



Learning on Learning

Today's learning programs are enabling organizations to navigate business challenges caused by uncertainty, fill skills gaps, and build the leaders of tomorrow.

By Debbie Bolla

For Naveen Bhateja, executive vice president and chief people officer for Medidata Solutions, the recent changes to the world of work caused by COVID-19 have only proved the value of a quality learning program.

"Learning and development are critical to keeping employees engaged and feeling connected to the company and its mission," he explains. "During times of uncertainty, the connection employees feel can wane."

Some of this missing connectedness stems from the need and nature of remote work—especially for workers who hadn't experienced it in the past and moved into it abruptly due to the urgency of the global health crisis. But technology has played a large part in easing the transition.

"Many companies, including Medidata, are investing in more digital technologies and methodologies to transform their learning channels and learning management features," he explains.

Mary Herrmann, managing director of global executive coaching for BPI group, also understands tech's value—especially in today's circumstances. "Advanced technological capabilities have enabled nimble organizations to continue

L&D programs without a hitch by transitioning them to virtual environments," she says. "Opportunities for development can remain consistent or change with organizational values and strategy as long as the platforms are reliable and have features conducive to learning."

Virtual work is also shifting the content of training programs, Bhateja says, since employee and manager needs have changed dramatically in the past few months. "For example, we're seeing companies increase training around how to manage a remote workforce," he notes. "More than ever, managers must consider how to convey human qualities such as empathy to support employees through the pandemic and social unrest; they must focus on creating collaborative scenarios that support employees juggling unique family and personal needs."

Herrmann agrees. "In terms of channeling leadership topics most conducive to today's ambiguous work environment, there has never been a time when managers' coaching skills have been more significant and applicable," she says. "Intense focus on developing leaders' ability to listen without judgment, question with curiosity, and challenge deep-seated beliefs, as well as guiding individual commitment to

action, can be applied to any of the various issues distressing employees right now. Additionally, that level of unconditional support creates an inspired and energized workforce.”

Within the L&D space, pre-COVID-19 challenges still exist for organizations. A main consideration: the skills gap, with Deloitte reporting that it could have a \$2.5 trillion impact on the U.S. economy over the next 10 years.

“As this gap widens, businesses that don’t take steps to address it might be left behind,” says Bhateja. With that in mind, Medidata built a specific strategy around cross-functional projects that help foster a learning culture. Bhateja says this strategy is an action close to home in the HR department.

“In the context of recent dynamic growth for our company, I questioned how the traditional center of excellence (COE) HR model could meet the needs of a rapidly changing business,” he explains. “At the same time, we wanted to define exactly what the ‘People Team’s’ contribution would be and what our vision for the future would be.”

The solution? A five-pillar strategy that aligns company objectives to areas not typically covered in the COE model that can be addressed through project work and come with professional growth opportunities.

Bhateja provides an example: “One member on my team had been doing employee engagement events management. She took on a leading role in building the change management resources. As a result of that project, she grew an interest in learning and organizational development. A few months ago, she accepted a role on that team and now focuses exclusively on that work. It’s a great example of how cross-functional work can open up career opportunities for team members and aid in retention of top talent, particularly when budgets are tight during challenging economic times.”

Another strategy the organization leverages to retain top talent is executive coaching and leadership development.

“At Medidata, we have various programs designed to assimilate top talent into the organization and into new leadership positions; transition them into those leadership roles with an expanding scope that impacts the business; and develop those with high potential to increase their effectiveness,” he explains.

Medidata leverages coaching for three talent transitions:

- assimilation into the organization or into a new leadership position;
- transition into a new role and/or one with expanding scope and impact in the business; and
- acceleration and development for high performers with high potential to increase effectiveness in their role.

What’s Ahead

Bhateja forecasts that technology will continue to drive the future of L&D programs. “Looking ahead, one of the technologies I expect to become more mainstream within L&D is virtual reality (VR),” he explains. “For example, VR is key to behavior apps that simulate scenarios ranging from running meetings to performance coaching. We at Medidata were exploring VR applications prior to the pandemic and have since accelerated our investments.”

For organizations looking to invest in their employees through learning and development, a roundup of partners and some of their services is provided below.

Accenture Academy

<https://www.accentureacademy.com>

Services: Skills assessment and analysis, competency-based approach to skills development, and a customizable online learning solution.

AchieveForum (now part of Korn Ferry)

<https://www.achieforum.com/>

Services: Research-based solutions for leadership development, coaching resources, and micro-lessons.

AllenComm

<https://www.allencomm.com>

Services: Custom training solutions for leadership, sales enablement, and compliance.

Aptara

<https://www.aptaracorp.com>

Services: Corporate learning strategy, eLearning development, workforce resourcing, learning management and administrative services, and learning technology.

