Organizations are likely to report greater overall learning effectiveness as the tenure of the talent development leadership role lengthens.

The greatest proportion of survey participants (41 percent) said their talent development leaders report to the chief human resources officer (Figure 3). However, a significant correlation was found to learning effectiveness when talent development leaders were direct reports of the CEO.

FIGURE 3:

FEW TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS REPORT TO CEOS, BUT DOING SO IS TIED TO STRONGER LEARNING

To whom does your talent development or learning leader report?



Talent Development Leadership Is a Dynamic Role in Most Organizations

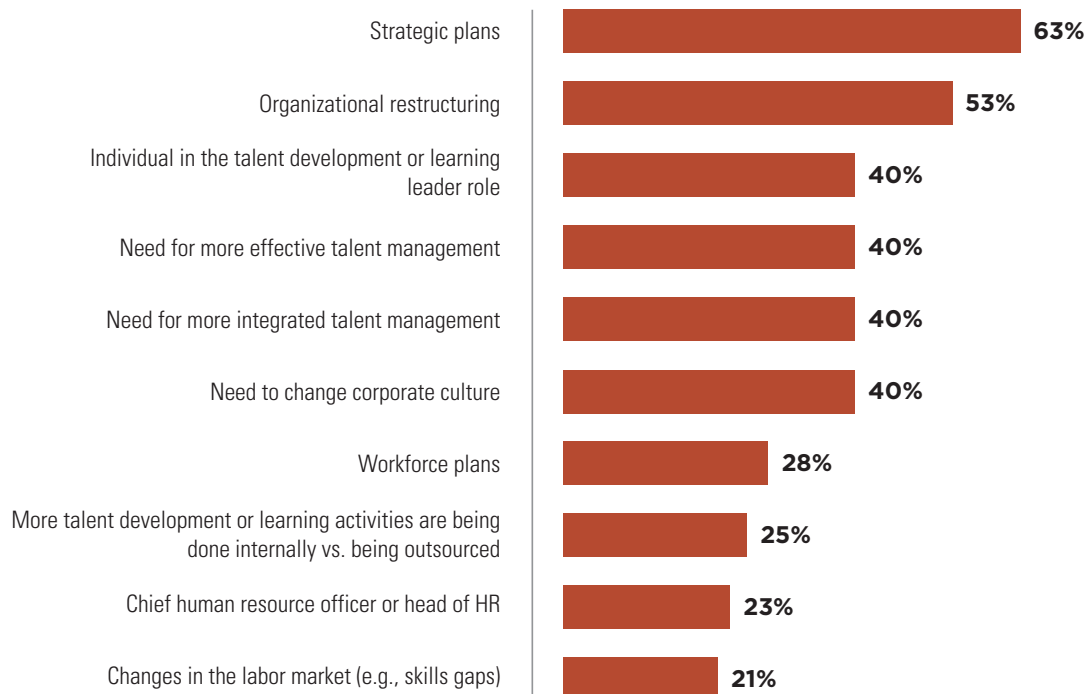
Given the extent and pace of change in the business world today, it would be surprising to find any leadership role that wasn't changing. Although nearly 20 percent of respondents reported no shifts in talent development duties, another 73 percent said the role had undergone changes, particularly during the past year or so.

As talent development leaders and learning strategies become more linked to business outcomes, it makes sense that business objectives underlie the most compelling forces behind changes to learning leaders' duties. Including learning in strategic business plans was the top driver of role shifts in 63 percent of firms that reported changes, and this was associated with stronger market performance and learning effectiveness (Figure 4). Evolving workforce plans as drivers of change in the talent development leader's role were also linked to talent development effectiveness.

FIGURE 4:

BUSINESS PLANS AND IMPERATIVES ARE CHANGING THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP ROLE

What are the major factors influencing those changes in the talent development or learning leader's role? (Choose up to five.)



There are other factors directly affecting bottom-line results that are causing changes in responsibilities of talent development leaders. More than half of respondents pointed to organizational restructuring, while about 40 percent cited needs for more effective or more integrated talent management, or for a change in organizational culture.

In some cases, the evolution of the talent development leadership role has been shaped, at least in part, by more personal factors. Forty percent of respondents attributed changes to the individual in the learning leadership position. And, those representing market-topping firms were more likely to cite the specific learning leader's influence. Thus organizations will be well served to invest in developing wide-ranging skills and capabilities in those likely to enter the talent development leadership role.

Another personal influence comes from leaders' leaders. At New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Procaccino says, "I've seen huge growth in my role, and I attribute that to the progressive CHROs for whom I've worked here." Almost 25 percent of survey respondents agreed, citing their chief HR officers as key motivators of change in learning leaders' roles.

Increases Mean Expanded Responsibilities

While many elements—from the organizational to the personal—underlie the changes occurring within the talent development leadership role, the biggest and most consistent result of change is the overall expansion of the position. Almost nine out of 10 respondents pointed to major growth in the scope of learning leaders' duties and responsibilities (Figure 5).

The survey asked about a dozen facets of the leadership role, inquiring whether each had increased, decreased, or remain unchanged. Overwhelmingly, respondents pointed to increases in talent development leaders' involvement in all 12 areas, confirming that expanded responsibilities manifest in many ways. More than 75 percent noted increased pressure for more integrated and effective talent management, and about the same number acknowledged that greater need for organization-wide collaboration added to talent development leaders' agendas.

FIGURE 5:

MOST TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP ROLES ARE ADDING MORE RESPONSIBILITIES

In what ways have the following aspects of your organization's talent development or learning leader role changed in the past one to two years? (Don't know responses are not shown.)



Some Responsibilities Are Tied to Market Performance

Three of these areas of responsibility were directly linked to market performance, underscoring a growing focus on driving better performance and producing a positive effect on bottom-line business results over time:

- ▶ an increase in the size of talent development teams managed by the learning leader
- ▶ greater need to develop business leaders within the organization
- ▶ more involvement by the talent development leader in diversity programs.

EA's Malik, who acknowledges significant growth in her own role, leads multiple functions. She sees role expansion as a necessary part of empowering talent development leaders to produce better business results: "If you're trying to truly change an organization—to reskill or build capability—that happens through a multifaceted effort," she says. "At EA, for instance, we needed to increase the number of analysts without changing overall headcount. That required a multifunction approach that touched learning, diversity and inclusion, organizational effectiveness, and more. If I just had L&D, we wouldn't have accomplished what we did. It was more about wrapping a plan around a business imperative than it was about learning new skills."

Producing Strong Learning Outcomes Remains a Core Capability

Changes in two other facets of the learning leader's role reflected strong correlations to talent development effectiveness, while further fleshing out the picture of today's learning leader. One important element is an increased focus on the application of learning technologies. Technology has become increasingly valuable for responding to expanding challenges as its reach and efficiency have grown.

The second factor is an increase in the talent development leader's sphere of influence within the organization. This goes hand-in-hand with expanded responsibilities and greater emphasis on the learning leader as the core developer of current and future executives across the business. The time talent development leaders spend with those current and emerging business leaders provides opportunities to build strong relationships and establish the trust that fuels wider influence. As leaders continue being shaped and developed by talent development leaders, the perception of the learning leader as a critical business resource will become organically embedded in company cultures which, in turn, are more likely to become learning cultures.

Talent Development Leaders Are Talent Management Leaders, Too

As talent development leaders watch their roles expand, some are taking on not just a few more responsibilities, but many. New York-Presbyterian Hospital's Procaccino is among a growing group of learning leaders who head multiple aspects of talent management.

