



## Workforce Transformed: **5 Ways to Revitalize Your Learning Strategy**



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## Workforce Transformed: **5 Ways to Revitalize Your Learning Strategy**

At The CARA Group, we work with senior leaders in Fortune 1000 companies to solve their toughest workforce challenges, including adapting an enterprise learning strategy to a rapidly evolving world of work. In this eBook, we share a few of the insights we have gained through experience to help you build a future-ready learning strategy that resonates with your workforce.

# Introduction

The world of work has changed dramatically over the past five years. The shift to hybrid/remote work, evolving workforce expectations, demographic changes, and the increasing complexity of digital transformation and AI integration have rendered many enterprise learning strategies obsolete.

**Consequently, it is important to revisit the approach to enterprise learning to ensure it aligns with both organizational goals and the pace of technological change.** The increasing shift toward hybrid and remote work environments has redefined how employees learn and access information. Traditional training models may no longer suffice in equipping teams with the skills they need to adapt to new workflows and digital tools. By re-examining learning strategies, organizations can better support a dispersed workforce while maintaining productivity and fostering employee engagement.

**The emergence of new technologies, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, has also transformed the skills landscape.** Many industries face skill gaps that threaten their competitiveness, requiring enterprises to adopt more dynamic and personalized approaches to workforce development. An updated learning strategy can integrate data-driven insights, enabling organizations to anticipate skill shortages and deliver targeted training solutions that drive measurable outcomes. This is particularly crucial as businesses strive to remain agile in the face of global disruptions.



**Additionally, shifting employee expectations demand a more modern and flexible approach to learning.** Today's workforce values professional growth opportunities and seeks organizations that invest in their development. Offering accessible, on-demand, and interactive learning experiences not only enhances retention but also positions companies as employers of choice in competitive labor markets. By prioritizing a forward-looking learning strategy, enterprises can better equip their workforce for future challenges while strengthening organizational resilience.

This eBook presents five key considerations for reimagining your learning strategy to drive meaningful engagement and support your workforce in a world of rapid transformation. From redefining learning outcomes to embracing AI responsibly, these strategies will help you develop a future-ready approach to learning that positions your workforce for enduring success.

# #1:

## Re-examine Your Learning Strategy Outcomes

An enterprise learning strategy must be about more than providing content to employees. It must be strategic, human-centric, and future-focused. An effective way to evaluate your current learning strategy is to examine the stated outcomes. Clear outcomes will become your “north star,” such that all resources, activities, and decisions made by the learning department should be in support of them. Below are some examples of outcomes that should be included in an enterprise learning strategy.



## Examples of Strategic Outcomes

## How They Should Evolve

**Identify and Develop Workforce Capabilities Prioritized to Strategic Business Goals**

Evolve to align not only with strategic business goals but also with emerging trends and technologies, including both technical and uniquely human skills.

**Attract Talent by Providing Personalized Learning Experiences and Career Development**

Focus on personalized learning experiences and more than one career development pathway. Include a KPI for both attraction and retention.

**Drive Organizational Culture**

Include a culture of continuous learning as an explicit outcome and include a measurement indicator. Create a plan to operationalize the metric across the organization.

**Grow Careers by Upskilling for Next-Level Roles**

Evolve to personalized career growth plans that leverage upskilling to prepare employees for emerging opportunities. Include cross-functional skills such as digital literacy and AI, as well as resilience and leadership.

**Retain High Performing Employees by Reskilling for Adjacent Roles**

Align learning outcomes to broader talent management goals. Examine roles and skill adjacency to determine reskilling paths that facilitate lateral movement within the organization.

**Engage Employees by Providing Continuous Upskilling Individualized to Their Needs**

Determine how the current system of upskilling will need to change to be more future-focused. Plan to pivot toward individualized, flexible, and accessible programs.

#2:

## Update Your Learning Metrics

The time has come for Learning & Development to embrace measurement! Actually, let's be honest. The time came many years ago. Metrics are the way to lead and manage enterprise learning. They facilitate decision making by helping you to determine what is working, track progress, and adjust for continuous improvement. Perhaps most importantly, they justify the importance of the learning department, and its budget and resources, as a critical enabler of achieving business results.

