

BUILD YOUR L&D TEAM'S **CAPABILITY**

Five Decisions that will Help
you Close the Gap



L&D CAPABILITY



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It's Time to Shift



L&D teams are 'overwhelmed and underequipped' according to 40% of L&D leaders surveyed in the 2021 Annual L&D Benchmark Report.¹

Change is unfolding on a massive scale driven by three main shifts: **technology, consumer and work-force expectations, and output.**

Advancing technology results in expanding process automation, an increasing availability of data to support better decision-making and service provision, and the augmentation of human work with technology.

More than ever, people want to engage in work that is meaningful, connected to a greater sense of purpose and making a difference. There is increased pressure on employers to provide genuine support concerning diversity and inclusion, and employee wellbeing.

In addition to all of this, business leaders expect ongoing improvement in performance and agility through collaboration and partnerships across organisations and with external partners in extended networks.

The pressure can seem relentless, placing ever-increasing demands on L&D professionals as they face each day with the unspoken message:



Remain relevant and demonstrate impact or risk being sidelined.

Indeed, today's L&D team requires a wide range of skills to deliver effective, relevant learning solutions that meet people's needs and expectations, and create business impact. Yet overall progress on building L&D skills remains too slow; the pace of change is outstripping the pace at which L&D teams are developing their own skills.

The most significant gaps are in three key areas, with 30% or fewer of L&D teams reporting that they have these capabilities:²



1 Performance & business impact (performance consulting, analytics and data management)



2 Supporting learning (facilitating social/collaborative learning, learning in the flow of work)



3 Digital skills (digital content development, technology/infrastructure)



How rapidly are you able to engage, develop and deliver effective L&D solutions compared to the speed of business?

Does your L&D team have the level of adaptable capability you need to rise to these challenges?

A New Vision Awaits

What if your biggest L&D challenges are your biggest opportunities – if only you had the adaptable capability to seize them? Pressure points can become possibilities, but this requires:



An open, curious mindset



Progressive, responsive ways of working



A strong, flexible contemporary skillset across your L&D team

Adopting a strategic approach to building your L&D team's capability and closing the gap will empower and release your team to:



Think and work business first



Create high impact and business value



Be easy to engage and responsive



Work at the pace of business



Create relevant, engaging solutions



Use technology effectively to enable learning and performance



This Vision can become Reality

At Learning Uncut, we believe that it's not only possible for you to make the shift and stop the widening skills gap in your L&D team, but to also ensure that your team is effectively equipped to rise to the challenge and turn your vision for learning into an organisational reality.

This ebook unpacks the **five decisions you must make to close the gap** and build your L&D team's capability.

We don't want you to walk away with just theory; we have incorporated one of our case studies, Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency, to show you how these five decisions can be practically applied to your organisational context.



DECISION 1:
Commit



DECISION 2:
Visualise



DECISION 3:
Engage



DECISION 4:
Focus

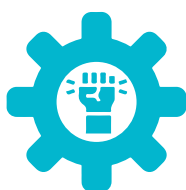


DECISION 5:
Act



1% of the typical work week is all that employees have to focus on training and development

Source: Meet the Modern Learner infographic, Bersin by Deloitte



DECISION 1:

Commit

In order to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap, you must commit to the journey and **'walk the talk'**. Something powerful happens in a team when its members clearly see that their leader is all in.

This first decision is about making the continuous development of the capability of your L&D team a priority. It's about role modelling best practice for others in the organisation.

The pressure can seem relentless, placing ever-increasing demands on L&D professionals as they face each day with the unspoken message:



Remain relevant and demonstrate impact or risk being sidelined

Let's face it: L&D teams can be so busy looking after everyone else's capability that they don't have capacity to pay enough attention to their own. We tell others to commit to building the capability of their team, yet often don't role model this ourselves. Your team must remember that they face the same challenges to sustain their learning as others in their organisation who they often struggle to engage with learning.

This decision to **COMMIT** to building your L&D team's capability and closing the gap will increase credibility and trust, and will set an example for your team to follow, making them better able to advise and guide others in their learning journeys.



Case Study

"Learning Uncut's Capability Roadmap helped us become clear on the strengths and development gaps we have across our entire unit."

- Waka Kotahi

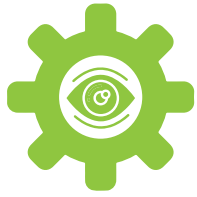
In 2019, Waka Kotahi formed their Centre for Learning and Development by integrating several teams into a single centralised L&D team. Their leader **decided to commit** to a long-term view of creating an organisational learning strategy and could see that it was critical to prepare the L&D team to lead the organisation through a shift in how learning happened.

Alongside the Centre's leadership team, they committed to an intentional, sustained team capability development process. This included engaging Learning Uncut to build a Capability Roadmap for the L&D team. The leadership team undertook a skills review ahead of the broader team so they could experience the process first and be able to role model their commitment, making the process more credible to the rest of the team.