Initially, Procaccino's responsibility was what she terms "straight learning." "But I've seen my role grow and grow and grow," she says. "In my purview now, I have training and development, technology learning solutions, organizational development (which includes team development, employee engagement, performance management, talent management, and talent reviews), employee rewards and recognition, and events. It's really a dual role I play as a learning leader and as a talent management leader for the organization."

For Learning Leaders, Job Expansion Means Taking on Talent Management

Almost 70 percent of the talent development professionals surveyed for the Study confirmed that they were reaching beyond the traditional limits of learning and development to take responsibility for one or more components of talent management (Figure 6). Among those representing companies that excel in organizational learning effectiveness, that number grew to 75 percent.

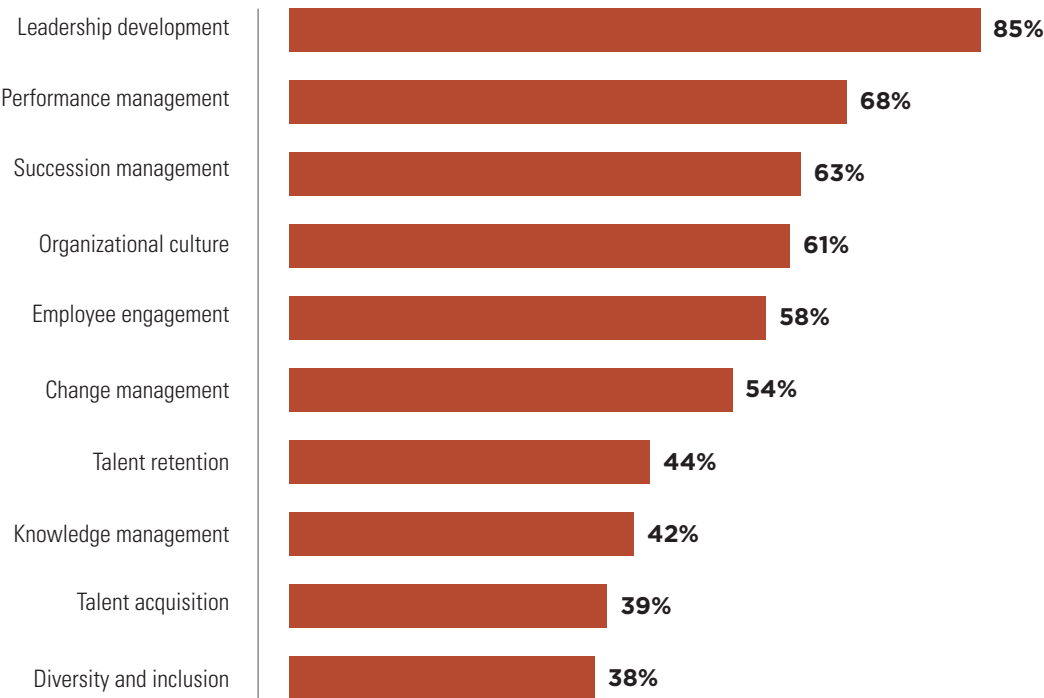
Most Companies Rely on Talent Development Leaders to Develop Other Leaders

When organizations look to their learning leaders to assume talent management responsibilities, leadership development tops the list. According to 85 percent of survey respondents, such widespread accountability emphasizes the talent development leader's role in building organizations' long-term business performance and strategic capabilities.

A gap of nearly 20 percentage points between leadership development and the next-ranked talent management component speaks to the priority enterprises place on preparing future business leaders.

FIGURE 6: TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS ASSUME VARIED TALENT MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to learning and development, for which of the following talent management components is your organization's talent development or learning leader also responsible? (Select all that apply.)



More than half of respondents said their organizations looked to talent development leaders to head other talent management functions as well, including performance management, succession management, organizational culture, employee engagement, and change management. The survey asked participants to choose all applicable responses, and the strong percentages echo the significant assumption of responsibilities described by New York-Presbyterian's Procaccino and EA's Malik.

When Talent Development Leaders Manage Talent, Organizations Benefit

Extending their responsibilities also gives talent development leaders a widened view of organizational learning needs. This greater understanding of enterprise training requirements was the top benefit that survey participants associated with broadening the scope of talent development leaders' talent management duties.

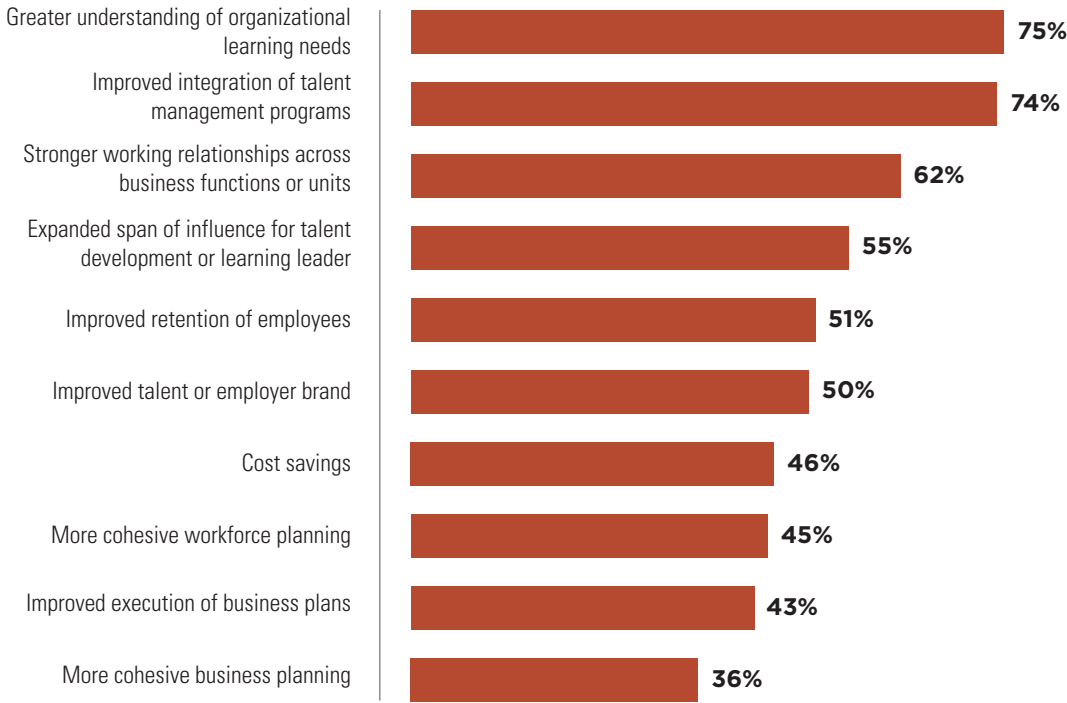
Greater understanding of learning needs is linked to better overall organizational learning effectiveness. So is another top benefit—improved integration of talent management programs. Stronger working relationships and a broader span of influence also ranked among leading benefits. Half of respondents affirmed their belief that leadership of other talent management components contributed to better talent branding and improved employee retention (Figure 7).

At Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in North Carolina, Regional Vice President of Talent Acquisition and Development Paula Wojtkowski agrees that broader responsibilities in talent management give her better insight into her organization's overall talent needs and performance. "From a talent acquisition perspective, my team gets a close look at candidates and new hires," she explains. "We work with recruiters to refine screening processes, and we get input from recent hires that enables us to confirm whether we're accurately representing the work environment here, our culture, and employment brand."

