



WHITE PAPER

The Future of Corporate Learning and Skills

What Employers Are Looking For

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Introduction

As the corporate learning and development (L&D) landscape evolves, skills assessments are taking center stage, especially as more companies eliminate or lower their degree requirements in favor of skill prerequisites. For example, the number of job postings from Google requiring a bachelor's degree or above dropped to 77% from 93% between 2019 and 2021, while Bank of America announced in 2022 that it has dropped college-degree requirements for most of its entry-level jobs¹.

A recent BCG survey of 342 L&D leaders highlights how organizations expect to invest more resources in skills assessment. This will better equip them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their workforce, aligning L&D to those needs, and better train their employees.

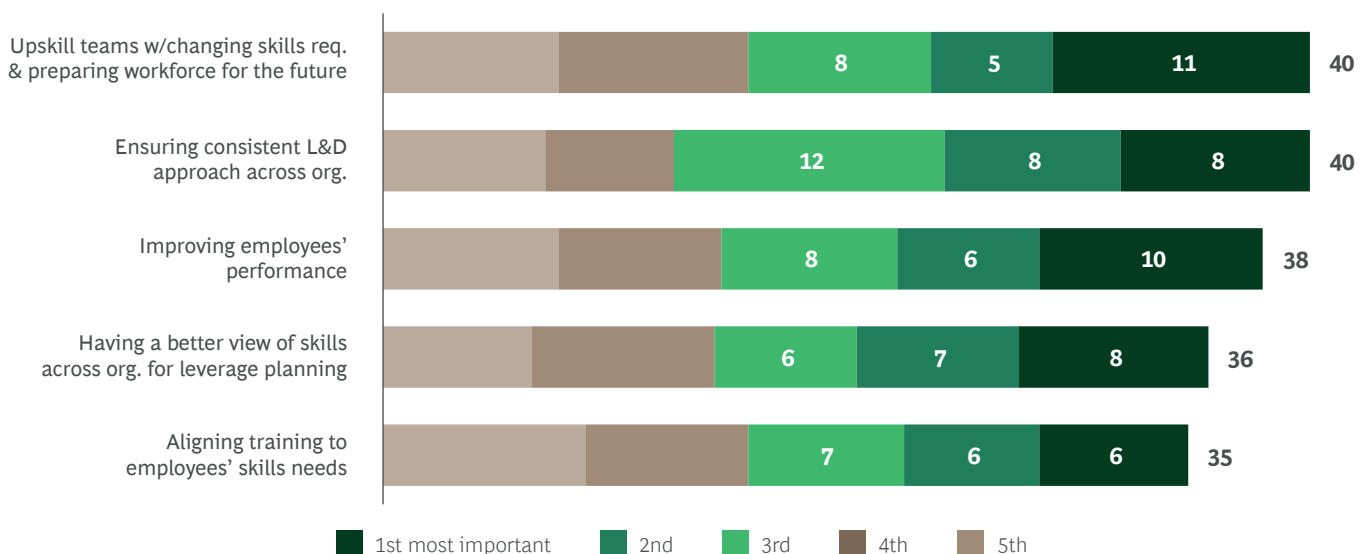
Why skills assessments are becoming central to L&D

Companies see skills assessments as critical to upskilling, especially as automation and AI reshape skill requirements. More than 1 in 3 (36%) ranked “Having a better view of skills” among their top priorities. Yet, many organizations lack sophisticated skill-tracking methods with 26% of the employers using an in-house built skills assessment tool. In comparison, companies are less likely to build their own Learning Management System (16%) and Learning Experience Platform (17%).

Exhibit 1 - Top talent and L&D needs

Q23: What are your organization's biggest talent and L&D needs?
Rank 5 as a % of total respondents (%)

N=342



1. “The Emerging Degree Reset”, *Burning Glass*, 2022 ([link](#)).

Employers now expect skills assessments to be incorporated into as many L&D products as possible, making skills capabilities a key selection factor for LMS and LXP solutions. Similarly, personalization is in high demand because it enables employers to tailor learning offerings to the needs of each employee.

As companies place greater emphasis on workforce development, L&D budgets have expanded. In the past five years, 88% have increased spending on L&D. Over 60% report that increased spending on L&D in the last 3–5 years has been fueled by a rise in overall revenue and a heightened priority on employee development. Companies are now prioritizing AI-driven assessments and talent analytics to ensure training efforts align with workforce needs.