Examine your learning strategy to ensure that you are driving to a few key, prioritized KPIs. Ensure they help quantify the effectiveness of each outcome and provide insights into the impact of the learning strategy on overall business performance.



## Examples of Strategic Outcomes

## Sample Metrics

**Identify and Develop Workforce Capabilities Prioritized to Strategic Business Goals**

**Alignment Score:** Measures the percentage of learning initiatives aligned with strategic goals and emerging trends. KPIs include customer satisfaction, sales, revenue, profitability, and cost savings.

**Attract Talent by Providing Personalized Learning Experiences and Career Development**

**Talent Attraction Rate:** Tracks the number of high-quality candidates attracted and hired due to enhanced learning and development offerings.

**Drive Organizational Culture**

**Culture Engagement Index:** Measures employee engagement scores related to ethics, DEI, and wellness, and includes continuous learning, reflecting Learning & Development's role in cultural change.

**Grow Careers by Upskilling for Next-Level Roles**

**Career Progression Rate:** Measures the percentage of employees promoted or transitioning to next-level roles due to targeted upskilling, tied to workforce and succession planning.

**Retain High Performing Employees by Reskilling for Adjacent Roles**

**Retention Rate of Reskilled Employees:** Tracks the retention rate of employees reskilled for adjacent roles, indicating reskilling effectiveness. Retention also shows ROI, proving the learning department's value.

**Engage Employees by Providing Continuous Upskilling Individualized to Their Needs**

**Employee Engagement with Learning Programs:** Measures engagement with continuous, individualized learning opportunities, including participation rates and feedback scores. This could include a net promoter score for learning programs.

## #3:

# Align Your Learning Strategy with AI Governance

Typically, a well-defined learning strategy includes a governance plan. Governance in the context of learning strategy refers to the framework of policies, procedures, roles, and responsibilities established to ensure that the learning initiatives within an organization are aligned with its goals, effectively managed, and continuously improved.

Interestingly, while almost all organizations we surveyed have an enterprise AI governance team, those teams are led by the IT department and do not include representation from HR, Talent Management, or Talent Development. For instance, in one F500 company, the IT department is piloting “free” AI such as Microsoft CoPilot, with no real strategy, requirement definition, or go-forward plan, and without engaging the learning department.

**These functions can no longer act in silos. Learning needs to participate in AI governance because the power of AI is not in the technology itself, rather it is in the ability of people to harness and use the technology.** IT Departments do not have the expertise to scope and plan for the



human capability development and organizational change management requirements of artificial intelligence.

The participation of the learning leader in AI governance helps ensure that AI tools are implemented in a way that is inclusive, accessible, and aligned with broader HR initiatives, ultimately contributing to a cohesive and sustainable approach to workforce development.

## Here are a few examples of where Learning and Development meets AI Governance:

### Promoting Ethical Use and Compliance

AI governance involves establishing policies and practices for ethical AI use, including data privacy, bias prevention, and compliance with regulations. The learning department can play a critical role in embedding these policies into training programs and ensuring that employees are aware of and adhere to ethical guidelines.

### Developing a System for Ongoing AI Literacy and Tool-Specific Training

As AI tools and systems are integrated into the organization, employees need appropriate training to use them effectively and responsibly. The learning department can drive AI literacy, developing and delivering programs that ensure employees understand how to interact with AI systems, leverage their capabilities, and avoid common pitfalls. This is particularly important when jobs are redesigned or existing processes are disrupted through the use of AI.

Learning also needs to participate in AI governance because as AI technologies evolve rapidly, the learning strategy must provide for ongoing learning and adaptation to reflect the latest advancements in AI and address emerging challenges.

### Addressing “Uniquely Human” Skill Gaps and Development Needs

The introduction of AI has created new skill requirements that aren't technical in nature. Ethical decision making, data analysis, contextual understanding and judgement, creativity and innovation, agility – these are just a few of the skills that the workforce will need to develop as a result of AI. The learning department must understand the impact of technology on employee competency requirements and design learning programs to address skill gaps.