FIGURE 7:

TALENT MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP WIDENS TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING NEEDS

In which of the following ways does your organization benefit by expanding your talent development or learning leader's role to include one or more additional components of talent management? (Select all that apply.)



When evaluated against the factors influencing the expansion of talent development leadership roles (described in section 1), survey findings suggest that organizations are seeing gains in some of the areas that drove role changes in the first place—particularly in improved integration of talent management programs. Overall, high-performance companies were most likely to realize benefits across most of the areas examined in the Study. Lower performers reported greater benefits in only two: cost savings and improved operating efficiencies in the other talent management components headed by the learning leader.

Added Responsibilities Require a Balancing Act

Unfortunately, there also can be drawbacks when learning leaders assume responsibility for talent management functions outside learning and development. Nearly half of survey respondents said that the greatest potential threats are posed by placing too much reliance on one individual and spreading the talent development leader's focus too broadly (Figure 8).

Wojtkowski agrees that responsibilities for talent functions beyond L&D can mean feeling stretched. “But truthfully, I don’t know anyone at this organizational level who isn’t spread a little thinly,” she says. “This is a very fast-paced industry where things change rapidly. I would love to be able to devote more time to strategic planning, and I do carve out time for that. As my team puts more rigor around our own development and certification in learning, I believe we are putting in efforts now that will give us more time back in the future. That said, I’m sure most other learning leaders would agree that there are some weeks when it feels as if all you do is put out fires.”

Procaccino’s wide-ranging talent management responsibilities mean that there are times when she gets pulled away from L&D. “Sometimes I’m pulled into things just because I’m creative, and I’ll get things done,” she says. “But I have a relationship with my leader that enables me to push back. I can say, ‘If you want me to do these things, then others may have to come off my plate. Are you able to accept that risk?’”

As Wojtkowski and Procaccino suggest, stepping up to expanded responsibilities is about talent development leaders’ ability to successfully balance the demands on their time, attention, and expertise. That means a shared focus that gives each area of responsibility its due. Those interviewed for the Study acknowledged the challenges, but embrace and thrive on them. Says Procaccino: “I believe so much in the role. You need to just be strong and courageous.”

Stepping up to expanded responsibilities is about talent development leaders’ ability to successfully balance the demands on their time, attention, and expertise.

FIGURE 8:

SOME COMPANIES BURDEN TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS WITH TOO MANY RESPONSIBILITIES

Which of the following are drawbacks your organization experiences as a result of expanding your talent development or learning leader's role to include one or more other components of talent management? (Select all that apply.)



Section 3

Development for Talent Development Leaders: Critical Skills and Effective Approaches

The Study documented tremendous growth in the scope of talent development leadership roles, as well as a greater emphasis on being a developer of current and future business executives and a driving force behind organizational performance. But developing current and future talent development leaders (including themselves) must be equally compelling priorities.

For talent development leaders, developing the developer is a two-pronged imperative. First, current learning leaders need to ensure that they are continually upping the ante when it comes to their own skills and capabilities by actively pursuing ongoing development.

Talent development leaders must identify and nurture potential future learning leaders as purposefully as they develop leadership talent across other business functions.

“I teach people that when it comes to development, they are the captain of their own ship,” says Wojtkowski. “Don’t let someone else be responsible for your development—you drive that. Earlier in my career, I cross-trained in operations on my own time every Saturday for six months because I wanted to know more about operations. I did similar cross-training in most of the functional areas here. As we continue to evolve our learning function, my team and I are developing ourselves at the same time.”

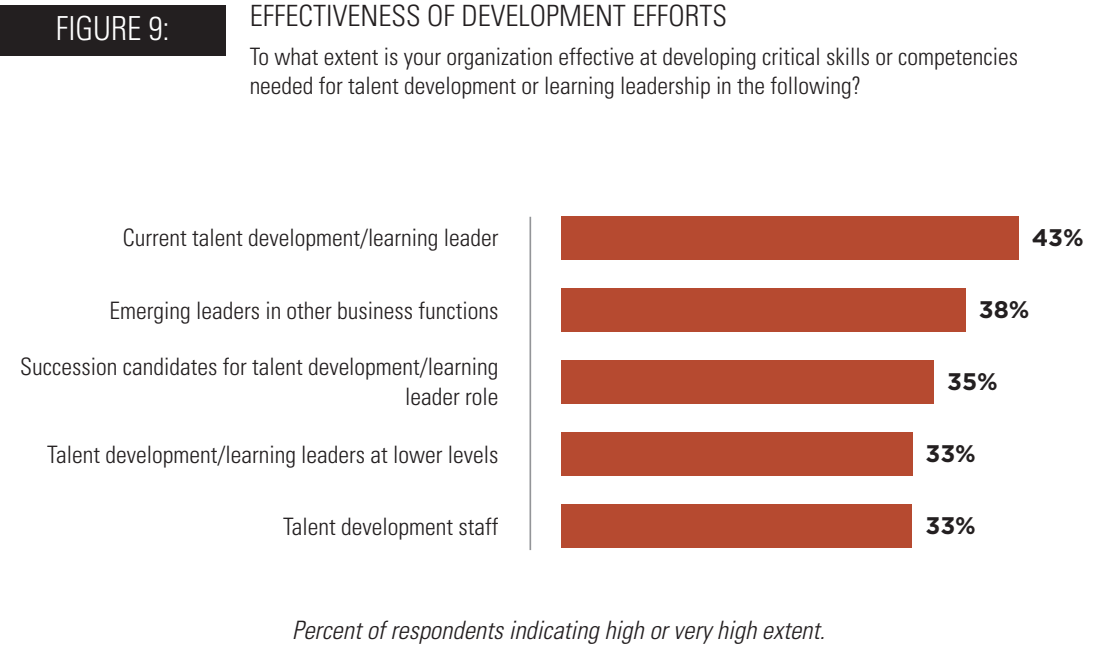
Second, talent development leaders must identify and nurture potential future learning leaders as purposefully as they develop leadership talent across other business functions within their organizations.

For Harrah’s Cherokee and a nearby sister property, Wojtkowski identifies high-potential leadership talent from various development programs, including top performers in her own business units. “I mentor about 20 people across both properties, and I try to expose as many people as I can to growth opportunities,” she explains.

Developing Talent Development Leaders Is a High-Performance Practice

More than half (55 percent) of organizations actively work to help leaders develop the critical skills needed to head talent development. Those efforts were more likely to be taking place in high-performance companies and in those reporting high levels of talent development effectiveness. In fact, companies that were low performers in the marketplace were two times more likely to say they don’t try to develop talent development leadership skills.

The Study found that organizational efforts centered around developing current talent development leaders were most likely to be deemed effective (by 43 percent of respondents; Figure 9). Indeed, that focus is well placed—strong correlations were found to both market performance and learning effectiveness with successful development of current learning leaders.



Developing candidates to succeed the current leader (which 35 percent of respondents indicated their organizations were doing effectively), was also linked to better market performance and learning outcomes. Of the five potential groups listed in the survey, learning effectiveness was strongly linked to efforts to develop each. However, employees and potential leadership talent lower down the organizational ladder were least likely to be targeted for talent development leadership preparation.

"I go all the way down the organization when I look for potential learning leadership talent," says Procaccino. "Everybody deserves that conversation, that respect, and that level of attention, so I have that conversation with everybody who works with me. I have skip-level meetings with my organization to ensure everyone has access to talk with me. I do that with others in the organization outside my department, too. I take that responsibility as a talent leader and talent developer very seriously. It's part of my role."

