

# **ESTRATEGIST**

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The dwindling global economy and increasing competition have forced the companies to take a relook at their existing strategies. In order to succeed in these challenging times, all the functions are reinventing themselves and Learning and Development is not immune to this trend either.

So has the Learning & Development spend time in learning about itself? Is it ready to unlearn? Is it ready to let go of some of its clichés which are irrelevant anymore? Is it ready to embrace the future? Is it aligned to business needs and employee aspirations? and so on...

The basic premise for the study was to identify the changes in the Learning and Development function over the years and the possible trends it will take course in the near future.

This study is a collation of the findings from a questionnaire-based survey and discussions with Learning and Development heads of Indian organizations across industries.

## Expert Speaks:

"Learning & Development has evolved over the years and is the crucial link between today's Productive and tomorrow's Future Ready organizations"

For the purpose of attaining deeper insights into Learning and Development functions The Strategist had contacted L&D heads from a diverse industry set. A look at the figures below gives an idea about their experience and expertise Combined employee strength of more than Diverse Industry Domains 82000 Organizations with combined turnover of \$220B Demographics Combined industry experience of respondents in excess of 350 years

- Leaders as teachers commitment index is at 2-5days in a year
- Faculty fees to have variable component linked to degree of learning of participants
- 90minutes of Magic Ideal time

- Let's play some games—

  Gamifications is on the rise

  Learning through networking needs to be explored
- In Person still the first love for delivery of learning

- Storytelling as a methodology gaining prominence
- Are we ready for Smart Phones ~ The participants are ready!
- In -house design and outsource

Executive Summary

- Encouraging innovation is business priority
  - Performance change is the best way to measure!
- Hard factors outrun soft factors

# Leaders as Teachers Commitment Index is at 2 ~ 5 Days in a Year

# Time leaders spend on conducting trainings

#### Findings

- Leaders in the industry (60 %) give a window of 2-5 days in a year for imparting trainings.
- This is followed by 15 % of leaders giving 6~10 days for training per year.
- > 10 % give 11~15 days and remaining 10 % give 1 day in a year for training.



"L&D needs to build on leaders – however possible. There are no ideal teachers for employees than the leaders themselves"

- Leaders are the ideal trainers for employees. They not only understand the business deeply, but can give real-life examples and since employees look up to them as role models and their insights are truly valued.
- ➤ The biggest challenge for L&D is to persuade leaders to increase their involvement in terms of time allocation
- To encourage senior managers spend more time, it may be advisable to allow them to showcase this in their appraisals or have a dedicated annual award in form 'Best Teacher' etc.

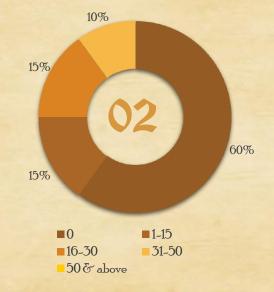


# Faculty Fees to have Variable Component Linked to Degree of Learning of Participants

# %age of faculty fees linked to trainer feedback

#### Findings

- More than half of the companies (60 %) have said that there is no link between feedback for trainers and their fees.
- > 15 % of the companies say that up to 15% of trainers' fee is dependent on feedback and a similar % select that number as 16–30%.
- Interestingly a decent number of companies (10 %) have linked a very high %age of trainers' fees (31-50%) to the feedback for trainings.



### Expert Speaks:

"Linking faculty fees to feedback or employee reaction is the first step towards tying L&D to organizational business growth. The next level would be to measure competence attainment and link fees to that"

- First step is to link participants feedback to the release of fees.
- Second step is to link some component of the fees to the feedback received from the participant post 30 days.
- Ideally the feedback should be taken from the managers post 90 days
- It is critical to build a bridge of trust between the participant, manager, faculty & L&D team to achieve a win~win here.



## Ideal time period for a training session

#### Findings

- The objective was to understand when do the participants start losing their focus and interest and start getting impatient during the course of training.
- Majority of the companies (45 %) believe that 90 minutes is the ideal time for a training session.
- ➤ 180 minutes of training session comes next with 35 % of the companies choosing it.

# 90 Minutes of Magic



#### Expert Speaks:

"With increasing stress & work load, and diminishing attention spans; the idea should be to deliver it quick, deliver it well!"