### Supporting Organizational Change Management

Our clients report that employee reaction to AI is on a spectrum from enthusiastic adoption to apathy to fear. The learning department can play a key role in governance by addressing the change management needs of the workforce. This includes assessing readiness and providing support by way of change levers such as communication, training, change coalitions, and sustainment plans to help employees adapt to new AI-driven processes and workflows.

On the next page, we share a case study illustrating the importance of having a defined governance aspect of your learning strategy.



# CASE STUDY: Learning Governance Enables Results for Global Restaurant Chain

## The Challenge:

Our client, a multinational restaurant group, knew that they had three key business challenges impacting the company's ability to be successful: (1) lack of leadership and succession planning due to growth, (2) excessive turnover due to inconsistent hiring and onboarding, and (3) high food

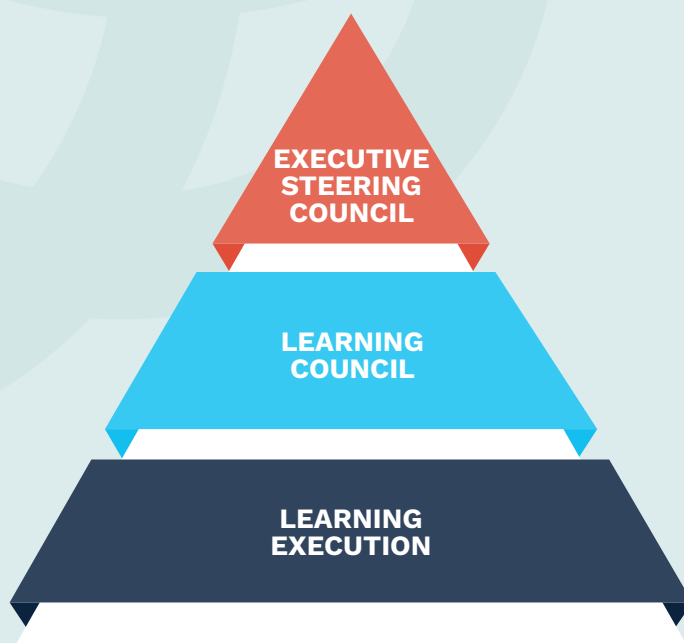
cost due to mistakes in preparing orders. Each country had a learning team working to address one or more of these issues. This resulted in redundant effort and cost, inconsistent results, and the inability to measure return on investment for learning spend.





## The Solution: Incorporate Governance into Your Learning Strategy

While the solution included many workstreams, the client first needed a learning strategy that included governance. Three specific groups were established: Executive Steering to support the alignment of global learning with funding and technology, a Learning Council to represent learning leaders from each country, and Learning Execution, to represent the learning professionals who developed, implemented, and measured program success.



### EXECUTIVE STEERING COUNCIL

- Executive Alignment and Steering
- Funding Approval
- Enterprise Technology Approval (LMS)
- Progress Reporting

### LEARNING COUNCIL

- Program Prioritization and Allocation
- Operational and Business Impact Measurement
- Includes Business Leadership and Talent Management/HR

### LEARNING EXECUTION

- Program Management
- Design and Development
- Vendor Selection
- Implementation & Measurement



**This governance structure ensured that the organization was aligned in the following ways:**

- Executives were aligned and engaged in the new learning strategy, and supported funding of key initiatives tied to business outcomes. They also were informed of achievements and business results, which led to credibility and support of the learning function.
- Learning leaders from different global teams understood what was going to be funded, developed, and delivered from the central learning function, and which they would contribute to. This allowed them to have a voice in the process and also to focus on local learning needs. This reduced redundant effort and supported an aligned implementation and organizational change management plan.
- Finally, the individuals accountable for executing the learning programs had leadership support, funding, and Executive support for measurement and sustainment of actual capability development and measurement of return on investment.





### **The Outcome:**

The result was a learning strategy that was supported and funded by Executive leadership. Redundant effort and costs were reduced and the programs developed were given broad-based support and priority. As programs rolled out worldwide, they managed and measured the change to ensure all employees understood expectations, had

the knowledge and capabilities to perform on the job, and were supported in being successful by their management teams. In turn, the Executive Steering Council supported both learning and organizational change management efforts by including a governance structure.