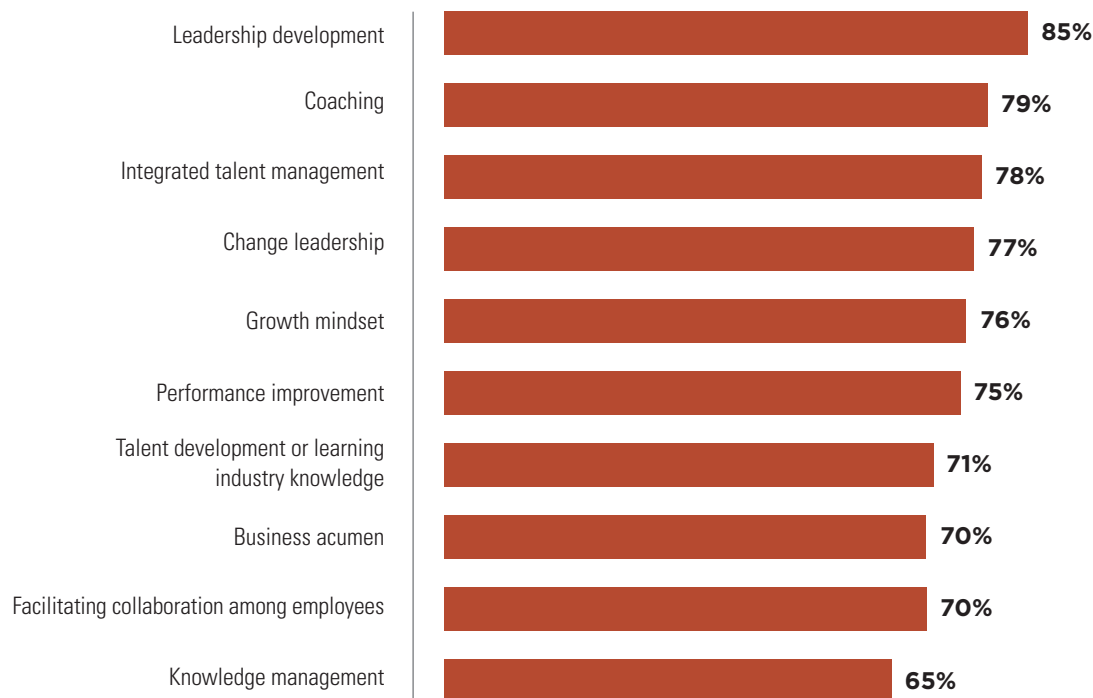
Leadership Development Is Talent Development Leaders' Most Critical Skill

Consistent with findings throughout the survey, 85 percent of respondents said the ability to ensure future business leaders for the organization is the single most critical skill talent development leaders need. Coaching, integrated talent management, change leadership, and a growth mindset rounded out the top five vital competencies, with performance improvement only 1 percentage point behind (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10:

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOPS 10 MOST CRITICAL SKILLS FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

To what extent do you consider the following to be critical skills and competencies for talent development or learning leaders in the next three years?



Percent of respondents indicating high or very high extent.

Strategic Skills, Agility, and Business Focus Are Important

Malik believes in the importance of strategic-level capabilities over learning-specific competencies for talent development leaders: “I’m not a specialist, but that’s probably why I have the role I do,” she observes. “In the tech industry, it’s less about pedigree and more about what you can practically do. I don’t have a PhD, but people on my team do. I just have the honor of architecting and leading them. I don’t get hung up on having to be a learning expert because I know I’m not. Yet I own the leadership role because I’m strong at holding a vision, bringing people together, diagnosing what’s working and what’s not, integrating disparate practices and breaking down barriers in the organization. My team respects that, and that’s the value I bring to my organization as a learning leader.”

Procaccino succinctly sums up her view on critical skills for talent development leadership: “The competencies of a good learning leader are courage, innovation, inspirational leadership, and agility. You have to be agile to be able to deal with whatever’s coming at you.”

Bror Saxberg, CLO at Kaplan, emphasizes business-focused capabilities for learning leaders. “Become good at measuring the value to the company of decision making,” he advises. “When decisions must be made, ask the right questions about measurable impact: Does that save time (therefore salaries)? Does that reduce costly errors? How costly? Does that reduce other risks? Does that improve productivity? Defined as what—shorter time, more per hour, what does that mean?”

“One reason CLOs lose out on resources is because they can’t engage in a conversation with their colleagues in the C-suite about the financial (and other) value of what they want to do with the talent in the organization,” Saxberg continues. “Making it an instinct to ask what the value of decisions will be to shareholders and being able to talk about (and improve) that value are critical skills for learning leaders that can help build significant value for the organization. And will help release real investment for learning and development, because of the measurable payoff.”

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—Kaplan CLO Bror Saxberg

Other capabilities Saxberg emphasizes are a greater understanding of evidence-based instructional design and the ability to perform effective learning assessments. “Good assessments are a critical part of crafting a learning infrastructure that can improve itself, so think creatively about what the evidence trail must be (both at the end of training and beyond) to demonstrate that we’ve been successful in doing what we attempted,” he says. “CLOs need to become much better at that because it speaks directly to the question of whether we are adding value. If you’re no good

at valid and reliable assessments ultimately tied to what matters to the business, you won't be able to draw that key learning and business results connection."

Wojtkowski at Harrah's Cherokee agrees that business capabilities are key, but encourages blending people skills and business skills. "At the learning leadership level, you have to have a blend. While you might have a great idea for developing people, if it is cost-prohibitive and you can't build a business case to support it, you'll never get it approved. You have to understand the analytics of the business."

Performance Assessments Gauge Talent Development Leaders' Capabilities

Measuring various aspects of learning leaders' performance provides organizations with a means of assessing the capabilities leaders bring to their roles. In companies that offer development to talent development leaders, performance assessments may serve as a gauge of training quality and effectiveness.

More than two-thirds of survey respondents (68 percent) formally measure the performance of their learning leaders. The practice is linked to greater talent development effectiveness, which is something to consider for the 25 percent of learning leaders whose companies don't assess talent development leaders' performance. If that weren't motivation enough, the Study found that more is better when it comes to measuring performance—as the number of measurements used by organizations rose, so did the strength of correlations to both market performance and overall learning effectiveness.

Talent Development Activity and Employee Engagement Are Top Performance Metrics

To assess talent development leaders' performance, most organizations use common measures, such as tracking quantity metrics (such as learning assets created or courses completed by employees) or employee engagement levels (Figure 11).

Significant percentages of respondents also cited more strategic measurements, such as quality of learning programs and leaders' abilities to develop talent. In general, quality and business metrics were options strongly linked to learning effectiveness. Organizational talent mobility (movement of employees internally) also reflected ties, albeit weaker ones, to learning effectiveness.

