

3 Missing Ingredients In Your
People's Learning & Development
– The Playbook

The company wants to develop its team members to perform better. The rationale is that the company needs to grow and develop its team members and managers personally and professionally to improve and succeed in the market. Team members are saying the same thing— they need to develop and grow to thrive both professionally and personally.

Despite this, the vast majority of leaders said that they struggle to get their teams to make time for training, apply what they learn, or both.

Why is there such a divergence between what is clearly in everyone’s best interest and the data at hand?

The example at hand can provide some clarity:

The company acquires a content library. After an initial excitement from everyone, the motivation fades and there’s no culture that sustains the learning & development. The initiative fails and it’s deemed unconvincing. Then the company gets more content libraries to fill the gap, but now the employees have a different problem— there are too many places where they need to log in.

Soon enough, employees get lost on all the platforms and their motivation plummets. By the end of the year, mandatory content consumption is scheduled which just promotes the “check the box” mentality and results in passive video watching and pencil whippings.

When training is assigned or provided to the team with a library of content, it’s essentially opening the loop by giving the employees the starting tools. But without the necessary follow-up, coaching, and results-tracking, the initiative fails as soon as the first wave of excitement subsides.

There are a couple of things companies get wrong when it comes to L&D. After exploring the problems of L&D, we will provide our unique answers and solutions to the challenges.



What Companies Get Wrong When It Comes to Learning & Development

There are three essential elements companies get wrong when it comes to learning & development (L&D):

Training is directionless

Most companies fail at L&D because the training they provide is directionless. For the employee to pick up a new skill, it needs to be aligned with what they do and where they want to go in their careers.

Training needs to be aligned with the employee's current skill level (nobody would teach elementary reading to a 45-year-old). Training also needs to be aligned with the desired future skills of the employee. So if an employee wants to become a manager, then it would make sense to provide training that would help them acquire skills that they can use to get the desired new role.

There's no application on the job

Learning and implementing are completely different things. An employee can listen/watch training and acquire the knowledge necessary to perform the skill. But actually implementing the knowledge requires opportunity, effort, and practice.

If the employee cannot apply the knowledge in their job, then it will be quite difficult for them to internalize the skill. Soon enough, the employee will forget the knowledge learned since they won't find a way to practice it on the job. New information needs to be applied and practiced.

Poor measurements

Measuring the effectiveness of L&D is quite difficult. Most companies still use superficial metrics like the completion rate or Likert scales. Successful companies have pivoted from that and started measuring outcome-based metrics like employee engagement, individual performances, and process improvements.

The last thing that companies miss out on is the culture. The company's culture needs to be embedded into all the training and development. Culture, with engagement and accountability, is one of the missing ingredients in people's development.



The Missing Ingredient in People Development

There needs to be a system, backed up by the culture, that engages and holds people accountable for engaging in their development and growth paths.

The employees will be engaged in their development if it's aligned with their personal and professional goals. To do that, there needs to be a co-creation of goals with their managers.

The goal-setting process follows a simple framework: identify gaps, prepare a plan, execute it, and then review it.

To identify the gaps in their skill sets, the managers will need to assess them in the Skills Model. The defining traits are leadership skills, soft skills, role skills, and required skills.

But how can the managers objectively assess the skill levels of their employees?

Objective framework for skills assessment

We at Adaptive have created an objective framework for skills assessment. This will ensure that the assessment is as objective as possible because the questions are on a "yes/no" scale.

For example, let's say that an employee needs to learn a role skill of "explaining and demonstrating features of products and services" to do their job. They would rate themselves on a scale of 0-5 to assess their skill.

- 0— The employee didn't finish training on "explaining and demonstrating features of products and service"
- 1— The employee finished the training
- 2— The employee applied what they learned
- 3— The employee documented the process (like a standard operating procedure) and they are following it
- 4— Following the process produces desired results
- 5— The employee is willing and able to teach this skill inside the team/organization

Most companies would stop their measurements at "1" (the employee finished the training), but we realized that isn't proving to be effective. The real value the company gets from their L&D program only happens at step "4" (Following the process produces desired results).

This can be done with employees to identify the gaps in their current roles and identify what skills they need to learn for their next roles.