What companies look for in L&D providers

Skills assessments have become an essential tool for identifying skill gaps, offering personalized learning, and tracking employee development. To be truly effective, skills testing must integrate seamlessly with training programs, talent analytics, and career progression tools rather than function as standalone solutions. Companies are increasingly evaluating KPCs such as skill-specific assessments, adaptive learning, customization, analytics, and scalability. By prioritizing these factors, organizations can build more effective, data-driven L&D ecosystems that enhance both employee development and overall business impact.

Skill-specific assessments

Our research suggests that organizations will outsource more of their L&D needs (i.e., 55%+ of respondents are likely to outsource across all in-house solutions). In doing so, they will increasingly favor vendors that offer skill- and role-specific, up-to-date assessments over generic learning models.

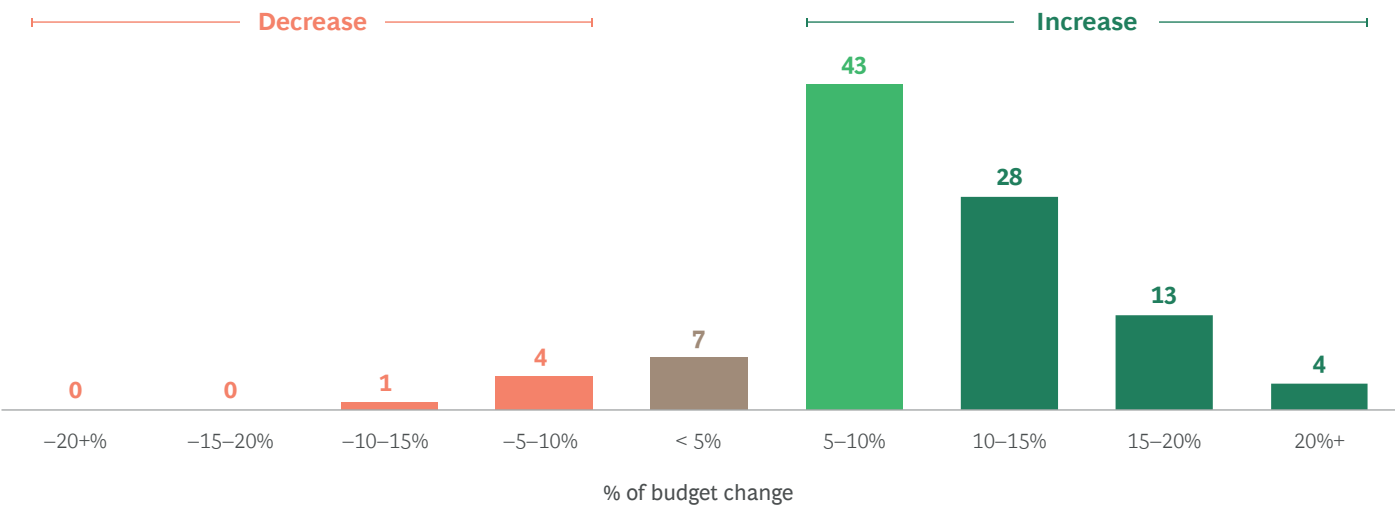
Exhibit 2 - Top 3 KPC per solution type (based on # of respondents selecting top 5 most important KPC)

Q25: Which of the following characteristics and features are most important to your organization when choosing an outsourced L&D solution type? Rank up to 5.

	Learning Management System (LMS)	Learning Experience Platform (LXP)	Content library	Instructor-led training	Skills assessment
1	Personalization and content rec. to learner	Availability and quality of skills assessments	Data, analytics, reporting features	Customer service and support	Personalization and content rec. to learner
2	Availability and quality of skills assessments	Price	Customization of course content	Personalization and content rec. to learner	Availability and quality of skills assessments
3	Customization of course content	Data, analytics, reporting features	Content curation/ relevance (e.g., up to date)	Customization of course content	Customer service and support

Exhibit 3 - Percentage of L&D budget change over last 3–5 years

Q17: How has your L&D budget changed in the last 3–5 years? (%)



Many companies rely on AI-driven assessments and adaptive testing to provide personalized evaluations and real-time feedback, allowing companies to adjust their development plans and helping employees to develop the right skills. For example, DHL has introduced their AI-driven “career marketplace” tool that assesses their employees’ skills and professional interests and matches employees with open positions within the company while directing employees to appropriate training and development opportunities². Other employers like Unilever have leveraged skills-based people strategies since 2019, using AI to suggest employment opportunities that match employees’ skill profile and career aspirations³.

