virti

The 2023 State of Learning and Development Report

Based on a poll of 144 L&D professionals working in the UK

> ## "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."
> Confucius

In the Spring of 2023, we surveyed 144 UK-based professionals in learning and development (L&D) to understand the current state of affairs. The results demonstrate just how essential L&D is to businesses, governments, and other organisations.

Revenue is a good case in point. According to the findings, a little more than two-thirds of the respondents say L&D has a positive impact on revenue.

Even so, L&D faces many obstacles. For example, budget is the top challenge for most L&D professionals that took the survey. This suggests the function is under-resourced.

Others believe there's too much focus on "ticking a box" for compliance. Whilst many admit they aren't familiar with emerging learning technologies such as digital immersion, which could scale L&D's impact and stretch the investment in training over the long run.

We hope you find the survey results reviewed throughout this report helpful. Your professional thoughts and suggestions are always welcome.

Kurt Kratchman
CEO, Virti
kurt.kratchman@virti.com

In this report

Executive summary

Most said L&D has a positive impact on revenue.

Most L&D professionals measure success by surveying employees (63%) and managers (40%); two-thirds (67%) said the training they provide has a positive impact on revenue.

Organisations conduct training for compliance, but soft skills are the most important training offered.

The top three reasons organisations conduct training are to ensure compliance (50%), improve employee technical skills (49%) and support their career development (39%). However, soft skills, like leadership and communication (50%), are the most important training L&D professionals said they provide.

Budget is the top L&D challenge.

Most L&D professionals said budget (57%) was their top challenge, followed by driving employee engagement (37%) and measuring results (29%). Obtaining executive support ranked near the bottom of the list of challenges, suggesting L&D professionals enjoy the broad support of their leadership.

Training materials are largely produced in-house.

53% of respondents said most of the training content they produce is created in-house; 31% use a mix of in-house and outside resources to create classes and courses; just 17% rely mostly on external content providers.

Executive summary

The shelf life of a training course is short.

While much depends on the subject matter, 50% of respondents said training courses typically last a year or less; 40% said courses last two or three years.

Flexible learning options.

Most L&D organisations are providing learners with flexible options for learning: 60% said they offer courses remotely, live and in-person; 56% said training can be completed anywhere and anytime from a computer or laptop.

Modest adoption of digital immersive training; noteworthy benefits.

39% of L&D departments train their teams in digitally immersive environments, such as virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) at least some of the time. These respondents said VR/AR provides better quality training and is more cost-effective in the long run.

Most L&D professionals report to HR.

62% of respondents said L&D reports to human resources (HR). Another 10%, the second most, report to the CEO. Half (50%) said the L&D function has both centralised and decentralised teams. About one-third (33%) of respondents said L&D leaders have titles commonly considered executive-level including Chief Learning Officer (CLO).

L&D challenges and budget

Compliance, technical skills and career development the top drivers of training

Respondents were presented with a list of common reasons organisations conduct training and were asked to select their top three.

When the results were tallied up, about half identified compliance or improving technical skills as the most pressing drivers behind organisational training.

More specifically, **compliance and regulations** (50%) ranked at the top of the list. This was closely followed by the need to **improve the technical skills and understanding** of the workforce (49%). Support for **career development** rounded out the top three (39%).

**The top three reasons L&D departments conduct training:**

50% Meet compliance / regulatory requirements

49% Improve the technical skills and understanding of their workforce

39% Support career development

It's worth noting, no single driver drew a majority, which points to a variety of needs L&D professionals must support.

Here's how the remaining answers stacked up:

- 32% increase productivity;

- 29% enhance safety;

- 20% prepare future leaders/groom from within;

- 19% soft skills gap;

- 15% foster organisational culture;

- 15% perk: L&D is a benefit that attracts and retains talent;

- 11% improve consistency across the organisation (i.e marketing, sales, service).

What would you say are the top three reasons your organisation conducts training?

Reason	%
Compliance/regulations	50%
Improve technical skills/understanding	49%
Support career development	39%
Increase productivity	32%
Enhance safety	29%
Prepare/groom future leaders from within	20%
Soft skills gap	19%
Foster organisational culture	15%
L&D is a benefit that attracts and retains talent	15%
Improve consistency across the organisation	11%
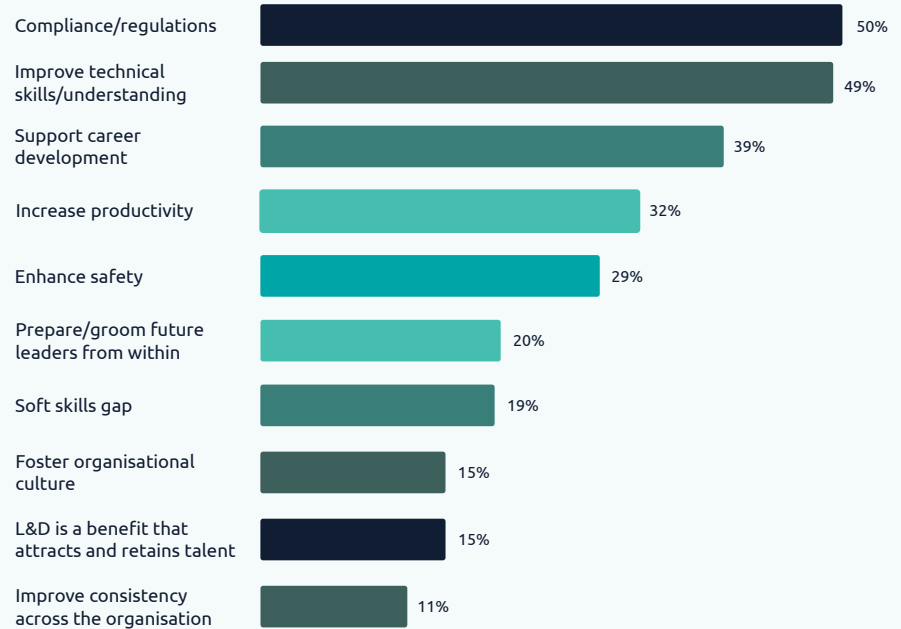
N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Soft skills like leadership and communication are the most important training

L&D professionals surveyed said **soft skills**, including leadership and communication (46%), were the most important courses offered.

This is an interesting finding because the most important classes differ from the top motivations organisations have for conducting training in the first place (as previously noted).

Career development (40%) and **compliance/legal** (38%) round out the top three most important courses offered. From here on, the answers trail off and no single answer

The most important classes, courses or skill training offered by L&D teams.

46%
Soft skills
(e.g. leadership,
communication)

40%
Career
development

38%
Compliance/
legal

drew a majority of vote:

- 29% management/recruiting/appraisals/disciplinary;
- 28% safety;
- 22% information security/cybersecurity;
- 13% project/program management;
- 11% organisational culture;
- 8% strategic planning;
- 8% software development/engineering;
- 7% contact centre/customer service;
- 6% data analysis;
- 6% sales; and
- 4% other.

What are the most important classes, courses and skills training your organisation provides?