- For one complete day of training (approximately 6 hours), modules should be designed in such a way that employees undergo training for 4 sessions, of 90 minutes each i.e. 4x90 minutes.
- It is interesting to note that many respondents during their conversation also shared that post 45 minutes the faculty should do a stop check and proceed further.
- The design of the content delivery has to built in these breaks and it should not be left to the discretion of the faculty.

# 90 minutes of Magic ~ Shorter Timeframe for Trainings

## % of training sessions that will shift to 'microlearning'

### Findings

- Most of the companies (45 %) feel that in future 26-50% of trainings will shift to shorter timeframes.
- A significant number of companies (30 %) believe that 11-25% trainings will shift to microlearning.
- A small number of companies (20 %) predict that more than 50 % of trainings will shift to microlearning.



#### Expert Speaks:

"Microlearning is the next wave of learning. It is not just about shorter time, but smaller content units as well...nuggets of time and nuggets of knowledge!"

- Since microlearning is learning without going through training in its traditional sense; just-in-time learning, providing summaries of training sessions, engaging employees using microgames are some of the ways L&D can catch the microlearning wave.
- Here learning is more of 'pull' rather than 'push' training.
- > 90 minutes of magic could be training session time in years to come from being module session time as of now.

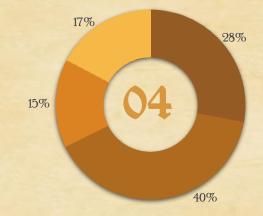


# Let's Play Some Games - Gamification is on the Rise

#### Reasons for attractiveness of gamification in trainings

#### Findings

- Majority of the companies (40 %) believe that gamification increases the level of interest in trainings.
- Better engagement (28 %) is the other reason.
- In addition, meeting the training objective (17 %) and more productivity (15 %) are also found useful to some companies.



- ■Better Engagement
- Increase level of interest in trainings
- More productivity
- Meeting training objective

#### Expert Speaks:

"Gamification is L&D's answer for turning employee monotony to employee productivity. If your company has not yet done it, you've fallen behind!"

- L&D needs to explore ideas to incorporate games in form of simulation, plays, stories, puzzle solving, treasure hunting etc. in training programs
- Games can be in form of online or offline too.
- It is critical to appreciate that right sensitivity should be build in so that the same doesn't turn trivial.
- Games without proper debriefing are a recipe for disaster.



# Let's Play Some Games - Gamification is on the Rise

## Training areas for which gamification is effective

### Findings

- More than one-third of the companies (35%) believe that gamification is effective in imparting soft skills.
- Induction training is not far behind with 28% of companies choosing it.
- Camification is yet to be evolved to impart company policy trainings (23 %) and technical trainings (14%).



#### Expert Speaks:

"With time gamification is going to become popular for not just imparting technical skills, but soft skills as well"

Company policy training

- Camification is very popular with Gen Y and to some extent Gen X and can be deployed in programs which cater to them.
- Games can be introduced in topics which are routine and mundane and doesn't require much skill of faculty.
- Companies should be cautious from going overboard with gamifying as some programs require human touch, exploration, debates and group dynamics and self exploration.

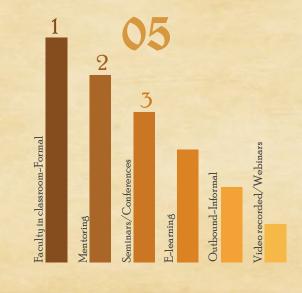


# Learning through Networking Needs to be Explored

# Most effective training methodology

#### Findings

- Faculty in classroom is considered the most effective training methodology by L&D leaders.
- Mentoring is the next most effective methodology followed by seminars/conferences.
- Video recorded/ webinar is viewed as the least effective training form.



## Expert Speaks:

"The value of social or observational learning is well proven in children. It is time that businesses realize its importance and explore the same for making employees learn"

- Mentoring is considered one of the most effective methodologies. To prevent cost over runs internal mentors / coaches need to developed over a period of time.
- Companies need to be explore using seminars/conferences for training as they are good platforms for networking and as adults we learn more quickly with experiential sharing.
- Companies should ensure a robust process of documentation to capture learning through networking.