Ardent Learning

<https://www.ardentlearning.com>

Services: Custom learning solutions, custom content, self-paced learning, classroom training, experiential learning, and virtual learning.

Axiom Learning Solutions

<https://axiomlearningsolutions.com/>

Services: IT training, contingent workforce training, and professional and business skills development.

BetterUp

<https://www.betterup.com/>

Services: Leadership development, expert coaching, professional services, micro-learning, and analytics.

BPI group

<https://bpi-group.us/>

Services: Talent strategy assessment, competency modeling, succession management, leadership development, and action learning programs.

Training and Development

BTS

<https://www.bts.com/index>

Services: Leadership development and coaching, talent assessment, sales training, and marketing training.

Caveo Learning

<https://www.caveolearning.com/>

Services: Strategic consulting, custom learning, performance solutions, learning development, virtual training, and curriculum design.

Cegos

<https://www.cegos.com/en>

Services: Leadership training, digital learning, content development, and on-site or distance learning.

Center for Creative Leadership

<https://www.ccl.org/>

Services: Organizational leadership training, coaching services, licensing opportunities, analytics and evaluation, workshops and on-site programs, and digital learning tools.

Central

<https://central.com/>

Services: Gamified, personalized, AI-powered micro-learning.

Computer Generated Solutions Inc. (CGS)

<https://www.cgsinc.com/en>

Services: E-learning, blended learning solutions, instructor-led training, and learning consulting services.

CITI Limited

<https://www.citi.co.uk/>

Services: Accredited training courses, change management, and program/project management.

Clarity Consultants

<https://clarityconsultants.com/>

Services: Instructional design, leadership development, learning effectiveness, learning technology, organizational development, sales enablement, and training delivery.

CMC Training & Consulting Inc.

<http://cmctrain.com>

Services: Training, curriculum design, application development, and IT consulting services.

CoreAxis Consulting

<https://coreaxis.com/>

Services: Immersive learning solutions and custom e-learning programs.

Cornerstone OnDemand

<https://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/>

Services: Learning management software, customized learning strategies, analytics and predictive insights, and curated content.

CPS HR Consulting

<https://www.cpsr.us>

Services: Blended learning courses, leadership assessment and development, executive coaching, and specialized training courses.

CrossKnowledge

<https://www.crossknowledge.com/>

Services: Employee onboarding, leadership development, personalized development plans, content library, digital learning platform, digital publishing platform, and mobile learning.

Dale Carnegie & Associates Inc.

<https://www.dalecarnegie.com/en>

Services: Virtual coaching, customized solutions, people skills and customer service training, leadership development, presentation training, organizational development training, and sales training.

Development Dimensions International Inc. (DDI)

<https://www.ddiworld.com>

Services: Leadership assessment and analytics, customized leadership development programs, competency management, and succession management.

Digits Industries Ltd.

<https://www.digits.co.uk/>

Services: E-learning design and development, custom portal design and development, mobile app development, and digital video production.

Docebo

<https://www.docebo.com>

Services: AI-powered learning management system, social personalized programs, virtual coaching, content library, and mobile learning.

Eagle's Flight

<https://www.eaglesflight.com/>

Services: Experiential learning, leadership development, and classroom or virtual learning sessions.

Fuse Universal

<https://www.fuseuniversal.com/>

Services: Mobile-first learning ecosystem, micro-learning, social learning, and metrics.

G-Cube

<https://www.gc-solutions.net/>

Services: Custom e-learning, instructor-led training, game-based learning, mobile learning, consulting, and content library.

Global Knowledge Training LLC

<https://www.globalknowledge.com/us-en>

Services: Classroom and online learning, synchronous or asynchronous programs, and certification training.

GP Strategies Corporation

<https://www.gpstrategies.com>

Services: Digital learning strategies and solutions, learning analytics and evaluation, content curation, and managed learning services administration and delivery.

Happy Ltd.

<https://www.happy.co.uk>

Services: IT training services, management and culture change, classroom training, event facilitation, and e-learning services.

Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning

<https://www.harvardbusiness.org/>

Services: Leadership development, flexible digital solutions, blended learning strategies, and interactive classroom experiences.

Hemsley Fraser Group Ltd.

<https://www.hemsleyfraser.com/>

Services: Core content portfolio, virtual, face-to-face training, customized managed learning services, and project support.

IBM

<https://www.ibm.com/topics/training-development>

Services: Professional certification programs and customized learning journeys.

Imparta Ltd.

<https://imparta.com/>

Services: Sales and service training solutions, sales leadership training programs, and a modular capability building system.

Instructure

<https://www.instructure.com/>

Services: Learning management system, manager enablement, and career development.