Category	Value
Soft skills/leadership/ communication	46%
Career development	40%
Compliance/legal	38%
Management/recruiting/appraisals/disciplinary	29%
Safety	28%
Information security/cybersecurity	22%
Project/program management	13%
Organisational culture	11%
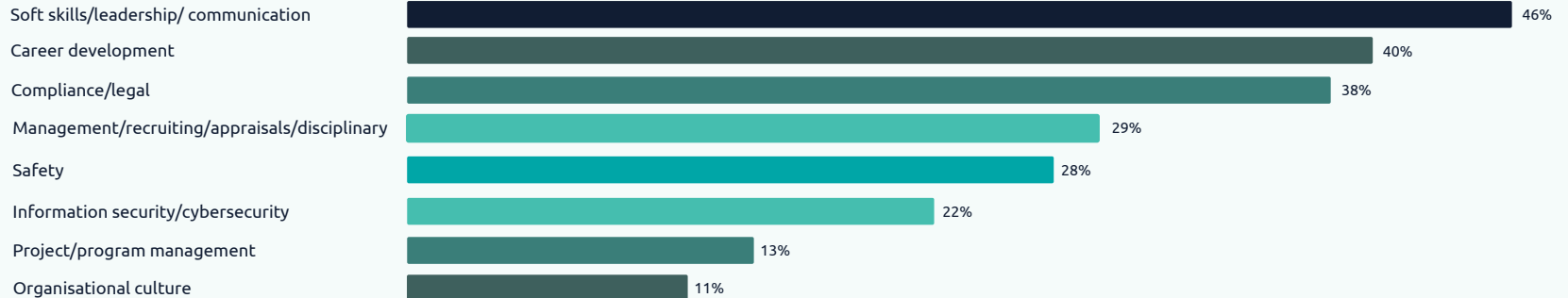
N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Budget is a top challenge for L&D professionals

Most L&D professionals surveyed said **budget** (57%) was their top challenge. A cross-tab analysis demonstrates this finding is generally uniform across organisations of all sizes.

This was the only question in this section – L&D challenges and budget – that received at least a simple majority and is likely to reflect the current economic situation.

Driving **employee engagement** (37%) and **measuring results** (29%) were ranked second and third on the list of top challenges by respondents.

The remaining challenges trail off as follows:

L&D professionals seem to enjoy the broad support of executive leaders.

While…

57%

…identified budget as their top challenge…

Only…

10%

…reported obtaining executive support as a challenge.

- 23% knowledge retention;

- 19% time to develop training courses/materials;

- 18% keeping up with changing training requirements;

- 16% availability of subject matter experts (SMEs);

- 16% determining the right class/course/training needs;

- 15% recruiting and/or retaining L&D talent;

- 14% developing/updating the training materials;

- 10% travel;

- 10% obtaining executive support for L&D.

One interesting finding among these remaining choices is that obtaining executive support ranks at the bottom.

This suggests L&D professionals seem to enjoy the broad support of leaders in training the workforce.

Which of the following would you say are the top challenges facing L&D professionals in your organisation today?

Challenge	%
Budget	57%
Driving employee engagement	37%
Measuring training results	29%
Knowledge retention	23%
Time to develop courses/materials	19%
Keeping up with changing training requirements	18%
Availability of subject matter experts	16%
Determining the right course/training needs	16%
Recruiting and/or retaining L&D talent	15%
Developing/updating training materials	14%
Travel	10%
Obtaining executive support for L&D	10%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti
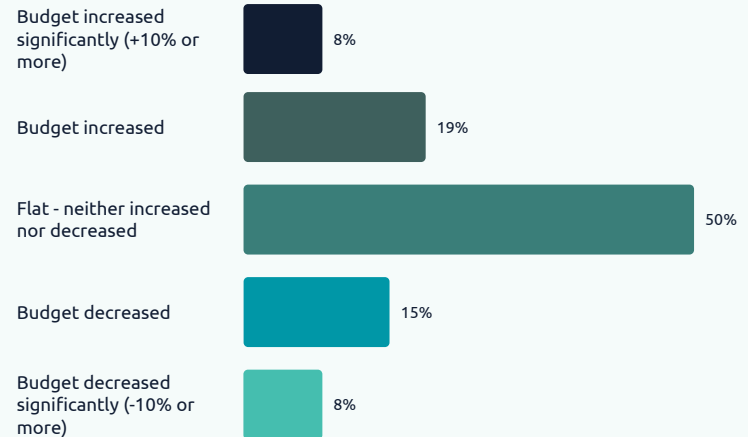
Most L&D budgets are flat

Half of the respondents said their budget is flat (50%) this year. Since the top challenge facing L&D professionals earlier was budget – it appears for many that means 'doing more with the same' resources.

About a quarter (27%) of respondents said their **budget increased** (19%) or increased significantly (8%). Similarly, about a quarter (23%) said their **budget decreased** (15%) or decrease significantly (8%).

In open-ended comments, some respondents wrote in to explain why they answered the way they did.

Those who experienced budget increases pointed to inflation, growth in headcount, and a lack of experience among new personnel which necessitated a budget bump.

Compared to your last fiscal year, which of the following most accurately describes your L&D budget this fiscal year?

Category	Value
Budget increased significantly (+10% or more)	8%
Budget increased	19%
Flat - neither increased nor decreased	50%
Budget decreased	15%
Budget decreased significantly (-10% or more)	8%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Interestingly, one also noted their increase was due to in-housing of the L&D function:

> "To develop in-house L&D experience and to source external suppliers for training programmes so our development offer is consistent globally."

Those that said their budget was flat noted other business costs had been prioritised for budget increases over L&D.

Those that said their budget decreased had mixed responses. One noted L&D received a significant increase in budget last year which inevitably meant a smaller budget this year. Others cited economic uncertainty and "higher operating costs." For those with a shrinking budget, it may not last too much longer, as one respondent noted:

> "Last year's budget was very small due to recovery from Covid and there is a recognition it can't stay at that low level so whilst it has increased it is still not significant nor up to pre-Covid levels."

Reported reasons for budget increases:

Inflation	In-housing the L&D function	Headcount growth	Lack of experienced personnel

Reported reasons for budget decreases:

Increase in previous years	Economic uncertainty	Higher operating costs	Recovery from Covid-19

The L&D organisational structure

A mix of centralised and decentralised structures

About four in 10 organisations (44%) seem to prefer a **centralised** approach to training. This typically provides leaders with better control of training – the courses offered and tracking.

By contrast, just six percent used a **decentralised** model – where training resources are pushed down to a division or business unit.

One advantage to this model is that business units often have greater visibility of the day-to-day activities of their workforce – and therefore have different insights into training needs.

Half (50%) draw from **both approaches** and mix it up: some

training is centralised, while other parts are allocated to a business unit.

Is L&D centralised or decentralised in your organisation?

A mix of both	50%
Centralised	44%
Decentralised	6%
Other	1%
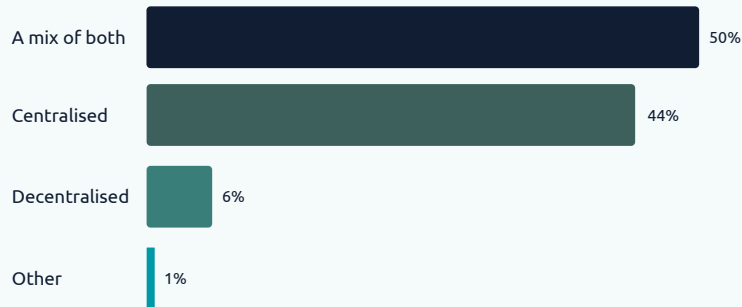
N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

The majority of L&D professionals report to HR

Most L&D professionals (62%) report to **human resources** (HR), which is the traditional reporting structure. After all, training is all about people.