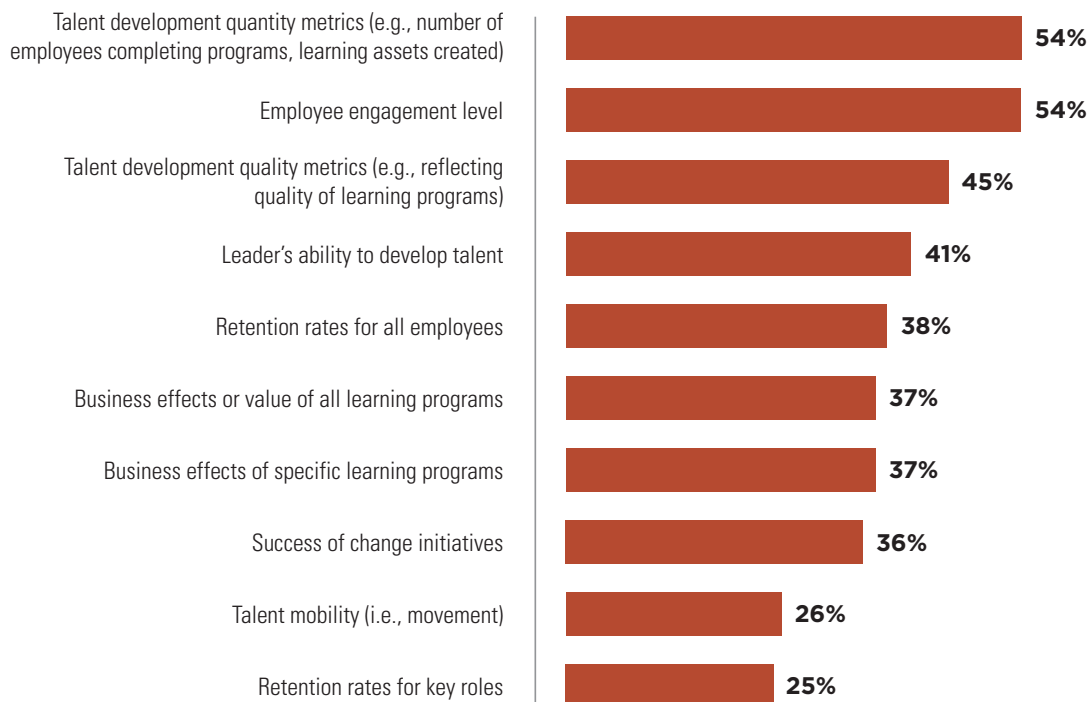
High-performance organizations out-distanced their lower-performing counterparts in the use of every measurement option presented in the survey. The largest gaps were found in measures of change initiative successes, all-employee retention rates, key-role retention rates, and time-to-productivity for new employees in those key roles.

Wojtkowski says business and other metrics are used to gauge her performance at Harrah's Cherokee. "I'm measured on EBITDA [earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization], turnover, employee opinion surveys, supervisor feedback surveys, and guest service scores," she says. "My team and I are working on creating our own talent and development analytics that we can measure ourselves on."

FIGURE 11:

TALENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT METRICS ARE TOP MEASURES OF LEADERS' PERFORMANCE

Which of the following does your organization formally measure to assess the performance of your talent development or learning leader? (Select all that apply.)



As the number of measures used to assess talent development leaders' performance rose, so did the strength of correlations to both market performance and overall learning effectiveness.

Section 4

Looking Ahead—Succession and Progression for Talent Development Leaders

With finding upon finding in the Study attesting to widespread growth in talent development leadership roles and an increased reliance on learning leaders to be powerful business catalysts and developers of enterprise-wide leadership talent, it is surprising that many organizations fail to ensure formal succession plans for talent development leaders.

“I am responsible for succession planning for my entire organization so it would be irresponsible for me not to be looking at developing successors for my own team,” says EA’s Malik. “I take succession planning very seriously. I have potential internal successors that I am developing to take on my role. I’m also always looking externally at people I think would be a good fit for EA, that I think would love the challenge. If our best internal people want my job and I’m not ready to leave, they’re going to go somewhere else. It means that I always have to be developing internally, giving them more responsibility, while also looking externally.”

Succession Planning—A Wake-Up Call for Organizations

Only one in five survey participants said their organizations had a formal succession plan for the talent development leadership role; another 32 percent expected to formalize a plan in the future. Formalized succession is strongly tied to learning effectiveness, underscoring another benefit of not only having a talent development leader, but also planning for the perpetuation of the role.

While only 20 percent have formalized succession, survey participants from market-leading organizations were only slightly more likely than those from lower performers to acknowledge having a formal plan, at 25 percent.

Only one in five survey respondents said their organizations had formalized succession plans for the talent development leadership role.

Regardless of company performance, at some point having a succession plan for the talent development leader becomes a vital strategy for mitigating real risk to an organization. As the learning leader's responsibilities extend into more components of talent management, planning for a successor moves further beyond only ensuring continuity for organizational learning. Every new function talent development leaders take on is at risk for loss of leadership if formal succession planning doesn't include that role.

High-Performance Organizations Look Internally for Talent Development Leadership Successors

The greatest single proportion of survey respondents (45 percent) said their organization would be most likely to promote from within when a talent development leadership successor was needed, although 30 percent opted to seek that new leader externally. The remaining 25 percent chose "don't know."

Strong links to both market performance and learning effectiveness were associated with taking the internal route to find a successor for the learning leader, and top companies were significantly more likely than lower performers to look within.

The relationships to performance and learning effectiveness offer a clear signal that organizations should begin to invest in developing potential talent development leadership talent earlier in the employee life cycle. Purposefully building wide-ranging competencies in promising candidates over time ensures a robust pipeline of qualified talent ready to assume learning leadership when needed. And with only 20 percent of organizations represented in the survey actively working to ensure talent development leadership succession, that opens extensive opportunities for many companies to improve their competitive capabilities and organizational performance by following suit.

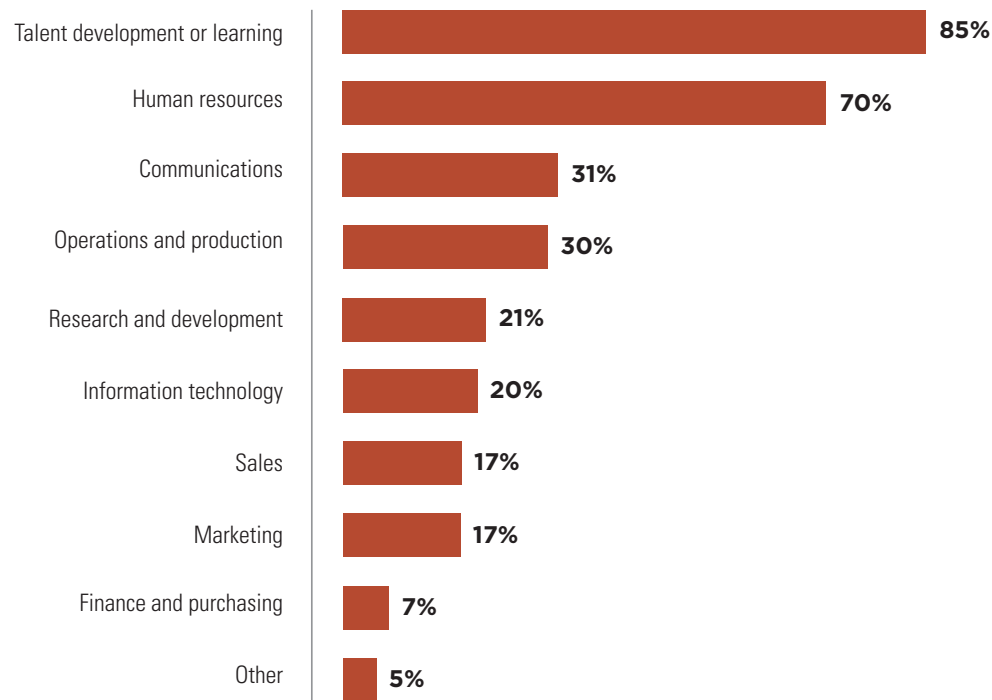
"I have some amazing talent on my team [at New York-Presbyterian Hospital] that I see as leaders of tomorrow, and I spend a lot of time mentoring them. I want them to have exposure to senior leaders in very strategic ways on projects that will stretch and challenge them," says Procaccino. "At the same time, I've brought in people with whom I've worked in the past."

