



## 3 Steps To Achieve Talent Development That Drives Organizational Success

The pressure on organizations to improve learning and development continues to intensify.<sup>1</sup>

Deloitte's [2016 Human Capital Trends report](#) recently declared, "The pressure on organizations to improve learning and development continues to intensify."



*Two-thirds of organizations are having difficulty recruiting for job openings*

Two factors are intensifying the pressure:

1. More and more organizations are unable to recruit all the talent they require, so they need to develop it internally. A [2016 SHRM survey](#) found that more than two-thirds of organizations are having difficulty recruiting for job openings, up from half in 2013.
2. A lack of career opportunities has risen to be the No. 1 reason employees say they leave an organization, according to a [Randstad survey](#).

*Why did you leave your last job?*



Source: Randstad 2015 Employer Branding Survey

<sup>1</sup> Deloitte, [2016 Human Capital Trends report](#).



*Throwing money  
at a challenge  
isn't enough*

Given the data, it's no surprise that more than eight in 10 executives (84%) view learning as an important (40%) or very important (44%) issue, according to Deloitte's survey. Many are putting their money where their mouth is, too. The SHRM survey revealed that 39% of organizations have increased their training budgets in the last 12 months, while 50% have kept their training budgets steady.

Of course, throwing money at a challenge isn't enough. In this article, we'll show you a coordinated talent development process that will help you substantially increase total employee performance, driving sustained organizational success.

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## Why Is Effective Talent Development Critically Important?

Before we get to best practices, let's look at the specific benefits of effective talent development to see why it's so critical for organizational success. Here are the top six benefits:

- **It builds your talent pipeline.** Few companies can find all the talent they need through recruiting. Having a strong pipeline allows you to fill more positions internally.
- **It helps you develop an effective career succession/career pathing process.** Due to the skills they are learning, employees have more career mobility, allowing for them to set goals for advancement.
- **It improves succession planning.** With more and more baby boomers in executive positions retiring (3.6 million baby boomers were expected to retire this year) or approaching retirement, the need to have enough internal talent that can fill those positions has become even more pressing.
- **It reduces turnover.** As a [Chicago Tribune](#) report shows, a high percentage of employees leave because they feel like they are in dead-end jobs. Effective talent development gives them a projected path for advancing in their career.
- **It improves employees' productivity.** Employees are more likely to be engaged, and to have critical skills to improve that improve their job performance.
- **It lowers recruiting costs.** Thanks to reduced turnover and more internal candidate hiring, there are fewer jobs to fill externally.

## Why is Effective Talent Development Difficult to Achieve?

One reason that there’s so much talk about talent development is so many companies struggle with it. It’s why talent development is on executives’ minds, and likely explains why companies are spending more money on training— they hope to do a better job so they can attain the results listed above.

Here are a few reasons why talent development is challenging:



*Talent management must be ongoing to be successful*

- **It requires a significant organizational commitment.** It takes more than acquiring the right tools and providing quality learning materials. Many companies fail to create a culture of learning, and as a result, engagement in the talent development process is poor, and so are the outcomes.
- **Training and learning take time.** Talent development must be ongoing to be successful. It’s easy for more immediate priorities to take precedence, and derail training and learning activities.

### Reasons that Positions Require New Skills<sup>2</sup>



- **It’s a complicated process that’s difficult for HR to manage.** Employees, supervisors and training managers are all involved in training, and all need to be on the same page about the training process—the current status, next steps, etc. Managing it all can be dizzying for HR and training managers, leading to delays and confusion in the process that slow talent

<sup>2</sup> The New Talent Landscape: Recruiting Difficulty and Skills Shortages (SHRM, 2016)

development efforts to a crawl, and cause frustration among all involved. These problems are common among organizations that are trying to manage training with paper or Excel.

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## For Effective Talent Development, Follow These 3 Steps



*Combine an effective process with a commitment to succeed*

You achieve effective talent development the same way people successfully meet many challenges—by combining an effective process with a commitment to succeed. Similarly an effective talent development process shares the same basic steps as many effective processes: you prepare for success, you execute the best you can, and then you evaluate and adjust.

Let's examine the three steps of effective talent development.