Another 15% report to a **division leader or general manager**, which was the second most common answer.

This too makes sense given the organisational structure preference for a mix of centralised and decentralised approaches noted earlier.
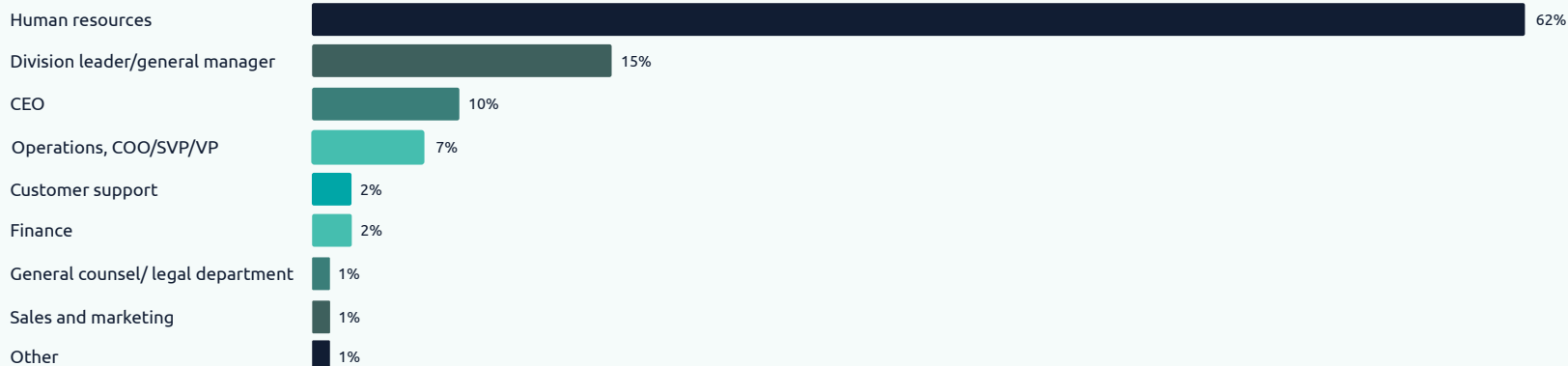
One in 10 respondents **report directly to the CEO**.

We compared answers from this cohort of L&D professionals

62% report to human resources

15% report to division leaders or general managers

10% report directly to the CEO

(reporting to the CEO) to answers from the cohort that reported to HR to see if there were any substantial differences.

There were no unique findings, which suggests in short, those L&D professionals that report to the CEO don't have any notable advantages – at least by measure of this survey.

Who does the L&D function report to in your organisation?

Human resources	62%
Division leader/general manager	15%
CEO	10%
Operations, COO/SVP/VP	7%
Customer support	2%
Finance	2%
General counsel/ legal department	1%
Sales and marketing	1%
Other	1%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

"Take us to your leader"

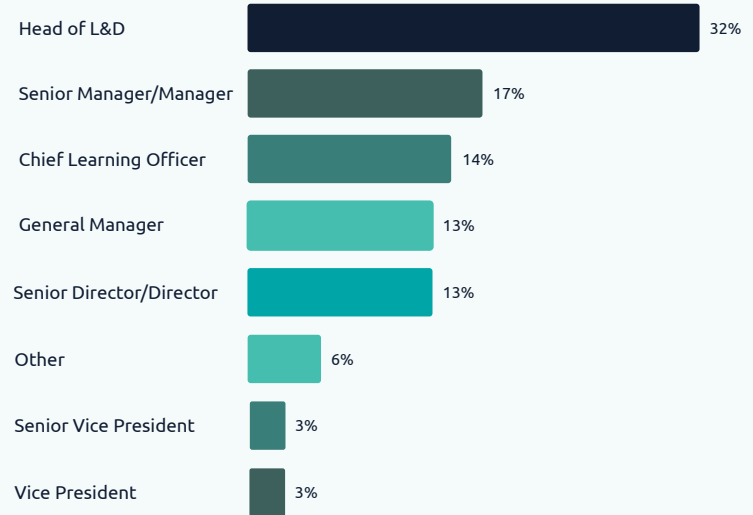**There is a range of titles among L&D leaders, including those indicative of senior leadership.**

We believe this conveys the weight of the responsibility the L&D function has to their organisations.

About one-third (33%) of respondents listed titles commonly considered **executive level**. This includes c-suite positions (14%), like a chief learning officer (CLO), general manager (13%) and senior vice president/vice president (6%).

Another third (32%) of the leaders in the L&D organisation hold the title of "**head of L&D**" – which was the most common one listed.

Respondents that selected "other" listed titles such as "global director," "head of HR," and "partner."

What title does the most senior leader in your L&D organisation hold?

Title	Percentage
Head of L&D	32%
Senior Manager/Manager	17%
Chief Learning Officer	14%
General Manager	13%
Senior Director/Director	13%
Other	6%
Senior Vice President	3%
Vice President	3%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

The production of training materials

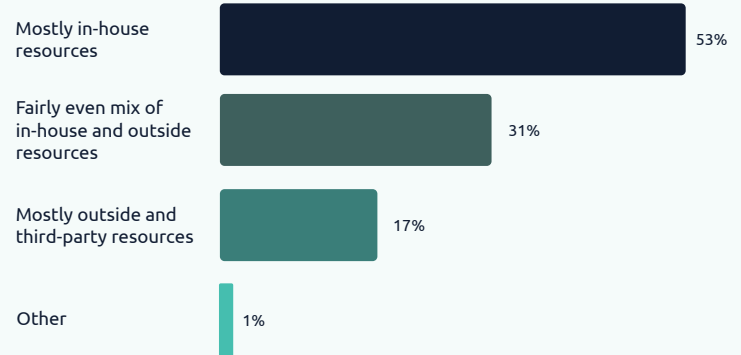# Most L&D training materials are produced in-house

A little more than half (53%) of respondents said most of their training content is **produced in-house**.

About one-third (31%) said they use **a mix of in-house and outside resources** to create classes and courses.

In contrast, a little less than one in five (17%) said they mostly rely on **external content providers** for their training materials.

Larger companies appear to be more inclined to complete a greater share of course development in-house.

How does your organisation primarily produce training content?

Mostly in-house resources	53%
Fairly even mix of in-house and outside resources	31%
Mostly outside and third-party resources	17%
Other	1%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

For example, a cross-tab analysis shows companies with 1,001-5,000 employees complete 60% of content production in-house. Similarly, 62% of companies with 10,000 or more employees do the same.

> Larger companies appear to be more inclined to complete a greater share of course development in-house.

There was no tendency among smaller companies to outsource more.

Taken together, it's safe to say most content development for training is done in-house.

Training courses and classes are short-lived

Half (50%) of L&D professionals indicated the lifespan of any given training course or class is short.

This includes those that said courses last **about a year** (35%) and those that said courses last **less than a year** (15%).

A plurality of respondents (40%) said their training materials last **2-3 years**. This feels more reasonable given how much time, effort and organisational treasure goes towards creating those classes.

Just a few respondents indicated their courses last between **3-5 years** (2%) or more than 5 years (6%).

Respondents that said "other" indicated the shelf-life of any

The average lifespan of training materials, according to L&D professionals

2-3 years
according to the majority (40%)

1 year
according to 35% of L&D professionals.

Less than a year
according to 15% of L&D professionals.

course often depends on the subject matter.

