



Learning & Development Trends to Know for 2021

L&D Trends to Know for 2021

Millennial engagement

Continuous learning

Upskilling

Real-time feedback

Mobile experiences

Microlearning

Adaptive learning

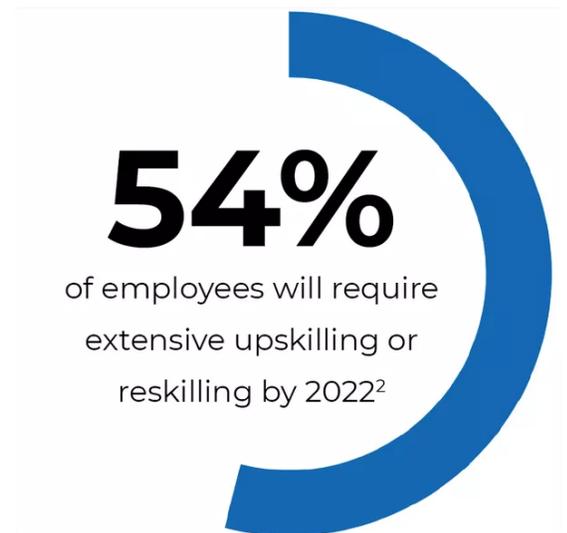
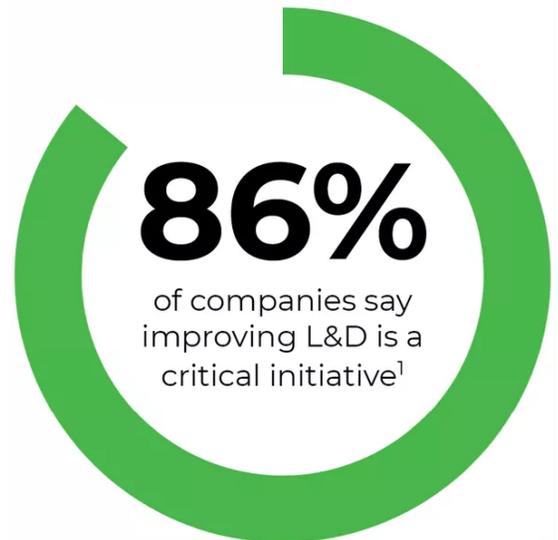
Personalized training

Soft skills development

User-generated content

Social learning

ROI data analytics



L&D Trends to Know for 2021

Millennial engagement

Millennials overtook Gen X as the largest generation in the US labor force in 2016, prompting company leaders to shift focus toward courting and retaining this key demographic.



2020 has seen this trend continue with particular emphasis on learning and development. Research from [PwC](#) indicates millennials rank training and development as the number one most valuable benefit employers can provide. This raises the stakes for learning and development programs and puts them at the forefront of discussions around employee engagement, retention, and culture.

Continuous learning and upskilling



Most learning programs are oriented around a key objective. When employees master the objective by finishing a course or demonstrating their newly learned skills, their work is complete. However, the constant changes of 2020 highlight how important regular reinforcement is to long-term learning outcomes. Continuous learning programs ensure that as circumstances change, employees can call upon all their skills to adapt.



Continuous learning can also extend to employee development through upskilling. Upskilling refers to the process of expanding one's capabilities and employability. Employees see how quickly the workforce is changing and recognize the importance of adapting with it. [PwC](#) research finds 74% of employees are ready to learn new skills or re-train to remain employable. In uncertain times, a shift toward continuous learning and upskilling helps prepare employees for the future.

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Real-time feedback

In 2020, following a trend set by industry titans including Accenture, Adobe, and Microsoft, more businesses moved to replace their annual performance reviews with real-time feedback. Meanwhile, businesses that have not shifted away from annual reviews are becoming increasingly aware of their flaws. 95% of managers are dissatisfied with their company performance reviews, and 90% of HR leaders don't believe they produce accurate information.

As work environments evolve in 2021, managers and employees will need more frequent and more robust performance data. In unprecedented situations, real-time feedback helps employees adapt to new circumstances, stay engaged, and feel secure in their performance.



Mobile experiences

As smartphones become the default medium for employees to access email, social media, and key information, employees are developing a strong appetite for mobile learning. Research from eLogic Learning finds 67% of people already access learning through mobile devices, and 99% of people agree mobile learning enhances their experience.

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Microlearning

According to Deloitte's research on the modern learner, the average employee can devote only 1% of their work week, or 4.8 minutes per day, to professional development. Microlearning is an up-and-coming trend that addresses this bandwidth shortage with small learning units or short-term learning activities.