Personalization and adaptive learning features

Companies increasingly seek L&D solutions that tailor learning pathways to close individual skill gaps. The ability to connect skills assessments with targeted learning recommendations ensures employees receive relevant, role- and skill-specific training rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Additionally, it requires integrating skills assessments across all L&D solutions to ensure the most recent data guides learning pathways and skill development strategies.

“Ownership of and engagement with learning it’s not a ‘build it and they’ll come’ situation,” an L&D leader emphasized during our research. “There aren’t many learning companies where people just sign up on their own, we need to make it worthwhile to them.” Personalization can play a vital role in making training more engaging and relevant, encouraging employees to participate in optional training and take ownership of their career development.

To effectively implement a personalized training strategy, companies need access to smaller, flexible learning units that can be combined to meet individual requirements. The 2024 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report indicates that 47% of L&D teams plan to implement microlearning programs this year to create a more flexible and adaptable learning experience⁴. Skills matrices will enable precise content tagging by skills and proficiency levels and map these resources back to specific role requirements.

2. “Upskilling to meet the challenges of the future of work”, DHL, 2021 ([link](#)).
3. “Unilever launches new AI-powered talent marketplace”, Unilever, 2019 ([link](#)).
4. “Workplace Learning Report”, LinkedIn Learning, 2024 ([link](#)).

Personalization has become the top criteria for selecting LMS, instructor-led training and skills assessment solutions. Providers able to combine content and skills structure with AI-driven recommendations and adaptive testing will gain a competitive edge in the market.

Experiential learning and simulations

Companies are prioritizing hands-on learning through AI simulations and assessments to reinforce practical skills. L&D solutions are quickly adapting to these needs by integrating interactive assessments and ensuring information is shared across HR departments and organizational platforms.

Anthropos is an example of an AI assessment and upskilling platform that helps companies adopt skills to verify and develop their workforce. Anthropos offers AI simulations to hire, onboard, and develop soft and hard skills in real-life scenarios that can mimic roles, situations, and tasks of a specific organization. It also provides the tools to map the workforce's skills and customize AI simulations and learning paths⁵.

Scalability of the solution

Organizations are prioritizing L&D tools like LMS and skills platforms that provide comprehensive workforce insights across teams, geographies or roles. These integrated solutions allow companies to develop a unified, holistic approach to talent management and workforce development.

Extended Enterprise features allow organizations to create personalized, role-specific learning experiences that ensure each employee has access to the most relevant training based on their position, geography and line of business. When skincare company Kiehl's wanted employees to elevate their knowledge of its formulas and the science of skincare, it adopted a LMS solution with those capabilities. Kiehl's was able to "bring expert-level education and superior brand standards to our teams around the world, making the experience more engaging and accessible than ever before."⁶

These features help organizations guide employees toward relevant content while maintaining cost-efficiency and consistency across departments.

Customization capabilities

Content customization is among the top three priorities for LMS, content library and instructor-led training solutions, according to our research.

Customization has become critical in skills taxonomies and assessments. As a CEO of a corporate L&D company explained, companies are increasingly developing their own skills taxonomies. This trend reflects a strategic shift away from generic, one-size-fits-all frameworks toward more tailored approaches that map to an organization's unique job architectures, current capabilities, and future strategic objectives.