One respondent noted in open-ended comments that technical courses tend to change every year, but personal development courses can last "a couple of years."

Only 5%
Of training materials are current for more than 5 years

How long does the typical course or training session remain current once produced?

Category	Percentage
Less than a year	15%
1 year	35%
2-3 years	40%
3-5 years	2%
More than 5 years	6%
Other	2%
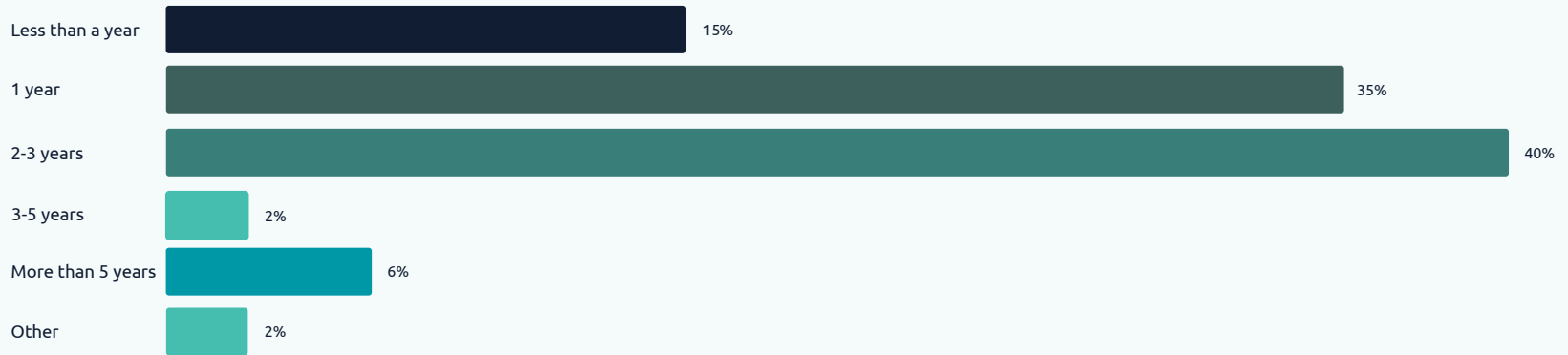
N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Video is used occasionally for training purposes

A plurality of respondents said they use video for training **sometimes** (42%).

When asked *"why?"* some respondents wrote that video can, at times, *"facilitate online learning"* and be a better way to provide information and to help learners absorb the lessons more efficiently.

About one in three (34%) respondents said they use video **often** (26%) or **always** (8%). Those L&D organisations are likely to be endowed with proper resources for video production. One respondent wrote:

> "Enhances the learning experience and we have a fantastic in-house digital artist with the skills and creativity to do so."

Video helps absorb the lessons more efficiently,
according to L&D professionals that use it

Similarly, about one-fourth (24%) of respondents said they **rarely** (14%) or **never** (10%) use video.

Some respondents in this category wrote in to say they didn't have the right resources or enough budget to incorporate video production.

Another, from a global organisation, noted videos can be *"difficult to translate"* and, increased cost notwithstanding, maintaining and updating those videos in multiple languages is a heavy lift.

Video can be difficult to maintain and update,
according to L&D professionals that rarely or never use it

Does your organisation create custom videos - even if with outside production help - to support L&D classes, sessions and training?

Category	Percentage
Always	8%
Often	26%
Sometimes	42%
Rarely	14%
Never	10%
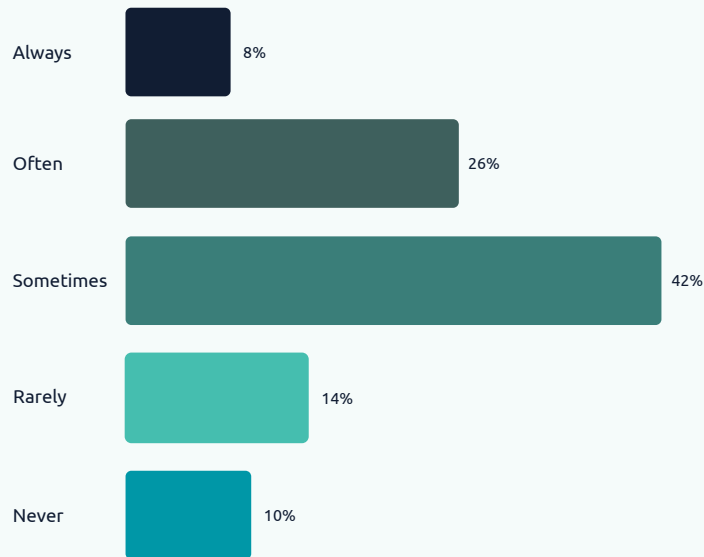
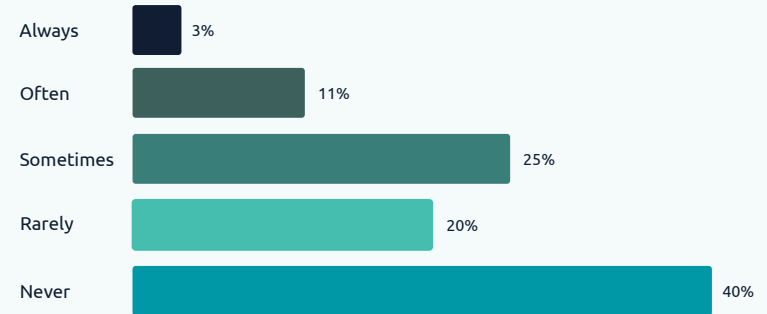*N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti*

Digital immersion: modest adoption but significant benefits

Digitally immersive learning environments, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), seem to have modest adoption at the moment.

Six in 10 (60%) respondents said they **rarely or never** use the tools. A few wrote in the comments to say they felt this technology was cost prohibitive, but other also pointed out their organisations were still new to the concept or simply weren't ready for it yet.

One respondent noted it simply has *"not been looked into"* yet. Another said their organisation *"struggled to*

Does your organisation use digitally immersive learning environments such as virtual reality or augmented reality for training?

Always	3%
Often	11%
Sometimes	25%
Rarely	20%
Never	40%

40%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

understand a real use for it." A third respondent observed their organisation lacked the maturity to use digital immersion and that the business didn't have an *"appetite"* for VR or AR.

However, **nearly four in 10** (39%) train their teams in digitally immersive environments at least **some of the time**.

In two subsequent questions, we segmented these two groups with separate questions:

Nearly four in 10
L&D professionals train their teams in digitally immersive environments at least some of the time.

We asked, *"What are the benefits your organisation finds in using virtual reality or augmented reality for L&D?"* of just those respondents who were part of the 39% cohort that answered this question with **sometimes, often or always**.

Similarly, we asked, *"What are the top barriers that prevent your organisation from using virtual reality or augmented reality for L&D?"* of just those respondents who were part of the 60% cohort that answered this question with **rarely or never**.

We will review the results over the next four pages.

The top benefits of VR and AR for L&D

Those that use VR and AR tools said it provides a **higher quality training experience**. This was the top benefit identified by respondents (44%).

Indeed, there's substantial research, including academic research, suggesting that **knowledge absorption and knowledge retention** tend to be higher with digitally immersive training.

While it can cost a bit to get set up, digital environments tend to be **less expensive over time**, because it eliminates the cost of travel without sacrificing the quality of training. This is a top benefit recognised by those respondents that use these tools (42%).