Sourcing future talent development leadership talent internally is linked to better organizational performance and greater capabilities in overall learning. But where are organizations looking for likely candidates? As Procaccino pointed out, the talent development function is the logical first choice as a source of future learning leadership prospects, and 85 percent of respondents agreed (Figure 12). A link to learning effectiveness added further credence to the learning function as an incubator of talent development leadership successors.

In many companies, talent development falls under the umbrella of HR, and seven in 10 respondents cited the human resources function as the second most likely internal source of future talent. Communications and operations trailed, each cited by about three in 10 respondents.

FIGURE 12: ORGANIZATIONS LOOK TO THE LEARNING FUNCTION FOR FUTURE TALENT DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES

In your opinion, which function(s) are most likely to be succession paths for future talent development or learning leaders? (Choose up to five.)



A second tie to learning effectiveness was associated with the idea of talent development leadership talent emerging from the research and development (R&D) function, a business unit noted by only 21 percent of respondents. However, respondents from market-leading companies were more likely to look for future learning leaders in R&D and in marketing and sales.

"I think people jump into talent leadership from all kinds of places," says Saxberg. "At Kaplan, there is an excellent head of HR who came through the legal side. You just need a real interest in people, performance, and the ways in which you can apply evidence-based results to dramatically improve that performance."

Talent Development Leaders Aspire to Other Roles

Having looked at potential pathways to learning leadership, the Study also asked participants whether they perceived talent development leadership as a stepping stone to executive (or other executive) positions. Two-thirds of survey respondents believed talent development leaders aspire to higher offices, and 76 percent of that group said that CHRO was the likely goal. Participants could choose multiple responses, and 35 percent said chief diversity officer (CDO), 26 percent said CEO, 26 percent said chief operating officer (COO), and 16 percent said chief compliance officer (CCO). Another 37 percent said "other C-level position" not named here.

Respondents from high-performance firms agreed that the CHRO role was most likely to be on the radar of talent development leaders. They were also more likely to suggest the COO and CDO positions. Continued emphasis on the learning leader's expertise in developing capable business executives and on spearheading multiple aspects of talent management make learning leadership an ideal proving ground for aspiring enterprise executives.

Section 5

Talent Development Leadership Profiles

Learning by Day and Organization Development by Night

Humera Malik is vice president of learning, engagement, and performance for Electronic Arts (EA), a California-based digital interactive entertainment company that delivers games, content, and online services for Internet-connected consoles, computers, mobile phones, and tablets.

Current Responsibilities

Malik is responsible for leading all aspects of learning at EA, including development programs, knowledge management, and self-service learning options. In engagement, she oversees employee surveys, the organizational intranet, diversity and inclusion, and corporate social responsibility. In performance, she spearheads organizational effectiveness, performance management, talent and succession planning, and employee awards programs.

Education and Career Path to Learning Leadership

After earning a bachelor's degree in political science, Malik began her career as a consultant with the Hay Group (a global management consulting firm) advising clients on organizational effectiveness, leadership development, and engagement. At EA, she has built on that foundation, advancing through multiple leadership positions in learning and talent management.

How did your journey to learning happen?

As a student, I became interested in exploring what it means to lead, the responsibilities of leadership, how teams form, and how they create meaningful change. I had no idea that I could build a career in helping people achieve great things inside a company. It wasn't until I'd graduated, done some internships, and thought more about a career in government that I decided to look at other options. I discovered there was a whole field dedicated to building leadership, developing teams, and creating organizations that can sustain and be healthy and successful. I was inspired and completely fell into this as a career.

What career experiences prepared you for the learning and talent management work you do now?

When you find someone who sees something in you, tells you that, and invests in you relatively early in your career, that pays off in volumes. I would not be where I am now without the sponsorship of my CHRO, and that support has kept me here for more than a dozen years. You can't get that if you're dipping into a company for two or three years—you don't have time to prove yourself. So first, I had somebody who believed in me, gave me progressively more responsibility, and entrusted me with important things going on in the organization.

A second big transition occurred when I started working on a small team to define the talent planning and succession planning process for EA. Being given free rein on something so strategic was a huge growth experience. It wasn't just a matter of plug-and-play from existing research and best practices, but a challenge to figure out what would work here. It meant digging in with leaders and talking about where we were going as a business, what talent capabilities we'd need, and then defining a talent planning process. When you're shaping talent strategy, you're shaping culture. That work opened the door into the suite of talent management.

How do you continue developing your own knowledge and capabilities to be prepared for new and different challenges?

You need to understand what motivates you, what gets you engaged and excited because you are going to transfer that to your team. It's important to know your business, too, so I try to figure how I can stay as close to EA's business as possible and close to our industry as I choose growth opportunities. My team takes advantage of a lot of public domain materials—articles, blogs, and the like. We look at those and try to soak up what we can about trends. I do some of that on my own, but I also look at what my team finds. I combine that information with highly selective organizations that offer me a true peer group that I respect.

Is there anything you aren't seeing about learning leadership that should be on the radar?

There is a lot out there, but I'm not sure it's always a good story. For example, you see a lot about how you can shape culture, what you should do about diversity, how to manage Millennials, and why coaching is important. But people don't pull together the threads between all these topics from the employee perspective. We have to think about the holistic employee experience from before they join to long after they leave.

There's a vendor hawking a system for every part of HR—employee surveys, recognition, performance management, feedback—but nobody has refined that to one or two. It's overwhelming how many tools you would have to deploy to achieve what you think would be a holistic enterprise solution. We do ourselves a disservice by not talking about it in an integrated way, and about how these different levers impact employees. Learning is happening in every moment of every day—how do you talk about it in that way? I believe there are opportunities to make learning a central part of the entire employee experience.

As a Talent Development Leader, You Have to Keep Growing and Changing

Andrea Procaccino is vice president and chief learning officer for New York-Presbyterian Hospital, one of the most comprehensive and integrated academic healthcare delivery systems in the United States.

Current Responsibilities

Procaccino's responsibilities are wide-ranging, encompassing training and development, technology learning solutions, organization development (including team development, employee engagement, performance management, talent management, and talent reviews), employee rewards and recognition, and employee appreciation events.

Education and Career Path to Learning Leadership

Procaccino holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry and a certificate in science management. She holds certifications as an instructional designer, performance consultant, trainer/facilitator, and master training director. She began her career in pharmaceutical research and development with Johnson & Johnson, and later became senior director of learning and development. She moved to Avon Products to head North America sales training, then advanced to executive director of global learning and development, global talent management, before leaving to accept her current role as vice president and CLO at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

Your early work was in R&D in the pharma industry—how did the shift to learning come about?