### 1. Prepare for Success

To achieve effective talent development, it's important to prepare yourself for success. Here are some steps to consider taking before starting, expanding a talent development program:

- Define the required competencies for each job (e.g. soft skills, technical skills, level of experience) through a benchmarking process. This is important for knowing which training materials to create and/or purchase.
- Acquire quality, thorough, and relevant training and learning materials, whether internal or from service provider (e.g. OpenSesame).
- Find a quality learning management system (LMS) to help you organize the process.
- Use assessments to identify the skills and competencies employees have, and areas that need improvement. These help determine the best skill and competency areas to develop.
- Create specific, reasonable goals for talent development efforts (these can and should be adjusted over time).

It's also important to note that if you're not pleased with your company's talent development results, it helps to examine these areas, too, by asking questions. Are your training and learning materials of high quality and aligned with job requirements? Is your LMS working for you? Are employees working on the right skill and competency areas? Are your goals reasonable?

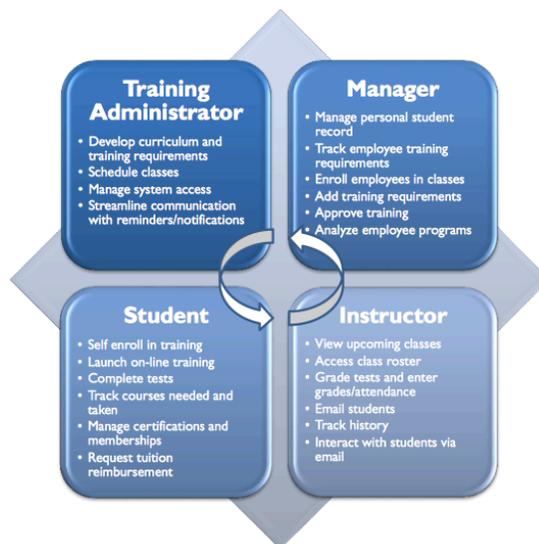
## 2. Execute Talent Development with the Right Training Management Tools

Obviously, this is the step you're trying to get right, to a level of perfection, as you're making a heavy employee investment here. This is where you're going to reap the rewards—a better talent pipeline, increased productivity, less turnover, etc.—if your execution is strong.

However, as we mentioned earlier, talent development is highly complex and difficult to manage. With employees on a wide variety of development paths and in different stages of the learning process, HR can struggle to keep everyone progressing to the correct next step in a reasonable time frame. That's why organizations that are succeeding at talent development are using a quality LMS (such as [Cyber Train](#)) to help them administer the process.

The benefits of using a quality LMS in talent development include:

- **LMS tool provides a centralized, on-demand location for corporate learning and training.** Training content is either created and/or purchased to build out courses and curriculums that parallel with the talent development needs of your organization.
- **Lessening the burden on all involved in the process (HR, training managers, supervisors and employees).** Your HR team won't have to juggle a dozen spreadsheets and reams of paper to manage the process. All parties can see the status of training activities that are relevant to them (e.g. HR can see status for all employees, individual employees can only see their own status).
- **Severely reducing delays and mistakes in the process.** Automated approvals and notifications streamline your learning process, and improve communication between all parties. This allows your employees to move to the next step without delay. And because the next step is listed in the LMS, there are no delays due to confusion over what to do next.
- **Improved compliance.** For jobs that require certification, a quality LMS will provide automatic notification of upcoming certification expirations to



employees, supervisors and training managers. Additionally, all are notified of courses due and accreditation requirements.

- **Improved employee learning/training experience.** A poorly run process frustrates and irritates employees, and can even sour employees on talent development efforts. A well-run process helps keep your employees enthusiastic about talent development.
- **Employees are empowered with self-service.** As noted in Deloitte’s 2016 Human Capital Trends report, employees increasingly want to take control of their own learning. A quality LMS includes self-service training you’re your employees can subscribe to allows them to develop skills that they believe will help them improve their performance and aid their efforts to advance in your organization.

### 3. Evaluate Your Talent Development Efforts, then Adjust

As with any challenging business effort, it’s important to evaluate your talent development efforts on a regular basis. This evaluation is necessary for making adjustments that you can be confident will improve your results. Also, the act of conducting an evaluation helps maintain talent development as a company priority.