The top benefits of VR and AR tools for L&D

44% Provide a higher quality training experience

42% More cost-effective over time

39% Easier to deploy

Another factor that may be at play with respect to costs is that artificial intelligence (AI) can help quickly make variations scenarios in a VR or AR environment – and then help keep those courses up-to-date.

Rounding out the top three benefits is the fact that it's **easier to deploy** (39%). Once these tools are established and used, learners can re-take an immersive course multiple times, whereas it's much more difficult to re-take a physical class whether it's lecture style or role-play style.

All-in-all, the top benefits of digitally immersive training tally up this way:

- 44% provides better quality training;

- 42% it is more cost-effective in the long run;

- 39% easier to deploy;

- 30% drives higher student/employee engagement;

- 26% we're better able to measure success; and

- 23% knowledge retention is higher.

What are the benefits your organisation finds in using virtual reality or augmented reality for L&D?

Benefit	Percentage
Provides better quality training	44%
More cost-effective in the long run	42%
Easier to deploy	39%
Drives student/employee engagement	30%
Better able to measure success	26%
Knowledge retention is higher	23%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

What's stopping L&D from adopting VR and AR?

The **cost** of digitally immersive training is by far the biggest barrier (57%) to the adoption of digitally immersive learning technologies.

This is true in terms of **initial costs and set up** of equipment (third barrier with 24%), but as respondents using the tools today, the costs are lower over the long term.

The digital nature provides repeatability, extensibility and scalability that's hard to match in a physical training environment.

Many respondents to this question noted they were **unfamiliar** with the available tools (39%) and one in five (21%) said the **didn't know where to start**.
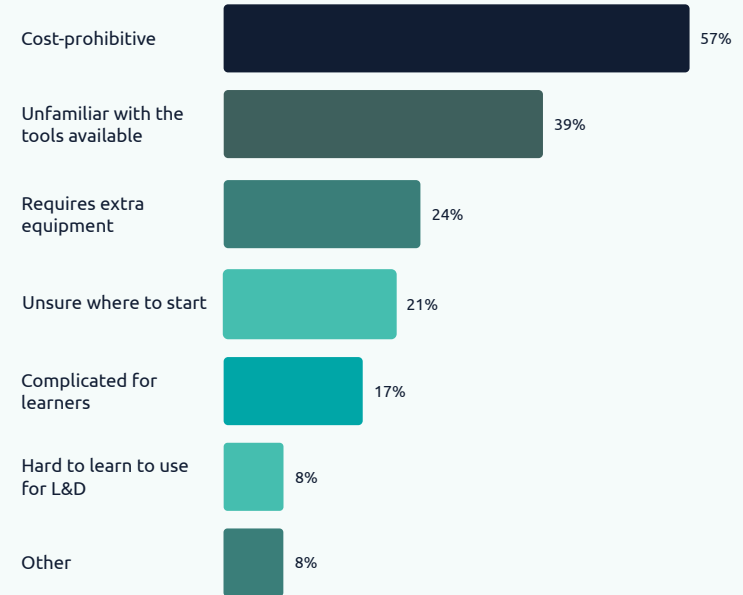
The top barriers to the adoption of immersive learning technologies in L&D

57% Initial costs

39% Lack of familiarity with available tools

24% Extra equipment required

21% L&Ds unsure where to start

Any L&D professional can overcome these barriers on their own through research.

This survey too may help raise awareness of both the barrier and illuminate a path to overcoming it for those interested in realising the benefits of these technologies in their organisation.

What are the top barriers that prevent your organisation from using virtual reality or augmented reality for L&D?

Barrier	Percentage
Cost-prohibitive	57%
Unfamiliar with the tools available	39%
Requires extra equipment	24%
Unsure where to start	21%
Complicated for learners	17%
Hard to learn to use for L&D	8%
Other	8%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Why and where learners can complete training

Employee motivation for training

A plurality of respondents (43%) said **compliance** was the strongest motivation for employees to engage more in training.

In other words, it's required. This mirrors a finding from earlier in the survey showing that compliance is the top reason organisations field and L&D team.

Respondents also said about one in ten employees engage in training of their **own initiative** to seek self-improvement (9%), in order to ensure they are **continuously improving** (8%) their knowledge, skills and abilities.

About one-third (34%) said it was **a combination of all these** factors.
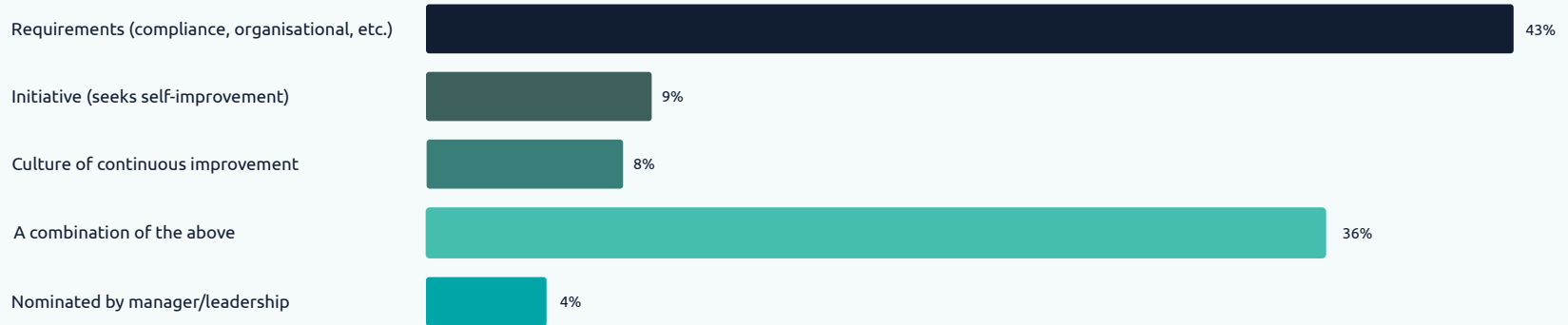
Compliance,
own initiative and
continuous improvement
Are three of the strongest motivations for employees to engage with training.

Understanding motivations is an important factor to consider when designing training courses or classes.

Doing so will better enable L&D professionals to develop training that both meets the learning standards – and does so in a way that engages learners – and helps them to absorb and retain the information.

What drives most employees to take a course, class or training session?

Requirements (compliance, organisational, etc.)	43%
Initiative (seeks self-improvement)	9%
Culture of continuous improvement	8%
A combination of the above	36%
Nominated by manager/leadership	4%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti
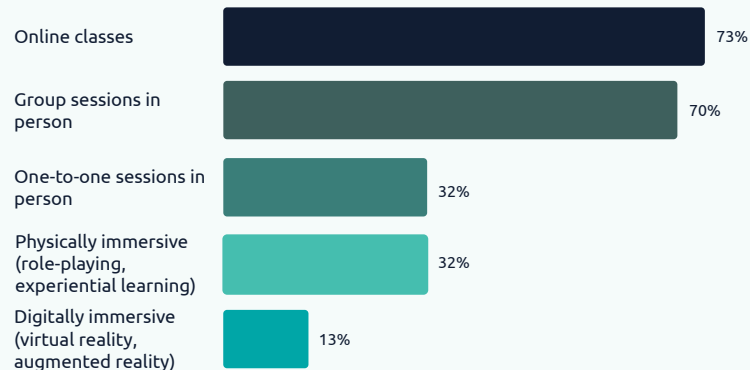
Online classes and group sessions the most popular training mediums

About seven in 10 L&D professionals said their organisation provides training across two mediums: a) online classes (73%) and traditional in-person group settings (70%).