As part of the clinical research I was doing with Johnson & Johnson, I was training physicians and nurses nationwide and worldwide, teaching them about clinical regulations, drug protocols, and disease states. I loved doing it. My then-vice president complimented my teaching work and asked if I'd thought about going into L&D. I thought it sounded interesting, and they believed I had real skill with training, so they invested in me—I received training and got certified. Johnson & Johnson let me start a department that I grew from two people to about 20 worldwide. We started an e-learning team and were doing game design theory, gaming, and 3-D virtual worlds before most people even knew what that was. Eventually, I left pharma and went to Avon Products to revitalize their training and learning, first in sales and then worldwide. When the CLO position at New York-Presbyterian Hospital came up, I knew that was it for me. That's how I fell into L&D, and I've been very blessed along the way.

Looking ahead, what do you think learning leaders need to be thinking about to be ready for the challenges talent development will bring in the future?

We have to keep an eye on our own business and what we need to get done in that business in the immediate future—one to three years ahead. But we also need to be looking out five to 10 years, too. And then we have to marry those perspectives, while also staying current in what's the latest and greatest in talent development and in our industries.

Also, we need to be strong—have the courage to just try new things and see what happens. Not everything is going to work. But you tweak things if they don't work, and keep fighting if it's the right solution. You may have to stretch yourself and your staff. But it's like Wayne Gretzky said: You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take.

We Need CLOs to Be Chief Learning Engineers

Bror Saxberg is chief learning officer for Kaplan, a global provider of educational services—postsecondary education, university preparation, professional education, English-language training, and other offerings—to individuals, institutions, and businesses.

Current Responsibilities

Saxberg's duties reach beyond learning to encompass research and development of new products, technologies, and learning strategies that span Kaplan's full range of educational offerings. He oversees learning technologies and ensures consistent academic standards for the company's products. In addition to heading learning, Saxberg is an author and an international speaker and presenter on educational and business topics.

Education and Career Path to Learning Leadership

Saxberg holds bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering and mathematics, a master's degree in mathematics, a PhD and master's in electrical engineering and computer science, and a medical degree. His career has included varied leadership positions—heading organizational operations and development, strategic work, multiple aspects of education and learning, and technology—with McKinsey & Company, DK Publishing, Knowledge Universe, Knowledge Testing Enterprises, and K12.

What do you consider important preparation for the talent development leadership role?

I think chief learning officers need to know a lot more about learning than they typically do now. How the brain learns and how it works, as well as how the structure of your organization's learning environments and motivation environments are consistent with that, are important to getting people to do the hard work required. That's the work I do at Kaplan. It is a learning organization, so the effect I'm having is on all the learning products we deliver to more than a million students worldwide. They have very different learning environments, but the idea is to redesign those environments so they are grounded in learning science and good learning measurement practices.

This is the essence of engineering. You start from the sciences, which inspire you about what to build (and what not to build). Then you build it, try it, and measure it. If it doesn't work, you don't give up. You try to find what you missed, make it work, and get the benefits. That is what's often missing in our industry. We need CLOs to be chief learning engineers.

Many learning functions still struggle with measurement. How widely is that scientific, evidence-based approach happening in learning?

It's pretty rare. Some large organizations are being systematic with their talent development work, but unfortunately a lot of it is not plugged into existing cognitive science and motivational science research. Consequently, learning professionals are either trying to re-create all that, or they're using models of learning that they wish were true instead of models grounded in how learning actually works.

Is application of evidence-based learning key in helping talent development leaders demonstrate learning's connection to better business results?

We don't appreciate how much of expertise is unconscious. There are patterns and decisions that have been burned into a top performer over years of practice and feedback, and they are no longer consciously accessible to that performer. As a result, your training programs may only cover 20 to 30 percent of what is needed to learn how to make decisions like those top performers do. Getting more clarity about what top experts do can be enormously valuable. To me this is where being a CLO should go: Identify the characteristics of top performers in the highest-value jobs, understand what decisions those individuals make and how they do what they do, then turn that into evidence-based training and run controlled trials to show how you've changed the value of the company by developing training that gets more people to think and act the way your top experts do.

What are you not hearing about learning leadership that you think is important? What would you like to see more of?

I think we need more case examples about how to identify what people are deciding and doing in workplaces that makes a big difference to an organization's value. How have you convinced yourself and other senior decision makers that you've added measurable value to your organization?

Case studies like that would make it easier for learning leaders to see how to take constructive action. But those resources would also help the rest of the C-suite see what they could be expecting. Some executives just expect the CLO and the head of HR to stay out of the way—a sort of do-what-you-have-to-do-and-don't-bother-us attitude. Real-world examples of how learning leaders (and senior managers) have made investments in learning and development, changed what was done based on evidence, and then showed big returns to shareholders—that's powerful stuff.

We're in the Entertainment Industry—Learning Should Be Fun

Paula Wojtkowski is regional vice president of talent acquisition and development for Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort and Harrah's Cherokee Valley River Casino and Hotel, which are owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and managed by Caesars Entertainment.

Current Responsibilities

Wojtkowski is responsible for all aspects of talent acquisition, from sourcing and hiring to onboarding and engagement. She heads talent development for both properties and oversees business process improvement (lean processes). Her leadership development duties include the Cherokee Development Program, which fast-tracks preparation of high-potential tribal members for leadership positions.

Education and Career Path

Wojtkowski holds a bachelor's degree in communications/public relations and an MBA. In more than 17 years with Harrah's Cherokee, she has built expertise in varied positions from entertainment and customer service management to continuous improvement, tribal liaison, Tribal Casino Gaming Enterprise board of advisers, and regional vice president talent development and external relations. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the hospitality and tourism/business department of Western Carolina University, where she teaches casino management.

How did you transition into learning leadership?

I'm relatively new to the formal training world, but I was hired into my present position for two reasons. One was specifically because of my previous operational experience. The other was my work with our Cherokee Development Program, which is designed to move high-potential tribal members into leadership roles. I'm looking to increase my knowledge base by participating in everything I can, and learning as much as I can as quickly as I can. Our development team is doing a lot of the right things, but we don't necessarily speak the common language of learning. Many of us have operational experience, which enables us to come at development from an operator's perspective. That's good, because we're able to blend some of the theory with perspective on real front-of-house challenges that our operators face.

The gaming industry itself isn't an ordinary business environment. Does that pose unique challenges for your learning and development team?

Yes, it can. I'm responsible for talent acquisition, development, and our business process improvement unit. That means my team has multiple challenges: How do we create the most efficient and effective labor models? How do we combat high turnover rates associated with our industry? What can we do from an employee's initial touchpoint to strengthen engagement and retention?

Our biggest challenge is how to screen for people who will be suited for this workplace. Casino environments are very tough from a regulatory perspective and from a code-of-conduct perspective, so we have very high standards. Once hires are made, the challenge shifts to what we do to keep those new employees engaged. Sometimes folks can feel completely overwhelmed by everything they need to learn in a short time. We've done a lot of work internally in trying to determine what they need to know versus everything there is to know. If people get overwhelmed in the first week, we can lose them. Our onboarding is not just the minimum of what they need to know, but includes several components that focus on employee engagement and fun, and making people feel wanted and appreciated. In our industry, it's important to build relationships with our teammates, our guests, and other stakeholders, so we start early.

What do you see as the strongest or most helpful experiences that prepared you for the learning leader role?

Working for and being on the board of advisers gave me a keen insight into the long-term vision and strategy of the tribe. Being able to explain the big picture and the why behind some of the decision making is incredibly useful. From a leadership development perspective, I am often called on to teach or train on that why. It also exposed me to all aspects of the operation. When you're the on-property representative, it is the kind of position that is what you make of it. I did a

lot of cross-training in most of the functional areas during the four years I spent in that role, which gave me street cred, if you will, with employees in those functions. Beyond that board experience, I'm also grateful for the time I've spent as an adjunct instructor at a local university teaching casino management.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about talent development leadership?