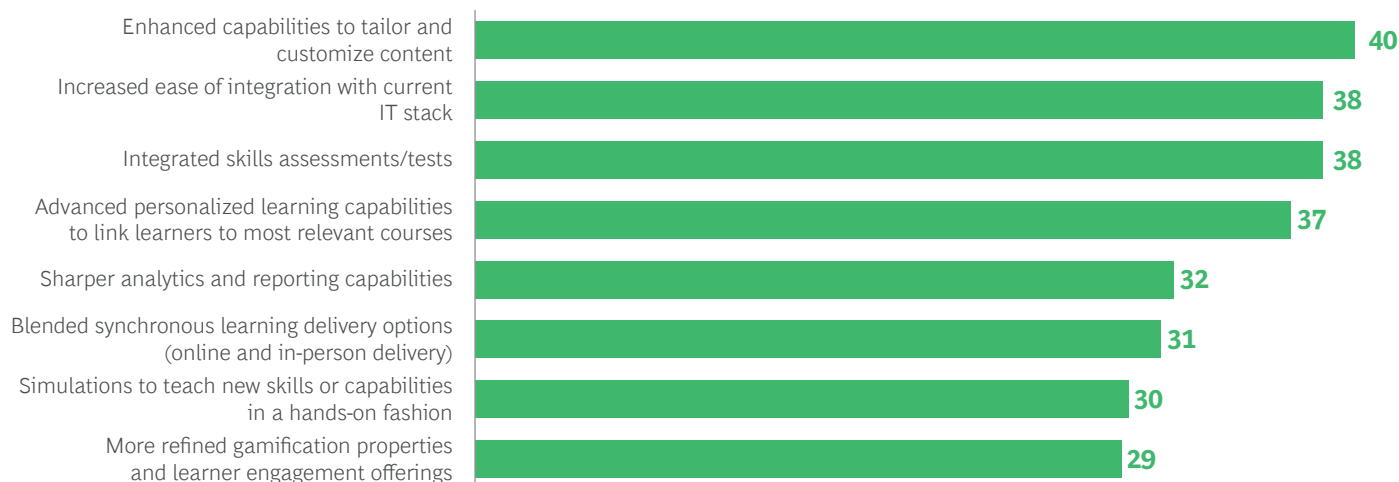
However, creating tailored content and assessments is expensive. Many L&D providers are using GenAI to transform content creation, allowing them to produce customized courses faster and at lower costs. Autodrafting tools can generate detailed curricula on complex topics with minimal human input. GenAI is also helping providers scale existing content by creating "derivative" versions tailored to different languages, reading levels, or specific needs like industry, company context, or competency gaps. While most providers are currently focused on using these tools to improve speed and reduce cost, many are now exploring how to offer GenAI tools directly to customers. This would enable companies to autogenerate personalized content for each learner's skills, goals, and preferences.

5. Anthropos website ([link](#)).

6. "How Kiehl's Amplified And Modernized Over 170 Years Of Education", *eLearning Industry*, 2024 ([link](#)); "Unlocking the Potential of eLearning: Kiehl's Success Story", *guykat*, 2023 ([link](#)).

Exhibit 4 - Top features desired when selecting a new L&D vendor or solution (% of respondents selecting features)

Q36: If you were to contract a new vendor or solution altogether, what would you like to see offered? (%)
Select up to 3 features



Analytics and actionable insights

Companies want to be able to track skills proficiency, knowledge gaps, and workforce development trends. Leaders value L&D solutions that offer engagement metrics, business results, and employee satisfaction scores. Vendors who can offer detailed reporting dashboards linked to employee training and performance will have a competitive edge.

However, our research shows that employers struggle to measure and report on ROI. Measuring ROI is among the top three challenges for LMS solutions, instructor-led training and skills assessments. “What’s missing [from L&D vendors] is not the quality... I think what’s missing from an offering’s perspective is guidance for organizational stakeholders on how to demonstrate the value to the business of the solution they are considering,” an L&D leader noted.

Failure to achieve expected ROI or impact was consistently listed as one of the top three challenges executives face with their L&D vendor.