Chances are the medium matches the content and learning objectives.

About one in three (32%) indicated their **in-person training** includes **physically immersive** courses, which include techniques such as role-playing and experiential learning.

Which of the following does your L&D organisation use to facilitate learning or training?

Medium	Percentage
Online classes	73%
Group sessions in person	70%
One-to-one sessions in person	32%
Physically immersive (role-playing, experiential learning)	32%
Digitally immersive (virtual reality, augmented reality)	13%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

The hands-on nature of immersive training can improve comprehension and information retention, but some of these classes may be candidates for **augmented reality or virtual reality** (13%).

For example, the military often creates physically immersive training scenarios with role players to teach small unit tactics. They also complement this type of training by running simulations with AR and VR.

This allows them to factor in innumerable variables, without the cost of placing learners in physical training environments that replicate the high-pressure of real world scenarios. Such applications could be adopted in a wide variety of industries.

For example, it would add value to safety training in a warehouse, or sales training for dealing with a variety of objections a salesperson might encounter.

VR and AR simulations can add value to
safety training in a warehouse or sales training for dealing with objections

L&D is offering learners flexible ways to learn

Most L&D organisations are providing learners with flexible options for learning.

Some 60% said they offer courses **remotely, live and in-person**.

In addition, a majority (56%) indicated training can be completed anywhere and anytime from a **computer or laptop**.

Mobile accessibility has a role too in learning as about one in three (32%) said learners can take classes anywhere and anytime from a **mobile device**.

In 2023, L&D organisations offer a mix of offline and online training

60% Remotely, live or in-person

56% Anywhere, anytime, from a laptop
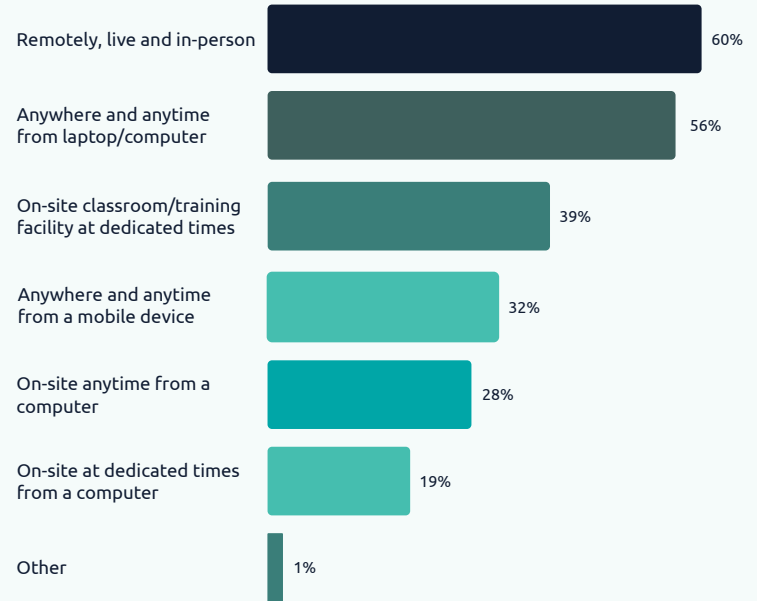
39% On-site classrooms

32% Anywhere, anytime, on mobile

This provides learners with another channel to take in lessons – or review course material – whenever they may have "in-between" time, such as during commutes.

At the same time, L&D also relies on more traditional training vehicles, such as **on-site classrooms** (39%) and **on-site computers (28%)**.

Where and how can learners attend sessions or courses?

Remotely, live and in-person	60%
Anywhere and anytime from laptop/computer	56%
On-site classroom/training facility at dedicated times	39%
Anywhere and anytime from a mobile device	32%
On-site anytime from a computer	28%
On-site at dedicated times from a computer	19%
Other	1%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

How learning and training is measured

Surveys the most popular method of measuring L&D

Most L&D professionals said their organisation measures the success of L&D through employee surveys (63%).

Polling respondents immediately after a class is an efficient way to gather both quantitative data and qualitative feedback on any given training course. About four in 10 (40%) also **poll leaders and managers**. Leaders are often in a position to observe whether training makes an impact on performance.

After this, the results trail off, with about a third calculating output metrics, such as the **number of employees trained** (36%), **classes completed** (35%) and total **hours spent in training** (17%). Others strive to tie L&D to outcomes. For example, the number of employees who are promoted post-training (13%).

63%
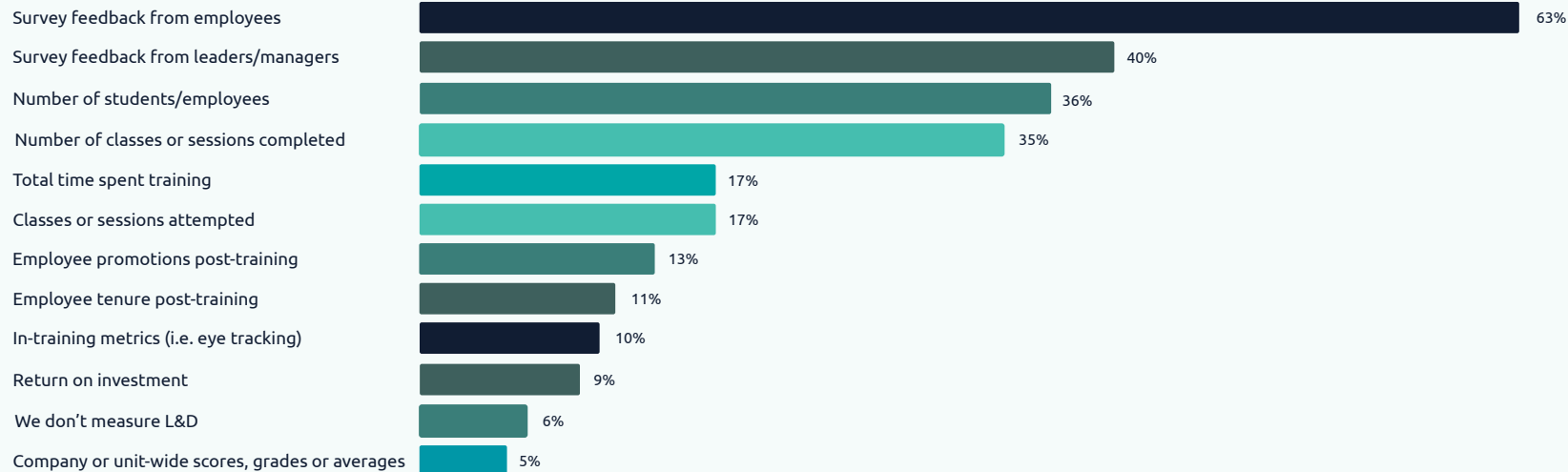of L&D professionals measure success through employee surveys

40%
of L&D professionals also poll managers

It's interesting to note that fewer than one in 10 organisations attempt to calculate the **return on investment** (ROI) of L&D (9%). Another 6% do not measure L&D at all.

This is a warning flag, as most business functions, including L&D will require some sort of data-driven analysis to justify budgets or budget increases.

How does your organisation measure or track L&D success?