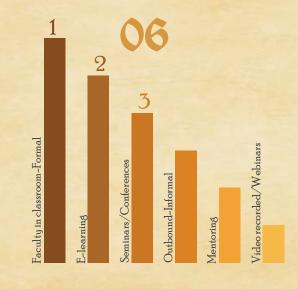


# In Person Interactions Favoured over Technology

# Main forms of delivery for the L&D programs

### Findings

- Faculty in classroom or formal trainings still rules the roost when it comes to the popular form for delivering the trainings.
- This is followed by e-learning and seminars/conferences.
- Interestingly, mentoring, webinars/video recording are the least preferred training methodologies.



## Expert Speaks:

"Video recording/webinars etc. are not as popular as classroom based delivery because there is no involvement/participation of participants"

- Right mix of delivery can be determined by the profile of participant, nature of topic, budgets etc. Based on the feedback of effectiveness, nature of intervention should be determined
- The format of 'Guru-Shishya Parampara' (or 'master-disciple relationship') is an integral part of India's tradition and schooling & college education and hence, classroom training is still relevant and will take time to evolve.
- With the increase of Gen Y population in the employee demographics technology will shine soon.

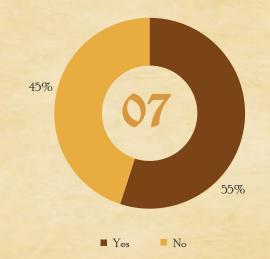


# Storytelling as a Methodology Gaining Prominence

# Use of 'learning by telling' / organizational storytelling

### Findings

- Learning by storytelling is gaining popularity and is selected by 55 % of the companies.
- During the course of conversations many industry heads, expressed interest in exploring the idea but haven't actually used the same because of lack of skilled faculty.



## Expert Speaks:

"The phrase 'Once upon a time...' has never failed to excite us. The same applies for employees. A captivating story is any day better than listening to a boring lecture"

- Storytelling as a methodology is considered safe as it is also ideal to engage all generations as it connects individuals through emotions.
- Since stories bring out emotions it is often experienced participants have strong opinion and the design of training program should budget for those conversations.
- Caution should be adopted to ensure that the faculty (storytellers) should not fall in the trap of becoming preachers.

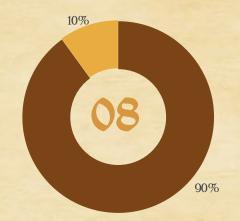


# Trainings on Smart Phones will become Popular

Increased use of delivering trainings on smart phone in future

### Findings

- An outright majority (90 %) believes that trainings on the smartphones will gain popularity and m-learning will be the face of the new age learning & development
- A very small number of companies (10 %) think otherwise.





### Expert Speaks:

"Designing content and delivery for multi-devices, multiple operating systems which are ever evolving is the key to the success of m-learning"

- Increased savings and better utilization of time along with a rewarding learning experience are some of the benefits of delivering trainings through smart phones and other mobile devices.
- Cloud based learning is a avenue and opportunity for L&D to leverage.
- Content in form of daily SMS, or Quizzes or Interactive Voice Message (IVR) or simple PPT slides etc. are options to explore before proceeding with online mobile games and quizzes.

# Insource Design & Outsource Delivery (Faculty)

#### Effectiveness of internal vs. external resources

### Findings

- 73 % of the companies believe that external resources are more effective for training delivery.
- > 27 % of the companies believed that internal resources can be effective in delivery too.
- On a whole more than 75 % of the participants were of the opinion that design responsibility should be best held internally.



## Expert Speaks:

"Training design and developing content should be done internally; whereas delivery can be external, under supervision"

- In-house trainings can be conducted for company specific policies, products/services, or operations; external trainings are the way to go when employees are to be trained on specialized skills.
- Too much exposure to in-house faculty also dilutes the impact after few programs because of a sense of repetition
- Design specialist should be in-house and they should work in tandem with the line managers to build impactful programs across.