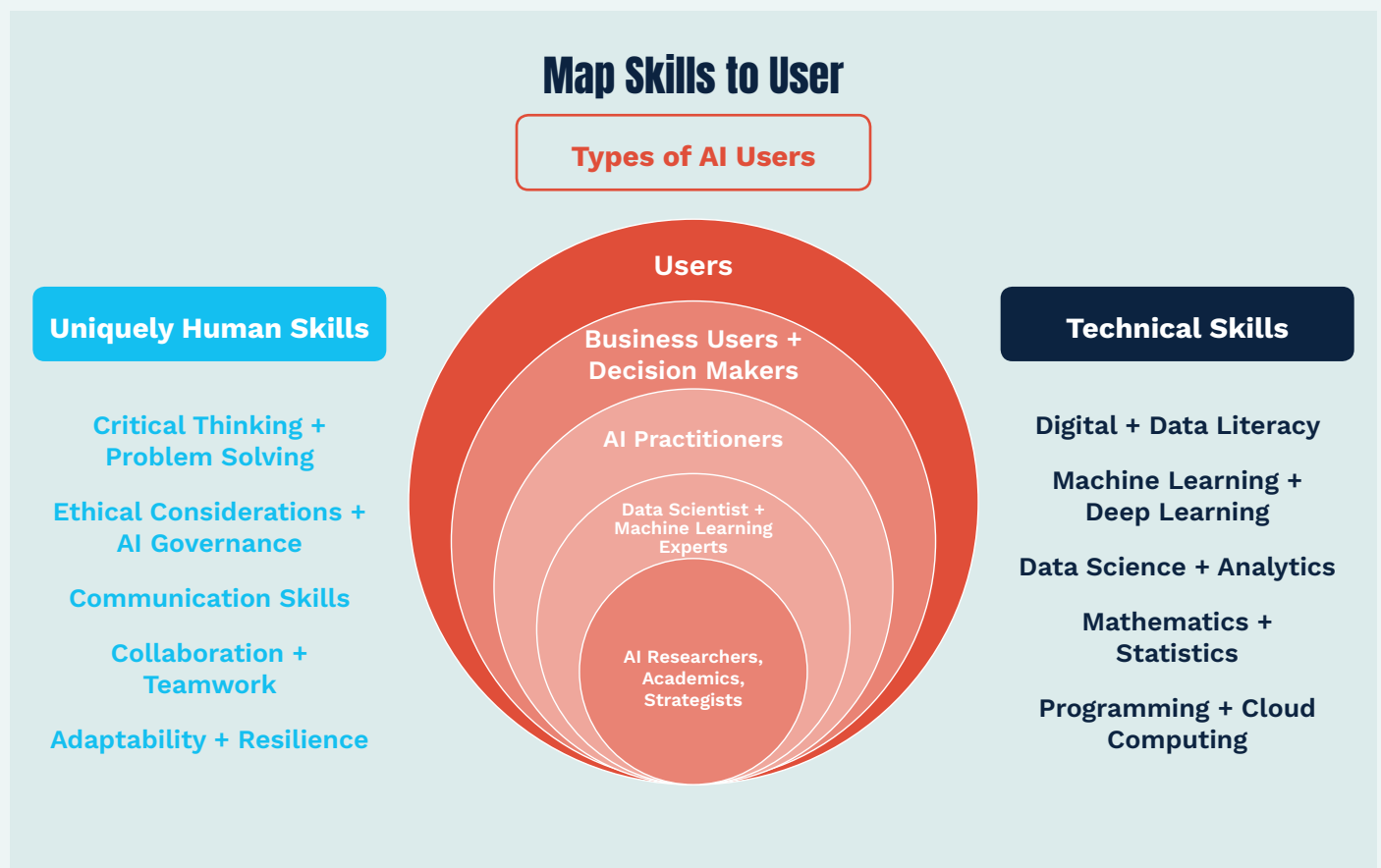


# #4:

## Create a Future-Focused Skills Framework

As AI changes the nature of work, the workforce must be equipped with the skills needed to work alongside AI technologies, particularly if their roles are changing as a result of them. This includes technical skills, such as data analysis, machine learning, and AI programming, as well as the ability to interpret and apply AI-generated insights.