Measure	Percentage
Survey feedback from employees	63%
Survey feedback from leaders/managers	40%
Number of students/employees	36%
Number of classes or sessions completed	35%
Total time spent training	17%
Classes or sessions attempted	17%
Employee promotions post-training	13%
Employee tenure post-training	11%
In-training metrics (i.e. eye tracking)	10%
Return on investment	9%
We don't measure L&D	6%
Company or unit-wide scores, grades or averages	5%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Most think training is successful, but are open to improving

Nearly seven in 10 respondents (67%) **agree** (14%) or **strongly agree** (53%) L&D is successful.

However, many are focused on improving too. For example, some believe improvement can come within the L&D team:

> "The only reason I haven't put strongly agree is because I think we could do even better, with more investment into soft skills development."

Others think changing the organisational view of L&D's purpose would make a difference:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following question: L&D successfully fulfills its mission at your organisation.

Strongly agree — 14%
Agree — 53%
Neither agree nor disagree — 20%
Disagree — 12%
Strongly disagree — 2%
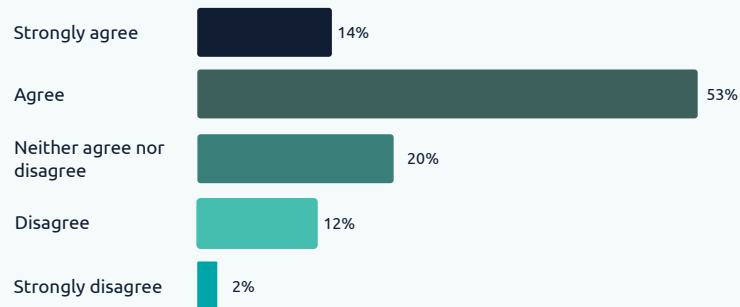
N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

"L&D is well-aligned with organisational strategy and directs focus accordingly. Ostensibly, we have buy-in from senior stakeholders but conflicting priorities with operational needs mean colleagues aren't always supported to access L&D and to apply learnings in their roles. There is also a significant focus on L&D for compliance and ticking a box."

Just 14% overall think L&D **isn't successful**. This includes 12% that **disagreed** and 2% that **strongly disagreed**. Some of these respondents also believe their success is outside of their control:

"Limited budget to reach all employees.

One way to improve the case for keeping or increasing the L&D budget is to re-consider the metrics being tracked.

Nearly 7/10
L&D professionals
think that L&D is successful in their organisation

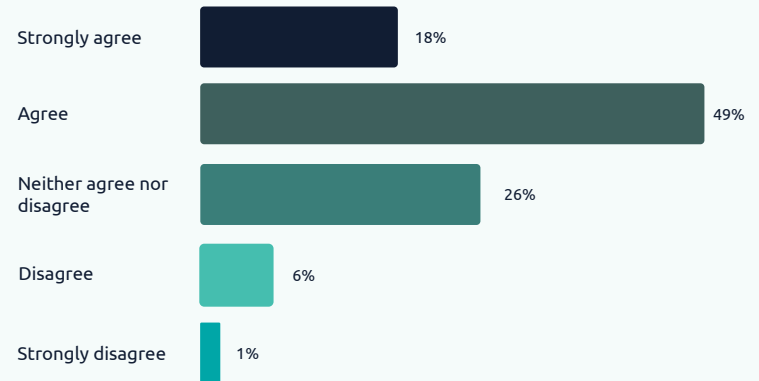# Most believe L&D has an impact on revenue

As with the question on success, most L&D professionals (67%) **agree** (49%) or **strongly agree** (18%) the training they provide has an impact on revenue.

While the combined statistics is the same as the previous question on success, the sentiment is higher as 4% more respondents selected "strongly agree."

This impact may not be linear. As one respondent wrote:

> "Indirectly, a focus on L&D attracts energised talent and a culture of innovative curious thinking."

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following question: L&D has a positive impact on your organisation's revenue.

Strongly agree	18%
Agree	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	1%

N = 144; Source: The 2023 State of Learning and Development Survey by Virti

Fewer respondents disagreed that L&D has an impact on revenue. This includes 6% that simply **disagreed** and just 1% that strongly disagree.

The difference, compared to the question on success, moved into the neutral category of **neither agreed or disagreed (26%)**.

It's interesting to see that overall, respondents are more likely to believe L&D has an impact on revenue than believe it is merely successful.

67% of
L&D professionals
report that L&D has an impact on revenue.

Respondents in their own words: How to improve L&D

Open-ended suggestions how to improve L&D

The final question was open-ended and asked,
"If you could make one recommendation to your CEO about improving L&D in your organisation, what would you say?"

Nearly 40% of respondents wrote in (53) and here are some of their answers:

- "Allow employees select the best time that suits them to attend trainings."

- "Go into virtual training."

- "That budget is needed in order to offer a high performance within L&D."

- "It's too fluffy, the team get all the nice fluffy stuff in training and when in the real world they cannot cope."

- "We need more support for our operational colleagues to access and attend workshops they've booked onto. Often places are cancelled last-minute or colleagues don't turn up, meaning we're not maximising our time and resources."

Open-ended suggestions how to improve L&D

The final question was open-ended and asked,
"If you could make one recommendation to your CEO about improving L&D in your organisation, what would you say?"

- "Make it a mandatory question to reflect and report on in PDRs [performance development reviews]."

- "Making clear the difference between L&D and colleague engagement , whilst complementary a good L&D offer does not fix all colleague engagement , retention and culture woes."

- "Let them [L&D} be creative instead of using them like account managers."

- "Hire more Leadership Development Consultants and L&D Admin support, buy in a new LMS system that is integrated with HR policy/practices and our resourcing structure."

- "Make a stronger effort to promote L&D programs at the executive and VP level."

Demographics & methodology

Demographics

Respondents work in a wide range of industries including healthcare, government, higher education, manufacturing, retail, financial services and many more.

They also represent an evenly broad range by company size – from small companies with fewer than 500 employees to global corporations with 10,000 or more on staff. The same was true by measure of the size of the L&D team. A plurality (40%) had between 1-10 L&D professionals on the team while 28% had more than 50.

We also asked about the office environment which has become an important demographic question post-pandemic. Some 61% report working in a hybrid environment. A quarter (25%) work mostly or entirely in the office, while 14% are mostly, or completely remote.

Methodology

The survey was conducted online in March 2023 by Virti. Respondents were solicited by email and through a commercial-grade survey panel.
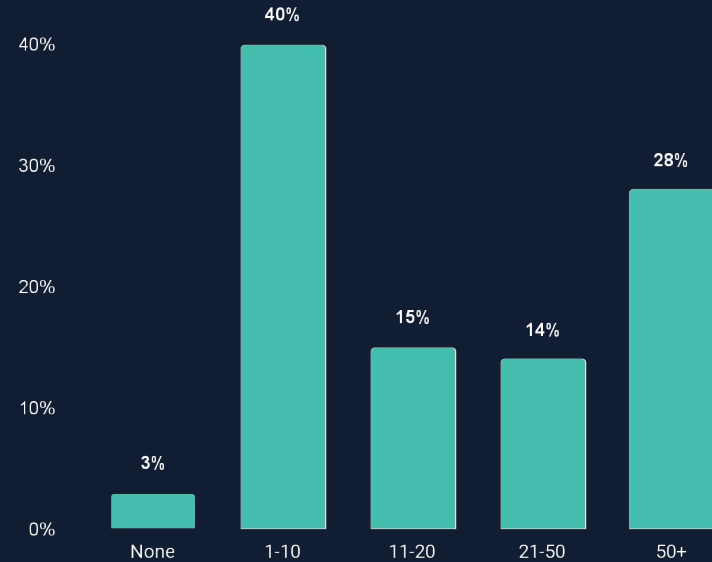
In total 144 qualified respondents based in the UK and working in the profession of learning and development (L&D) completed the questionnaire.