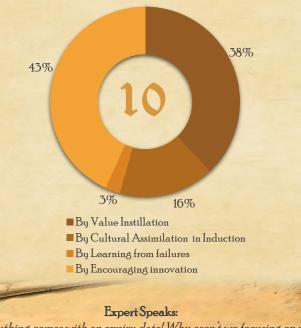


# Encouraging Innovation in Business Priority Today

# L&D's priority in line with business expectations

## Findings

- 43 % leaders believe that encouraging innovation is top priority of Learning and Development.
- Interestingly value instillation is not far behind with 38 % of the companies choosing this.
- Cultural assimilation in induction (16 %) is third while a small number (3 %) of companies have chosen learning from failures as how L&D can help in building organizational culture.



"Everything comes with an expiry date! Why aren't we focusing on reinduction of existing employees after 36 months?"

- Innovation should be encouraged across and from the beginning Learning and Development needs to play a crucial role by incorporating the same in its programs.
- Refresher courses for tenured employees is must for culture assimilation.
- Value institutionalization must be on the top of the agenda as it binds the employees in the long run.
- Learning from failures needs focus as it encourages employees to explore.



# LD=LD: Leadership Development is Focus Area for Tomorrow

#### Focus areas for learning department in coming years

### Findings

- Leadership development (38 %) is going to be the focus area of Learning and Development in years to come.
- Employee engagement (23 %) and organizational capability (23 %) emerge as the next important focus areas for organizations L&D function.
- Surprisingly, the areas which will be least focused by L&D function are employee growth (3%) and loyalty (0%).



### Expert Speaks:

"L&D needs to identify and nurture future leaders....start early and be patient...after all 'Rome wasn't built in a day!"

- Identification of high potential leaders at each level is the new name of the game and L&D function needs to facilitate the same to ensure organization are future ready.
- Employee growth is the agenda and responsibility of employees and not L&D is the message that needs to communicated clearly.
- Org capability should come ahead as a priority to make L&D function a strategic business partner.

# Performance Change is the Best Way to Measure!

## Metrics used to measure the success of L&D

#### Findings

- Performance change or increased productivity (40 %) is how organizations prefer to measure the success of Learning and Development.
- Participation % in trainings (20 %) and faculty rating post training (20 %) are the next preferred metrics of the companies.
- Feel good factor among participants (10 %) is followed by improved income generation (5%) and other metrics (5%) for measuring the success of Learning and Development.



term returns such as faculty rating or feel good factor!"

- Impact metrics (productivity improvement) should be more widely used vis-à-vis output metrics. (participation / attendance)
- L&D also needs to move away from using 'feel good factor' as a success metric. It needs to clearly differentiate between employee "learning" and 'outing'.
- Measuring the productivity by having a productivity index which tracks how participants' profiles have changed after 90 days of taking the training from managers could be the first step

# L&D Team as Strategic Business Partner... Long Way to go ...

# Common expression used to refer to L&D members

#### Findings

- Majority of the companies (38 %) view members of L&D division as facilitators while 23 % view them as trainers.
- Only 18 % of the companies consider L&D members as strategic business partners.
- In addition, 15 % view them as curriculum developers and 8 % perceive them as education specialists.



#### Expert Speaks:

"There is still some way to go before L&D is perceived as a Strategic Business Partner because of the common perception that learning is more of an outing"

- To build Strategic Business Partner outlook L&D should work towards interlinking organizational capability with business growth.
- > Spending quality time with line managers on regular basis would enable to build programs which have maximum business impact and thereby build higher credibility.
- Curriculum developers to Education specialist is the next step for L&D function.

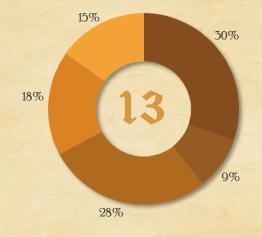


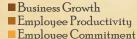
# Hard Factors Outrun Soft Factors

# Impact of L&D on business focus of the organization

### Findings

- Learning and Development helps in business growth of an organization with 30 % of companies rating it as top outcome.
- A close second is employee productivity with 28 %.
- Employee efficiency (18%) and employee commitment (15%) emerge as the next important results of Learning and Development.
- Interestingly, client satisfaction (9 %) is impacted least.