Moreover, when in-person training is not feasible, microlearning offers a mobile-friendly alternative that can be easily rolled out to a dispersed remote workforce. Microlearning also offers economical advantages for companies that have been forced to lay off employees. As companies get leaner, reducing training overhead becomes a priority. Microlearning doesn't require a live instructor and can deliver the same content to employees without taking them offline for long periods of time.

Adaptive learning and personalized training



One of the biggest L&D trends of the 21st century is adaptive learning. As emerging technologies streamline and automate more general tasks, employee responsibilities become more specialized. Personalized training with adaptive learning programs helps employees reskill and upskill more effectively.



In 2021, personalized experiences will be a key focus for many ROI-centered L&D groups. Aligning learning programs with each employee's role and goals keeps employees engaged with learning and prevents resources from being wasted on irrelevant efforts.

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Soft skills development

Developing soft skills, also commonly referred to as behavioral skills or power skills, has become a top priority for company leaders. According to an [IBM report](#), the three most critical skills to executives are:

1. Willingness to be flexible, agile and adaptable to change
2. Time management skills and ability to prioritize
3. Ability to work effectively in team environments

Research from the [Carnegie Mellon Foundation](#) and the Stanford Research Institute found 75% of long-term job success depends on people skills and only 25% on technical knowledge. The rising awareness of soft skills and their role in success has led many companies to focus their learning and development efforts on defining, coaching, and tracking these skills.



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User-generated content and social learning

User-generated content, or USG, is content generated and shared by first-hand users of a program, application, or process. This trend has been raging in 2020 in response to employees' hunger for more personalized experiences. Employees find learning content created by their peers to be more personal and "human" than traditional user manuals and protocols. UCG also adds a social component to the learning experience that encourages collaboration between employees. Research from Brandon Hall Group estimates 73% of businesses will increase investment in this kind of social learning.

In 2021, as training resources become scarce, many L&D professionals will lean heavily on UCG. Unlike traditional resources, UCG requires almost no capital investment because employees create and maintain the content, which frees up critical L&D resources.



ROI data analytics

Using data analytics to evaluate the ROI of learning programs is hardly a new idea, but this will perhaps be the most important trend for L&D groups to know going into 2021. The economic collapse of 2020 and subsequent fallout will leave businesses laser-focused on ROI. L&D groups should expect their programs to be under heavy scrutiny as executives look to cut costs. Demonstrating program efficacy with data analytics on learning outcomes will be essential.

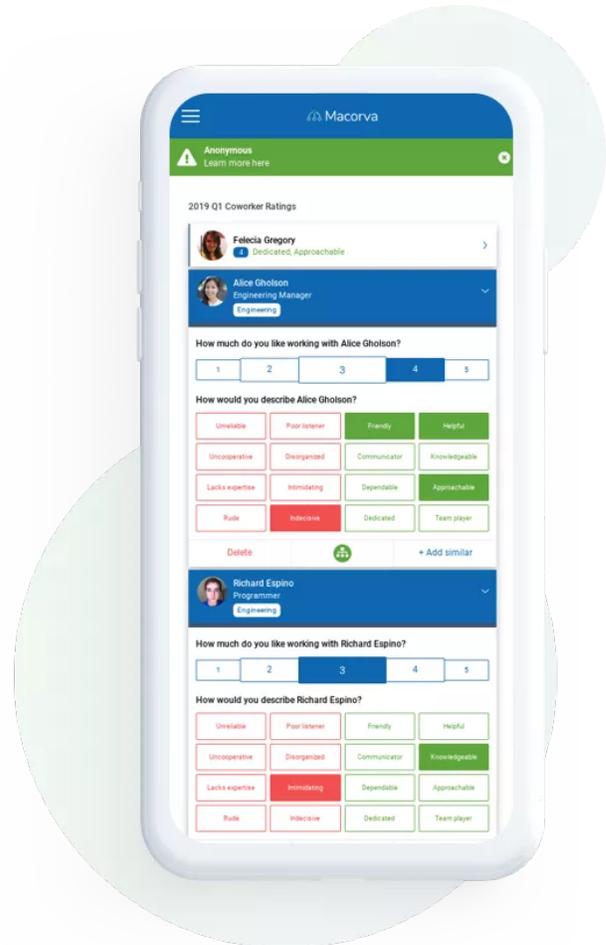
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Stay ahead of the curve

Keep your L&D group up-to-date with the latest industry trends. Macorva's employee experience platform:

- Empowers employees to anonymously give feedback to all coworkers.
- Returns feedback trends to every employee with no management overhead.
- Captures employee experiences as actionable data to measure manager effectiveness and training ROI.

and much more! [Click here](#) to contact a member of our team for a 1:1 consultation.



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