Intrepid by VitalSource

www.intrepidlearning.com

Services: Corporate digital learning, collaborative online programs, leadership development, and executive education.

Judge

<https://www.judge.com/>

Services: Instructor-led training, custom learning asset development, and learning strategy consultation.

LearningMate Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

<https://www.learningmate.com/>

Services: Custom content development, immersive learning experiences, workforce skills management, and knowledge consulting.

Learning Technologies Group

<https://www.ltqplc.com/>

Services: Digital learning approach and strategic consulting.

LearnQuest Inc.

<https://www.learnquest.com/home.aspx>

Services: Application development training, business analytics training, and cloud computing training.

Leo Learning

<https://leolearning.com/>

Services: Blended learning, e-learning, video, virtual reality, gamification, and learning management.

Linkage Inc.

<https://www.linkageinc.com/>

Services: Leadership development and change management.

Miller Heiman Group (now part of Korn Ferry)

<https://www.millerheimangroup.com/training/>

Services: Sales methodology and skills training.

MPS Interactive

<https://www.mpsinteractive.com/>

Services: Custom e-learning, gamification, micro-learning, mobile learning, and stimulations.

NetCom Learning

<https://www.netcomlearning.com/>

Services: IT training and managed learning solutions.

NIIT

<https://www.niit.com/en/learning-outsourcing/>

Services: Managed training services, content and curriculum design, learning administration, learning delivery, and strategic sourcing and vendor management.

Paradigm Learning

<https://paradigmlearning.com/>

Services: Experiential learning, gamification, talent and leadership development, business acumen training, and project management training.

Pearson

<https://www.pearson.com/us/>

Services: Assessment, custom content and curriculum development, custom training courseware, degree and certification programs, self-service learning programs, knowledge capture, online mentoring, and online talent and leadership development.

PeopleFluent

<https://www.peoplefluent.com/>

Services: Instructor-led training, on-demand learning, user-

generated content, social sharing, real-time reporting, and digital coaching.

Performance Development Group

<https://www.performdev.com/>

Services: Leadership and professional development.

PulseLearning Ltd.

<https://www.pulselearning.com/>

Services: Custom e-learning, system stimulations, instructor-led training, blended learning, gamification, and mobile learning.

Raytheon Professional Services

<https://www.raytheon.com/>

Services: Instructor-led training, web-based training, virtual classroom training, simulation-based training, gaming, video, and mobile learning.

Roundtable Learning

<https://roundtablelearning.com/>

Services: E-learning, augmented reality, virtual reality, video learning, instructor-led training, and strategy and management.

SAP SuccessFactors

<https://www.successfactors.com/content/ssf-site/en.html>

Services: Cloud-based learning management solution, blended learning, succession planning, and career and development planning.

SilkRoad

<https://www.silkroad.com/>

Services: On-demand video courses, mobile learning, learning assessments, and engagement and compliance reporting.

Skillsoft

<https://www.skillsoft.com/>

Services: Leadership development, leadership and management skills training, digital skills training, IT training and certification, and compliance training.

Talent Dimensions

<https://talent-dimensions.com/>

Services: Career development solutions, leadership development, and talent identification.

Take Flight Learning

<https://takeflightlearning.com/>

Services: DISC training, leadership training, conflict training, sales development, and interactive innovation training.

TalentKeepers

<https://www.talentkeepers.com/>

Services: Online leader training, leader assessment and development, and recertification.

The Center for Leadership Studies

<https://situational.com/>

Services: Customized learning solutions; instructor-led, online, blended, and virtual delivery; and executive coaching.

The Ken Blanchard Companies

<https://www.kenblanchard.com/>

Services: Leadership development, e-learning programs, management coaching, and training events and workshops.

The Learning Factor

<http://learningfactor.com.au/>

Services: Digital learning, micro-learning, virtual reality, gamification, and managed training.

The Myer-Briggs Company

<https://www.themyersbriggs.com/en-US>

Services: Certification training and personality assessments.

The Training Associates

<https://thetrainingassociates.com/>

Services: Training delivery, instructor-led training, managed learning services, and learning strategy.

TrainingFolks

<https://www.trainingfolks.com/>

Services: Training needs assessment, instructional design services, and custom e-learning.

Upside Learning

<https://www.upsidelearning.com/>

Services: Learning consultancy, e-learning, mobile learning, video animation, gamification, rapid learning, and instructor-led training.

Wilson Learning Corporation

<https://www.wilsonlearning.com/>

Services: Sales and leadership development.

VitalSmarts

<https://www.vitalsmarts.com/>

Services: On-demand and live virtual training in dialogue, accountability, influence, productivity, and effectiveness.