Client satisfaction

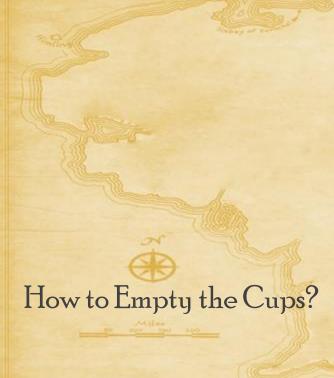
Efficiency

#### Expert Speaks:

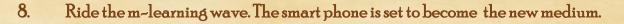
""n this day and age of talent scarcity and increased competition, none of the factors can be ignored. L&D needs to make its impact felt ~ everywhere"

- Training calendar landscape should have a healthy balance between Hard (Business growth, Employee Productivity, Efficiency)

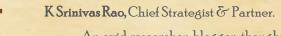
  Soft Factors (Employee commitment, Client satisfaction).
- All programs should be logically clubbed into Hard and Soft categories to ensure sharper focus.
- Budget spend v/s feedback for each of the categories will be a good start to measure ROI.



- 1. No one can make employees learn better than their role models ~ the leaders. Persuade them to do so.
- 2. Take steps to linking faculty fees to participants' performance post training-Showcasing Business Impact is not optional any more.
- 3. Acknowledge that participants can get bored and restless during a long training session. Reduce the Session time to  $45 \sim 90$  minutes.
- 4. Everyone loves a good game. Build innovative design and delivery to incorporate games and socialization.
- 5. Explore employees' need to learn in class room and beyond through experiential sharing with a single strategy learning through networking.
- 6. Machines and technology have only limited role to play and lets not blindly use them.
- 7. Promote storytelling, however don't fall in the trap of preaching.



- 9. Route the training design to in-house experts and explore outsourcing the delivery to external resources.
- 10. Building an organization's culture and value system is a priority for L&D to ensure competitive work environment and sustainable organization.
- 11. Explore ideas like social media, crowd sourcing as avenues to strengthen design & delivery.
- 12. L&D needs to gear up...it is still not seen as a strategic business partner. New thoughts like Performance change is the ideal way to measure L&D's success, deigning calendar with business heads, Organization Capability Index etc as the first steps towards to it.
- 13. Strike a balance between programs (hard factors & soft factors) Balance between Business & Org sustainability, Balance between immediate & long terms, Balance between skills & competencies, Balance between technical & behavioural etc.



An avid researcher, blogger, thought leader, Srini is a human capital strategist with an experience of 20 years, across the Human Capital Value Chain. He has more than a dozen publications in national & international journals along with 2 books. He is also currently the Editor of NHRD Magazine – the most widely read publication in HR fraternity.

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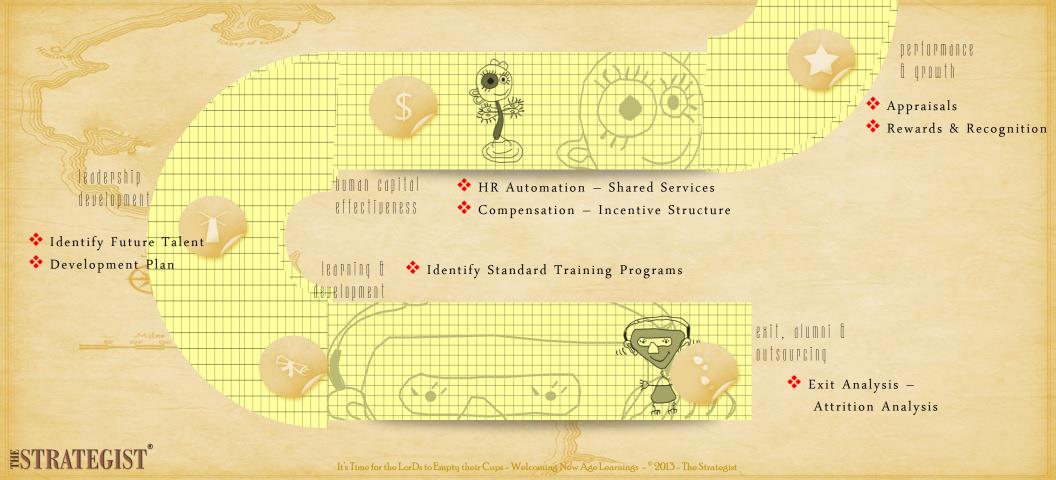
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The Researchers





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