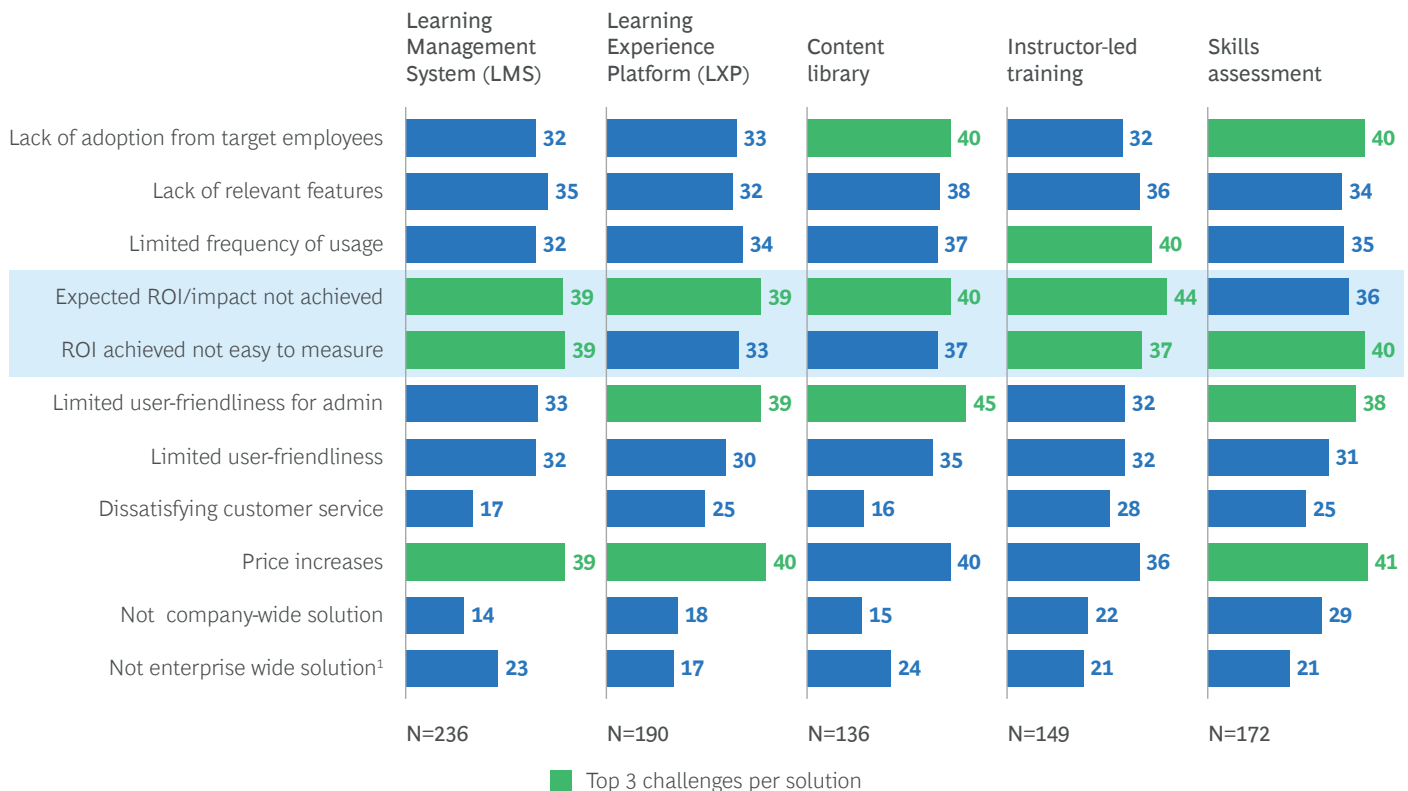
Seamless integration with existing L&D Systems

Companies prefer L&D systems that easily integrate with existing HR tech, LMS, and LXP platforms. Over 70% of organizations rely on outsourced skills solutions, making plug-and-play integrations essential for scalability and ease of adoption. Some core Human Resource Management Systems are moving to skills-first approaches that embed skills across HR systems, requiring the LMS to integrate those taxonomies. “The challenge is the integration of multiple platforms, vendors, and technologies while maintaining a consistent user experience,” noted an L&D director at a major media corporation.

Go1, an online content library, already offer integrations with numerous workplace technologies, including HCMs like Workday and ADP, and LMSs/LXPs like D2L, Docebo, or Degreed.

Exhibit 5 - Main challenges faced across different solutions (% of respondent selecting each)

Q24: What are the main challenges that your company faces with your current solutions? (%)
Select up to 3 challenges for each solution.



Conclusion

Skills assessment is a core component of L&D strategies, with companies continuing to invest in outsourced solutions. To stay competitive, L&D providers should consider integrating skills assessments, offering adaptive learning, and facilitating customization at scale.

The future of L&D is data-driven and skills-focused, requiring on-time analytics, AI-powered insights, and seamless system integration. As an L&D leader explained, “one of the continual challenges we had is the concept of learning supporting strategic objectives rather than just being an employee benefit. The challenge is proving the value of learning and connecting it to the business outcomes.”

Providers that move beyond content delivery to become strategic talent partners will lead the industry forward.

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