Survey takers were incentive with a chance to enter a random drawing for one of three gift cards (valued at £100, £ 75 and £ 50).
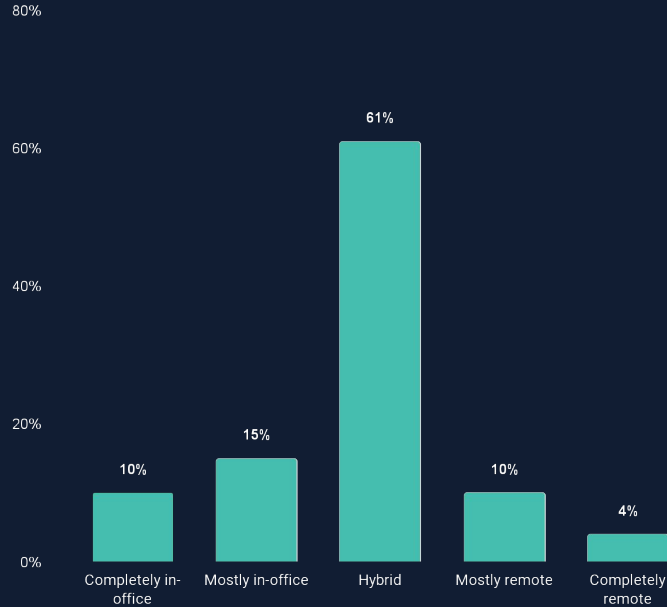
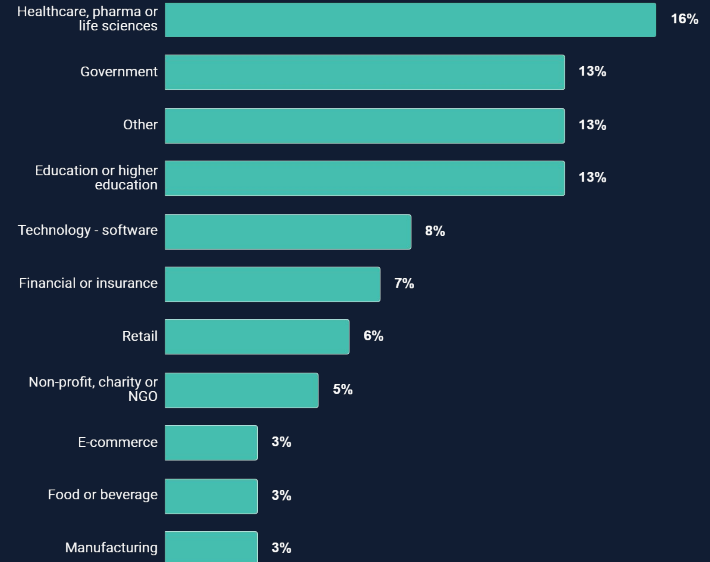## How many employees overall does your organisation employ?

- 0-500: 26%
- 501-1,000: 16%
- 1,001-5,000: 24%
- 5,001-10,000: 15%
- 10,000 or more: 18%
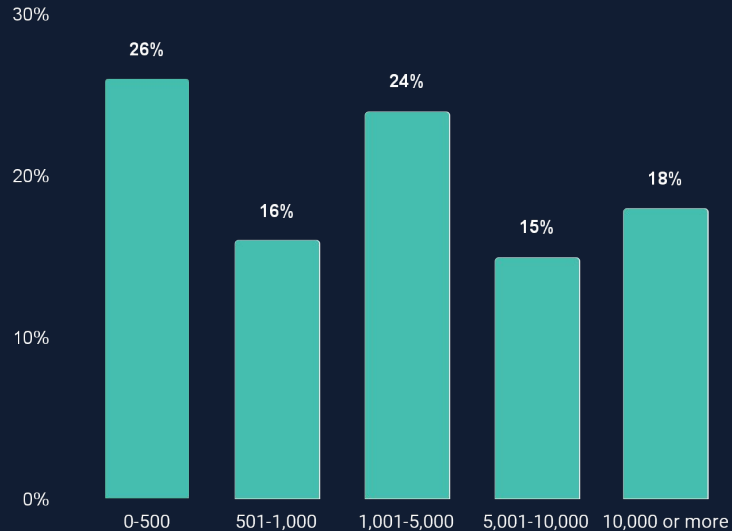
How many employees does your organisation employ whose responsibilities are dedicated to L&D?

- None: 3%
- 1-10: 40%
- 11-20: 15%
- 21-50: 14%
- 50+: 28%

Which of the following best describes your current office environment?

Environment	Percentage
Completely in-office	10%
Mostly in-office	15%
Hybrid	61%
Mostly remote	10%
Completely remote	4%

Which of the following best describes your organisation's primary industry?

Industry	Percentage
Healthcare, pharma or life sciences	16%
Government	13%
Other	13%
Education or higher education	13%
Technology - software	8%
Financial or insurance	7%
Retail	6%
Non-profit, charity or NGO	5%
E-commerce	3%
Food or beverage	3%
Manufacturing	3%

Those that said "other" listed industries including construction, engineering, hospitality and architecture, among others .

About Virti

Whether it's managerial skills or warehouse safety, traditional training can be difficult to scale, expensive, and unable to recreate real-life scenarios.

That's why Virti's cutting-edge VR/AI learning platform gives your team the power to create immersive learning experiences inspired by your real world.

L&D teams using VR training see:
- **230% increase** in knowledge gain
- **60% reduction** in onboarding time
- **97% felt prepared** when put in difficult situations

Ready to start creating environments where your teams love learning? Visit learn.virti.com/take-a-dip
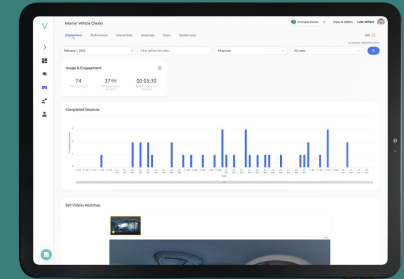
Recreate hard-to-replicate real-life scenarios with 360 immersive interactive videos
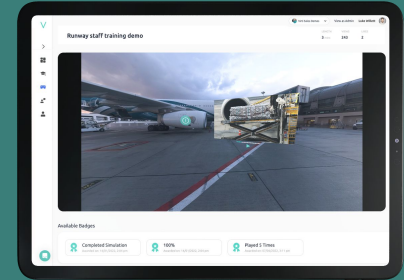
Help your learners practise their soft skills with AI-assisted avatar roleplay
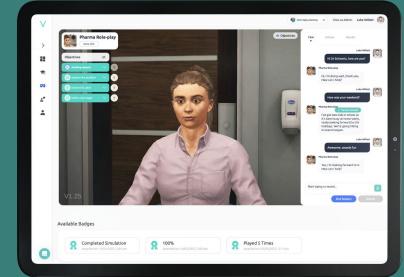
Let AI give your learners real-time feedback and keep tabs on important metrics

virti

www.virti.com