Reflection Question

Are you ready to commit? Who needs to help you make this decision?



DECISION 2:

Visualise

In order to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap, you must visualise what you want learning to look like in **18-24 months'** time, and start building towards it now. This second decision is about being forward looking and understanding what the organisation really needs.

Let's face it: L&D teams have struggled to meet their aspirations for too long. While it's important to deliver on near-term priorities, only addressing urgent short-term capability needs puts your team at risk of not building the required skills to shift organisational learning and increase your impact.

The skills required by a contemporary L&D team have evolved over the past 5-10 years. Along with traditional skills (training delivery, learning management, coaching and mentoring), today's L&D toolkit must also include a broader range of approaches to improve performance requiring adeptness in areas such as curation, performance support and cultivating communities.

This decision to **VISUALISE** your L&D team's future capability and close the gap will help you translate your vision for learning and strategic priorities for the coming 18-24 months into a clear definition of the skillset required to realise that vision.



Case Study

“Learning Uncut’s Capability Roadmap provides clarity on the kinds of competencies people require to move into a different kind of role.”

- *Waka Kotahi*

The **Waka Kotahi** L&D leadership team reviewed the existing range of skills in Learning Uncut’s L&D capability library. They identified and created descriptors for some new skills including Relationship Management, Digital Learning Design and Storytelling. In addition, they drew on this library to create a skill profile for every role in their L&D team.

They decided to **visualise** the shifts they wanted to make in the year ahead. This meant including some skills that were not heavily used at the time, but would become increasingly important in the future. The Learning Uncut skill profile mapping tool produced a target heat map of skills across the whole team, allowing the leadership team to review and better balance the target distribution of skills across the team.

40% of L&D leaders are ‘extremely concerned’ that L&D are overwhelmed and underequipped.

Source: 2021 Annual L&D Benchmark Report, Mind Tools for Business



Reflection Question

How would closing skill gaps help you to achieve your vision for learning in your organisation?

Learning Uncut L&D Skills Library



STRATEGY

- L&D Strategy
- L&D Capability Development
- Relationship Management
- Programme and Portfolio Management
- Project Management
- Change Enablement and Management
- Storytelling



OPERATIONS

- Marketing and Communications
- Manage Technology for Learning
- Resource Management
- Procurement and Finances Management
- Process Management and Improvement



PERFORMANCE & IMPACT

- Performance Consulting
- Data Analytics and Reporting
- Organisational Capability Development
- Impact Evaluation
- Skills and Workplace Performance Assessment
- Presentations and Communication



LEARNING FACILITATION

- Face to Face Learning Facilitation
- Live Online Learning Facilitation
- Asynchronous Cohort-Based Learning Facilitation



SOLUTION DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

- Solution Design and Development
- Content Creation and Management
- Curation
- Performance Support
- Digital Learning Design



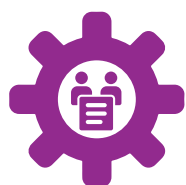
LEARNING SUPPORT

- Develop Continuous Learning Skills
- Support Work Teams
- Community Cultivation
- Coaching Support
- Mentoring Support



The Capability Roadmap helped our team members to reflect deeply on where the learning profession is heading and how to invest in their own development.”

- Debra Van Rensburg,
National Australia Bank



DECISION 3:

Engage

In order to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap, you must engage your team and bring them along on the journey with you. This third decision is about lowering threat levels and engaging your team on a collective discovery process to help them see the possibilities and opportunities.

Let's face it: L&D teams know what it's like when it seems that changes are being made 'to them' rather than 'with them'. Opening up a dialogue with your team about shifts in work and learning and what this means for them increases their buy-in to the changes required to be better equipped to deliver value in a rapidly changing domain.

Bring the outside in. Share resources and information about what is happening globally in the profession, the practices of high performing L&D teams and case studies that demonstrate the evolving practices, ways of working and implications for the roles of learning professionals.

This decision to **ENGAGE** your L&D team in building their capability and closing the gap creates a team dialogue about what's changing, why, and how it applies to your organisation.

Case Study

"Learning Uncut's Capability Roadmap supported conversations between team members and their leader about their strengths and development areas. We could then compare those to the competencies required in their role or in a role to which they aspire."

- *Waka Kotahi*

The Waka Kotahi leadership team decided to engage their L&D professionals in team listening sessions conducted by Learning Uncut's Michelle Ockers and colleague Nigel Paine.

A key finding was that team members were keen to develop their skills, share their expertise and work more closely across the team. They wanted to understand what skills they had across the team, what they were missing and how they could bridge the gaps. A key question that they expressed was **"What do others in the team know that I don't?"**

The L&D leadership team responded by explaining that they were inviting all team members to complete a self-review against their capability framework in order to understand the capability of the whole team. They would then be able to leverage strengths and build their capability to support the realisation of their learning strategy. **They were all in.**



Reflection Question

Is your team ready to embrace a capability uplift? How will you engage them?



