Organizations are facing considerable challenges in today’s business market. The increased pace of change has left many employees under-skilled for the roles they are performing, creating challenges for organizations to upskill employees in an efficient and timely way. The shift to remote and hybrid work has required organizations to accelerate their digital transformation initiatives, which has widened digital skills gaps, leaving organizations more vulnerable to cyber threats and security breaches. Compounding these challenges are low employee engagement rates, high turnover and a competitive job market.

All these factors are driving organizations to reexamine their company culture to engage and retain talent. This includes evaluating company benefits and offerings and shifting toward a more human-centered approach to work. So, what does all this mean for learning and development (L&D)?

L&D has been in the spotlight over the past few years, helping organizations manage large-scale change initiatives and preparing employees to navigate these changes. In many cases, it’s been L&D’s time to shine and show the value that training can bring the organization — and learning leaders have done just that. Training is quickly becoming a competitive differentiator for companies — and those that lean into training to close skills gaps, identify blind spots and create a strategic plan for the future will reap the rewards.

The 2023 key trends focus on creating more impactful learning experiences for the modern workplace. From developing more effective leaders to connecting learning to career pathways, learning leaders can leverage training to build a stronger, higher-performing workforce that can thrive in this new world of work.
It’s been L&D’s time to shine and show the value that training can bring the organization.
Leadership is core to every organization. Leaders shape every facet of the employee experience, helping to foster teamwork and establish a work environment that is psychologically safe for employees to speak up and take risks. Poor leadership can lead to low employee engagement and increased turnover, and in today’s volatile business environment, organizations need effective leaders more than ever.

The role of the manager has evolved over the past few years, with a shift toward more human-centered leadership. Leaders are no longer stewards of tasks; they are advocates for their employees. Today’s leaders must be skilled communicators who actively listen and empathize with employees to provide the necessary support and guidance. They need to provide continuous feedback to help employees improve their skills and foster career growth. And they must be able to effectively lead employees regardless of where they’re located.

Leadership development is a critical need for organizations in today’s business market. While spending on leadership training dipped during the COVID-19 pandemic, spending is up significantly over the last year (and rightfully so). To ensure optimal success, learning leaders must assess whether their current leaders have the skills and capabilities needed to move the organization forward. Targeting the skills that align with the company’s values and goals can help learning leaders identify and develop the right skills.
Employees have a desire to learn, grow and evolve. With turnover rates soaring, organizations need to invest in their employees’ career development or risk losing them to the competition. Developing career pathways and connecting learning to career advancement opportunities can enable employees to grow and stay with the company long term.

Skills mapping is necessary to support internal mobility and create career pathways. Learning leaders must identify the skills needed for various roles and advancement opportunities. To ensure employees gain the required skills, assessments must be integrated into training programs and learning pathways to check proficiency and evaluate skills gaps.

Development opportunities should not be limited to high-potential talent. All employees need access to training and development to allow upward or lateral mobility within the business. By enabling more employees with access to development opportunities, organizations can increase minority representation in leadership and decision-making roles. Additionally, providing employees with coaches and mentors can provide personalized support tailored to their strengths, interests and goals. These relationships can build a network for employees as they navigate their career journey within the company.
A lot has changed over the past few years — including our employees. Even if your organization has returned to — or never left — the office, learning leaders must reassess the needs of their employees. This means taking into consideration how they prefer to receive training and enabling them with access when they need it most.

Training Industry research has shown that offering training in multiple modalities can increase training outcomes. Using a variety of delivery methods increases the likelihood that an employee will receive training in a preferred method, which can increase learner engagement and knowledge retention.

While one size has never fit all, as we move forward, the focus needs to be on creating learning experiences that elevate your company culture. As we move forward, the focus needs to be on creating learning experiences that elevate your company culture.

Employees want to work for organizations that prioritize L&D, but oftentimes, employees struggle to find the time to devote to learning opportunities. With ongoing to-do lists and competing priorities, learning becomes another task to complete. Integrating learning into the day-to-day workflow can help learning feel more natural, accessible and achievable.

Providing short, simple learning resources that target a learning need can help time-starved employees upskill on the job. Technology can be used to deliver these timely resources, including using artificial intelligence for on-the-job coaching support and augmented reality to administer job aids as needed.

Managers must also be involved in their employees’ learning journey to enable success. Leaders should help manage their employees’ workload to ensure they have the time for learning. They must also help employees connect the learning to their job role and integrate new skills on the job to ensure that learning sticks. This can help to reduce employee burnout and enhance motivation and engagement.

A lot has changed over the past few years — including our employees. Even if your organization has returned to — or never left — the office, learning leaders must reassess the needs of their employees. This means taking into consideration how they prefer to receive training and enabling them with access when they need it most.

Training Industry research has shown that offering training in multiple modalities can increase training outcomes. Using a variety of delivery methods increases the likelihood that an employee will receive training in a preferred method, which can increase learner engagement and knowledge retention.

While one size has never fit all, as we move forward, the focus needs to be on creating learning experiences that elevate your company culture. These experiences must connect and engage employees regardless of where they’re located. For instance, leveraging technologies that have social learning capabilities can help foster employee engagement and simulate a virtual watercooler experience.

As the workplace continues to evolve and change, learning leaders must continuously evaluate the needs of their workforce to deliver learning experiences that connect and engage employees in a meaningful way. Learning leaders can leverage internal data from engagement surveys and meet with leaders across the organization to identify areas for improvement that training can help support.

Integrating learning into the day-to-day workflow can help learning feel more natural, accessible and achievable.
The training market has continued to rebound from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, we expect to see training budgets increase by more than 6% and the global training market to grow by 2%. The leadership training market is one segment of the training market where we have seen the most growth over the last year, and we expect that to continue as organizations realize the need to develop better leaders for the betterment of the business.

Ken Taylor is the chief executive officer of Training Industry, Inc. Michelle Eggleston Schwartz, CPTM, is the editor in chief at Training Industry, Inc., and co-host of “The Business of Learning,” the Training Industry podcast. Email Ken and Michelle.