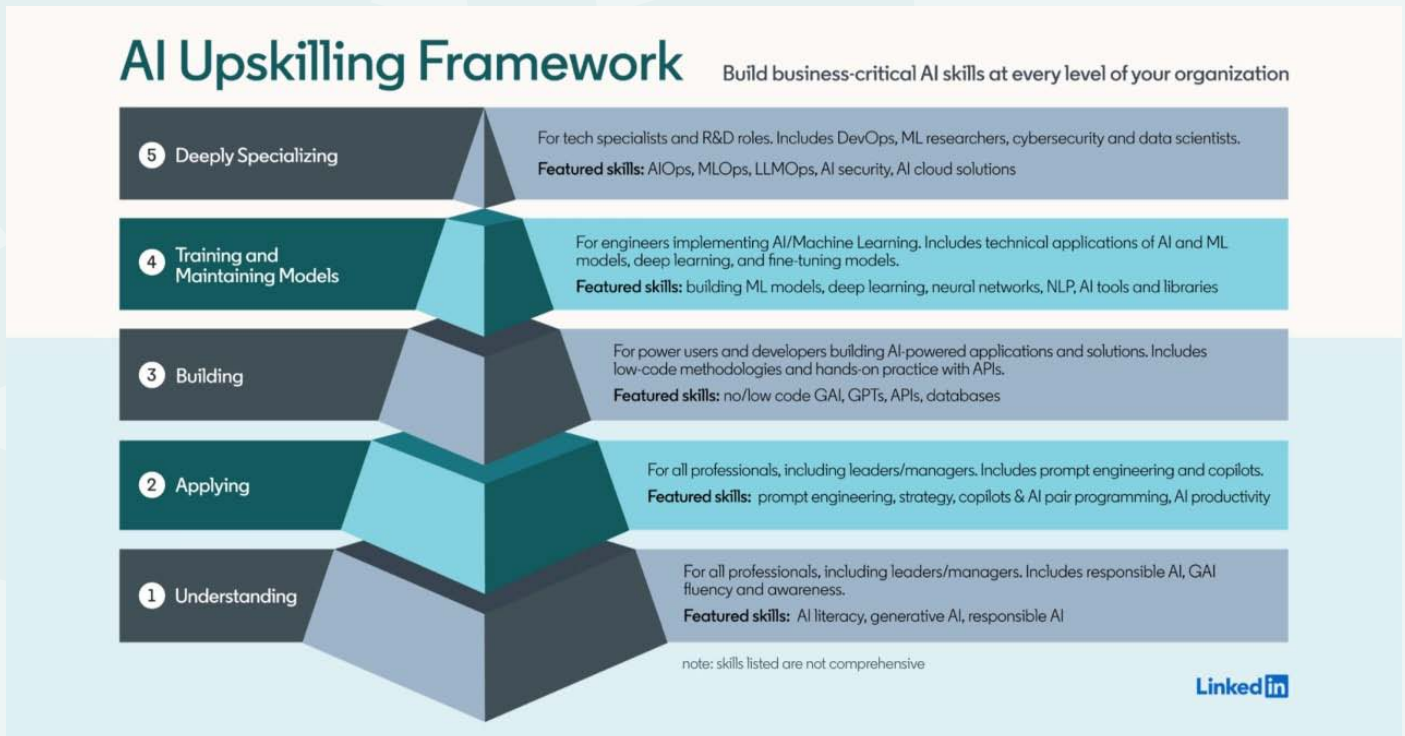
An AI skills framework by role will help the organization understand the skills needed by all employees (particularly those uniquely human skills required for the future) as well as the technical skills required by the majority and those required in specific roles.



Segmenting the workforce based on roles, such as AI practitioners, generalists, and business leadership, allows for the creation of customized learning paths that cater to the specific needs of each group.

Not all employees will need to upskill in AI at the same level. Many

employees will only require basic literacy and an understanding of corporate policies and data security. However, many organizations will require deeper technical skill sets. Use a technical skill framework such as the one listed below from LinkedIn to identify the depth of skill needed for the role.