How often should you perform evaluations? We recommend formal, periodic evaluations, perhaps annually or every two years. Components of a strong evaluation process include:

#### Evaluate Your Goal Achievement

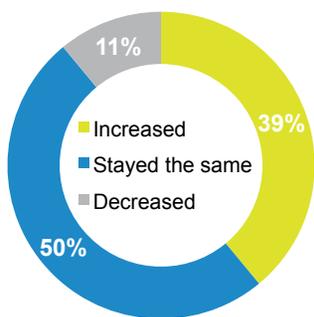
Look at the goals you set for your talent development program, and see if they’ve been met or not. If the goals have been met, consider setting more ambitious goals. If results have fallen short of the goals, take steps to identify why the failure occurred and/or to identify new goals that are more realistic.

#### Analyze Your LMS Metrics

The best LMSs have metrics that can give you insights about how well or poorly your process is performing. In addition to periodic analysis of LMS metrics, it also can help to look at these metrics on a regular basis to track your process and fine-tune it. Examples of benefits you can achieve include:

- Track courses and curriculums to ensure completion
- Use online testing, including review of results, to ensure knowledge transfer
- Assess administrative process workflow and results to ensure successful communications at every level.

Change in Training Budget in the Last 12 Months



Source: The New Talent Landscape: Recruiting Difficulty and Skills Shortages (SHRM, 2016)

## Survey Your Employees

Because employees experience your talent development directly, they are a great source for identifying areas of improvement. You can ask questions like:

- Is the talent development program valuable to you?
- How do you rate the learning materials?
- Are you using the self-service learning option? Is it valuable to you?
- Is the pace of the learning materials too slow, too fast or just right?
- Are you satisfied with the pace of approvals?
- What is the biggest shortcoming of the talent development program?
- What is the biggest positive of the talent development program?

## Survey Your Training Managers And Supervisors

Identify their thoughts about the effectiveness of your talent development efforts. Many of the questions to ask employees are also sensible to ask training managers and supervisors.

## Make Adjustments

Based on the findings from the process above, identify changes that you believe will improve how your talent developments efforts are performed, and therefore improve your results.

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## Organizational Commitment

There's one essential component that we mentioned in the "Why is Effective Talent Development Difficult to Achieve" section that we've yet to discuss: organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment means that from executives to line workers, the organization is committed to the talent development process. Employees are committed to learning, executives are committed to providing it and rewarding it. When you accomplish this, you have a learning culture, which is a necessity to earn great talent development results.

Creating a learning culture requires more than quality tools and effective and efficient administration. It requires concrete actions that demonstrate the great value your organization places in talent development, actions that motivate employees to improve themselves. These actions include:

- **Make training and development for everyone.** All employees need to be involved for a learning culture to grow. When learning is for only some segments of your organization, it can cause frustration and resentment among those not included.



*Creating a learning culture requires concrete actions*

- **Recognize success.** Recognize employees who learn new skills and improve their performance, so others want to do the same.
- **Hire internally.** Doing so shows all employees that it pays off working hard to develop their talent and skill. It supports engagement in your talent development program.
- **Involve employees.** Give employees input into your training and development program. The employee survey in the evaluation process is one example. Offering employees self-service learning and encouraging them to use it is another.

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## The Bottom Line

Effective talent development has always been important, but with today's talent shortages and recruiting difficulties, it's now a must for sustained business success. Considering that 87% of millennials rate "professional or career growth and development opportunities" as [important to them in their job](#), this new reality is unlikely to change any time soon.

As a result, many organizations are committing significant resources to talent development. Those that succeed in this critical effort combine an effective and efficient training and learning process with an unwavering commitment to talent development.

### About Visibility Software

Founded in 1999, Visibility Software, a leading provider of applicant tracking and training management software, has helped thousands of organizations of all sizes solve talent acquisition and talent development problems. Our two primary flagship software solutions Cyber Recruiter and Cyber Train provide a simplified, flexible approach to usability, agility and licensing to deliver fast, game-changing results.

With powerful out of the box integration capabilities to many leading ERP and HR applications, our solutions eliminate redundant inefficiencies in recruiting, onboarding, and training. For us it's all about placing high value on helping organizations build a strong foundation for their recruiting and training management strategies.



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