One of the misconceptions about learning leaders is that they live in a world of theory rather than the real world. And that they do not fully understand day-to-day operational challenges. Our table games department, for example, employs more than 800 people. When I try to push forward an initiative or a mandatory training program and I want all 800 people to go through it, I know that I had better be willing to come in on sunrise or swing shift, or extend that training over multiple weeks, because that's what those folks need. Depending on the size of an organization, I think learning leaders may not fully understand those operational challenges. And if you don't, it's easy for people to dismiss you. I made it a point to learn about operations, and I'm willing to make training work across multiple shifts and timeframes. We have a small team, but we'll do what is necessary to partner with our operators and work within their challenges.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In today's complex, competitive, and volatile markets, organizations achieve success through consistent agility, innovative strategies, and superior execution. Most leaders recognize that those conditions require organizational cultures centered on learning that attracts and engages top talent and drives strategy execution. In that environment, the talent development leader has emerged as a strong presence whose role is expanding far beyond traditional bounds of learning and development.

For those talent development leaders, learning is still at the core of the role, but success is about positively affecting bottom-line results in many ways. The research revealed much about the changing landscape of learning leadership, the skills talent development leaders need, the ways they are building them, and what it takes to find and prepare the next generation of learning leaders. Based on those insights, this report offers the following recommendations for development of current and future talent development leaders.

Recognize that talent development leadership is a dynamic role in a shifting work world.

High-performance organizations acknowledge that the learning leader's role is being redefined constantly, and understand that's a positive attribute that enables leaders to respond and align to fluid business and talent imperatives. Learning leaders who participated in the Study characterized their roles as being far more journey than destination, profoundly affected by disruptions in both internal and external business environments.

EA's Malik provides an example of how agile talent development leaders might turn disruption into a competitive edge: "If you hire a freelance contractor, do you provide not just the training they'll need to do the job, but so much more that it will make that person a better candidate for something else? If so, your whole attraction strategy will change: We give you an opportunity to bring your best self to work, learn from the best in the industry, pioneer new products and services, and learn every day, which will benefit you now and in the years ahead. In turn, you'll be enticed to come here for the role, hopefully, and work with us in a different capacity if you choose to leave one day. Competing effectively will depend on how learning leaders think about development and talent strategies and their impact on that future worker. It changes our role and theirs, too."

Prioritize learning for talent development leaders to keep pace with expanding roles.

With 90 percent of talent development leadership roles adding more responsibilities, even the most well-prepared individuals will need to proactively work to develop new skills or maintain current knowledge across multiple disciplines. "We must always be learning; we never reach the pinnacle," observes Wojtkowski at Harrah's Cherokee.

Critical skills for talent development leaders are dictated first by the scope of their roles and the unique needs and objectives of their organizations. The Study identified capabilities to focus on including leadership development, coaching, change management, talent management integration, and business acumen. Learning leaders also recommend building knowledge in how individuals learn, evidence-based design, inspirational leadership, business analytics, innovation, and strategic leadership.

Wojtkowski touts the value of cross-training to build functional knowledge and enhance credibility and influence. Malik continues her development through selective participation in professional groups. “I have a network of people in the field that I talk to,” says Procaccino at New York-Presbyterian. “I go to symposiums and read a lot of industry literature as well.”

Acknowledge that talent development leaders with broad responsibilities need team support.

Take a page from the playbooks of top learning leaders and draft a team of skilled professionals who can provide the strong backup learning leaders need to manage multiple areas effectively.

Procaccino, who leads L&D, engagement, performance management, and other functions, has a team of more than 40 professionals. She divides the group into distinct subteams that handle specialized areas.

Malik speaks to the strong contributions of skilled and knowledgeable teams, too, explaining that she handles the strategic-level leadership duties and looks to her group for the specialized abilities and technical expertise. “I learn from my team every day. I can hold my own in some areas; in others I am not an expert, but am a passionate learner. I look to my team often to lead major organizational change initiatives. I am there to support them and ensure that it makes sense in the context of the larger business and talent strategy.”

Ensure that performance assessment begins at the top.

A third of organizations fail to formally measure the performance of their talent development leaders. But reliance on the learning leader to positively affect bottom-line results demands consistent and excellent work, traits that grow out of systematic performance measurement and feedback. Top companies apply a variety of measurements to assess talent development leaders’ work—as the number of measures rises, so do links to market performance and learning effectiveness.

Metrics that gauge the quantity and quality of talent development (such as learning programs completed and application of skills learned) are popular, as are those tracking employee engagement and retention. Although specific business measures tied to talent development leaders’ performance are less frequently used, they are a valuable mechanism to ensure learning leaders are meeting expectations about moving business results.

Formalize a succession plan for the talent development leader's role.

An astounding 80 percent of organizations open themselves to significant risk by failing to plan for talent development leadership succession. As learning leaders take on added responsibilities in talent management and other business functions, succession planning takes on added importance.

Study results confirmed strong links to both market performance and learning effectiveness when organizations actively sought potential future talent development leaders internally. Start with a formal succession plan for your learning leadership role, but follow through and capitalize on those performance ties by creating development programs and pathways to advancement for promising talent development leadership talent in your organization.

Open the door to the C-suite.

Many talent development leaders who participated in the Study were senior-level executives. But the research confirmed that the learning leadership role can be an excellent springboard to CHRO or a higher position. Organizations deserve to benefit from the extensive talent and business leadership capabilities today's talent development leaders are building and applying every day.

Make room at the top for learning leaders who aspire to other executive positions. Make options for advancement known, and design development programs for current talent development leaders that provide the experiences and grooming needed to achieve excellence when they bring their expertise to new senior-leadership roles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ATD and i4cp gratefully acknowledge participation in this research by the members of i4cp's Chief Learning and Talent Officer Board and Board facilitator John Coné.

Our sincere thanks to the following talent development leaders for their generous contributions of time and professional insights:

- ▶ Andrea Procaccino, Vice President and Chief Learning Officer, New York-Presbyterian Hospital
- ▶ Bror Saxberg, Chief Learning Officer, Kaplan Inc.
- ▶ Humera Malik, Vice President Learning, Engagement, and Performance, Electronic Arts Inc.
- ▶ Paula Wojtkowski, Regional Vice President Talent Acquisition and Development, Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort

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The Association for Talent Development (ATD) is the world's largest professional membership organization supporting those who develop the knowledge and skills of employees, improve performance, and achieve results for the organizations they serve. Originally established in 1943, the association was previously known as the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD).

ATD's members come from more than 120 countries and work in public and private organizations in every industry sector. ATD supports talent development professionals who gather locally in volunteer-led U.S. chapters and international member networks, and with international strategic partners. For more information, visit www.td.org.

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Andrew Dixon provided statistical analysis for this report.

APPENDIX: SURVEY OVERVIEW

Target Survey Population

The target survey population for this Study was talent development professionals from organizations in various sizes and industries. Sixty-two percent of participants represented organizations with workforces of 1,000 or more. Overall, 543 unique participants completed the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey was composed of 36 questions, including those geared toward the demographics of respondents.

Procedure

ATD and i4cp distributed a link to an online survey to the target population in early October 2016; the survey closed in late October. In-depth interviews with chief talent development officers were also conducted by phone.



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