### Focus on Capability Development

Of course, a subscription to LinkedIn Learning is not an upskilling strategy. Upskilling is about developing capability, not about taking courses. True capability development involves a comprehensive approach that integrates learning with practical

application, feedback, and continuous improvement. It's not just about accessing information; it's about transforming that information into actionable skills that employees can apply in real-world scenarios.

# #5:

## Level-Up Your Learning Department

In a classic case of “physician, heal thyself,” the learning department must reexamine its people, processes, and technology to better serve the organization and meet the demands of the future workforce. Considering the desired outcomes, metrics, governance, and capabilities development of the organization, how will the people, processes, and tools of the learning department need to change?

### Changing Learning Standards

A learning strategy typically defines standards and approaches to learning content. Consider how these current approaches enable the workforce of the future.

### Flexibility

Just as employees value flexibility in their work schedules and locations, they also expect flexibility in learning opportunities. This means offering a variety of learning formats, such as on-demand e-learning, virtual classrooms, and mobile learning options, to accommodate different learning styles and schedules.

### Outcome-Based Learning

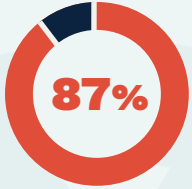
With workers wanting to be judged based on outcomes rather than time spent in the office, learning programs should also shift towards outcome-based assessments. This involves setting clear learning objectives and measuring success based on the application of skills and knowledge in real-world scenarios.



## Diversity and Inclusion in Learning Content

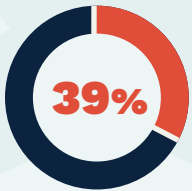
To meet the expectations for a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, learning content must reflect these values. This includes offering training on unconscious bias, cultural competence, and inclusive leadership, as well as ensuring that learning materials are accessible and relevant to a diverse workforce.

### Continuous Professional Development



Recent Gallup research finds that 87% of millennials value career growth opportunities underscoring the need for continuous professional development.<sup>1</sup> Learning leaders should design career development pathways that provide ongoing learning opportunities, mentorship and coaching programs, and clear progression routes within the organization.

### Enhanced Onboarding Programs



According to research from Qualtrics, 39% percent of employees who have been with a company for less than six months plan to leave within the next 12 months, indicating a critical need for improved onboarding processes.<sup>2</sup>

## Examine Learning Process and Tools

If learning standards change, expectations for resources must change as well. For example, AI can augment parts of the instructional design process, such as content creation, personalization, and assessment. AI tools can also analyze learner data to identify needs and preferences, which can influence course design. Instructional designers will need to learn how to effectively use AI tools for designing personalized learning experiences and leveraging data insights.

Note that learning departments need internal governance as well. For any new technology, clear business goals and measures should be established (reduce costs, improve productivity or quality, etc.). From there, requirements should be defined and new processes should be designed and agreed to. Finally, the change should be managed so that all stakeholders understand what the goals are, why the changes are being implemented, and how they can be successful.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imperative.com/blog/gallup-12-employee-engagement-development>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qualtrics.com/news/qualtrics-announces-top-employee-trends-for-2024/>



## Upskilling for Learning & Development

Learning leaders must also develop new competencies within their teams, such as data literacy, measurement skills, and AI fluency so that they can more effectively design, deliver, manage, measure, and sustain results.

Turn the focus inward to assess and enhance the learning department's own capabilities. Evaluate and

optimize people, processes, and technology within the learning function to ensure it can effectively support the broader learning strategy. Invest in upskilling learning professionals, streamlining processes for efficiency, and adopting innovative technologies to improve the delivery and impact of learning programs.

# Conclusion



Learning leaders play a pivotal role in preparing their organizations for the future, especially as AI reshapes workforce needs and skill demands. Staying attuned to workforce trends will help you to drive AI initiatives that not only promote continuous learning and close skill gaps but also champion ethical AI use and thoughtful workforce planning.

By embracing these strategies, you can lead the way in positioning the learning function as a vital force in organizational success, ready to tackle the complexities of today's continuously evolving work world.



## **Why CARA?**

CARA works with employee-focused business leaders to successfully manage talent challenges and complex organizational change. For 20+ years, the world's most recognized brands have trusted CARA to support their business. Our experts create custom solutions tailored to enhance your workforce's performance through three disciplines proven to make a fast and long-lasting impact: Change Management, Learning, and Communications.

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