A couple of questions that can help out managers to objectively evaluate their team member's skills could be:

- Do you have a process for implementing this skill?
- Do you consistently search for new and better ways to execute this process?
- What results have you achieved as a result of implementing this process into your workflow?

The objective framework is helping managers evaluate their team members and helps them create a plan that can be both accountable and engaging.

People Development Framework

Our People Development Framework is a 2x2 matrix consisting of low/high accountability and low/high engagement. The combinations create four quadrants:

Accountability Low, Engagement Low – The Dead Zone
 Accountability Low, Engagement High– The Fantasy Zone
 Engagement Low, Accountability High– The Burnout Zone
 Engagement High, Accountability High– The Adaptive Zone

The Dead Zone happens when the employees’ goals aren’t co-created or aligned with their needs and when there’s no tracking, follow-ups, coaching, or evaluation. Nothing grows in the Dead Zone.

The Fantasy Zone happens when the goals set for the employees are co-created and aligned with their needs but there’s no support from the company culture nor the system— no tracking, no follow-ups, no coaching, no evaluation. The Fantasy Zone is like that magical vacation that keeps getting postponed for years and years.

The Burnout Zone happens when the employees’ goals aren’t co-created or aligned with their needs, but there’s support to achieve the goals— tracking, follow-ups, coaching, and evaluation. The Burnout Zone might appear good at first because it brings results, but the costs deeply outweigh the benefits— the employees get burnout, productivity plummets, and turnover rate rises as employees quit.

The Adaptive Zone happens when the goals set for the employees are co-created and aligned with their needs and

there’s support to achieve the goals— tracking, follow-ups, coaching, and evaluation. The Adaptive Zone is where you want to be and where some companies like Toyota already are.

We created a playbook that would help the companies get to the Adaptive Zone.

People Development Playbook

The People Development Playbook consists of four steps:

- Prepare
- Launch
- Execute
- Review

Prepare

In preparation, it’s important to define the role skills, required skills, leadership skills, and soft skills in the job description.

The managers need to be accountable for the process. Because they are working with employees on a day-to-day basis and they can hold each other accountable. The importance in the preparation phase is in transforming managers into coaches so they support the development of their team members.

Launch

During the launch phase, it’s necessary to have a bootcamp for managers to implement the entire system. The managers are responsible for the accountability and

engagement of their team members with L&D. Every one of their team members needs to have a development plan connected to their motivations, goals, and aspirations (to ensure engagement). Managers also need to follow up with their team members in the format of 1-on-1 meetings (preferably on a weekly basis) to ensure accountability to the development.

Execute

The employees rate themselves on the 0-5 scale and then the managers verify their ratings to make sure that they are aligned. Since the questions are on a “yes/no” scale, there’s no wiggle room.

During the weekly 1-on-1 meetings, the managers should have time allocated for skills progressions review. Managers should focus on “3s (The employee documented the process, like a standard operating procedure, and he is following it)” in role skills and try to increase those to “4s (Following the process produces desired results).”

There should also be team review sessions. There, managers can ask helpful questions such as:
Who is behind on their SkillsGoals?
How can we help? (great question to rally the team)
Who is learning things worth sharing? (Asking for someone to share how they went from a “3” to a “4” on the scale)
What is our plan for next month?

The managers should also have a quarterly check-up on the process to close the loop.

Review

A review is done once a year to see which employees have developed skills, see how much they progressed, and understand what needs to be changed in the entire learning & development process.

The company needs to analyze the skill model and update any job descriptions that require upskilling or reskilling to have alignment.

How Adaptive can help

There are three ways Adaptive can help out in the process:

- ActionClass Leadership Workshop System— A system created to produce leadership results with over 40 leadership and soft skills competencies and 100+ topics. It was designed to be run virtually
- A Proven Process For Learner Accountability— Driving learner engagement is one of the most difficult challenges for leaders of today. The Adaptive process helps develop a learning culture where managers are directly involved in engaging the team.
- A Platform For Creating And Tracking Results— Adaptive shows you the quantifiable and trackable results related to your growth and development objectives.
- Other systems show how much of the content was consumed, but we at Adaptive show you how your employees changed their behavior on-the-job and how that leads to better performance.