DECISION 4:

Focus

In order to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap, you must focus on what matters most. Not all gaps are equal. This fourth decision is about identifying your team's most critical gaps and prioritising the skills that most need development. It's about taking stock of what you already have in order to build what you want.

L&D teams are commonly falling short in their skill level across the team compared to what is required for consistently high performance in current times. **At Learning Uncut, we have a growing library of skills developed through our work with building L&D capability.** Most teams we support select 25-30 of those skills required across their team as part of their customised L&D capability framework.

The exciting part of this decision is getting to choose which skills should be developed in-house, which skills can be accessed from other parts of your organisation, and which skills can be sourced from external partners and vendors. Having considered this range of options, focus your energy and attention on no more than three skills that present the highest risk if not addressed. This will set your team up to close the gaps most critical to team success.

This decision to **FOCUS** on the most critical in-house skills to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap will allow you to tap into the power of collaborative learning.



Case Study

“Learning Uncut’s Capability Roadmap enabled us to use data to deliberately focus our team development. We’ve seen a big shift in our team’s capability in the areas we targeted.”

- *Waka Kotahi*

Once Waka Kotahi’s current skill level data was gathered, it was compared to target skill profiles. All team members were invited to participate in an analysis workshop to explore the data and have a say in prioritising skills for development. Learning Uncut conducted the initial data analysis and presented it to the team, facilitating an exploration that allowed everyone to use the data to discuss priorities and collectively agree on a short-list of three skills.

They **decided to focus** on **Performance Consulting, Evaluation, and Data Analytics and Reporting**. The L&D team were able to enhance their focus further as these skills are interrelated; they all belong to the ‘Performance and Impact’ category. Their journey towards becoming a learning organisation was truly underway and the synergy was tangible.



The Pareto Principle suggests that 20% of your effort will produce 80% of your results.



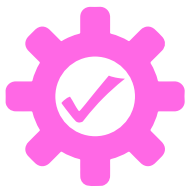
Reflection Question

How will you help your team to prioritise and focus on their own development?



“Goals determine your direction.
Systems determine your progress.”

James Clear, Atomic Habits



DECISION 5:

Act



In order to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap, you must act in order to maintain momentum.

This decision is about creating a plan to develop your prioritised skills, keeping track of progress, and setting up accountability.

Let's face it: L&D teams are aware that despite the best of intentions, it's easy to get distracted. The biggest enemy to execution is the whirlwind of pressing daily work. Remember that time is the biggest challenge to learning in organisations. Your very first decision to commit will be tested, and you will need to remind your team of the imagined future you visualised earlier.

This is the time to increase engagement: form small accountability groups to create a team development plan for each of your prioritised skills with specific actions. Share progress data with them and encourage them to commit to driving towards the skill goal.

This decision to **ACT** on a plan to build your L&D team's capability and close the gap will create ongoing motivation to stay on track and keep on going.



Case Study

“Learning Uncut's Capability Roadmap has helped our approach to evolve and mature over the last year. Our people have a much better understanding of the tool and why we are using it.”

- *Waka Kotahi*

Waka Kotahi **decided to act** by forming small working groups to take the lead in the development of each of their prioritised skills. These working groups created a development plan by looking at upcoming work that would provide an opportunity to not only use curated content (learning through investigation), but also to apply and practise skills (learning through experience) by working alongside others (learning through others).

New team members completed a skills self-review as part of onboarding and discussed this with their manager, rapidly giving a clear snapshot of their experience and skills and the best way to shape their individual development plan. If individuals changed positions or moved between teams, their target skill profile changed to their new role and their development plan was revised accordingly.

The result of these five decisions? The data speaks for itself.

In the space of one year:



The number of people at 'advanced level' or above for Performance Consulting and Evaluate Impact doubled



The number of people at 'proficient level' in Data Analytics and Reporting rose by 50%



Reflection Question

Are you ready to close your team's skill gaps to increase your impact now - and prepare for the future? When will you reach out to Learning Uncut?

References

1. Innovate, Dominate or Decline, 2021 Annual L&D Benchmark Report, Mind Tool Business, Pg 9
2. Innovate, Dominate or Decline, 2021 Annual L&D Benchmark Report, Mind Tool Business, Pg 20



Learning Uncut is Here to Help

Your L&D team has the potential to transform organisational learning and help your business thrive. Deciding to **commit, visualise, engage, focus and act** will empower your team to build its capability and close the gap. The great news is that you don't have to do this on your own. At Learning Uncut, we are passionate about coming alongside teams like yours to expand their L&D capability.

We are offering you a **free 30-minute consultation call** with Michelle Ockers to discuss your L&D team capability challenges, identify your biggest challenge and plan your next steps to address it.

Together, we can close the gap!

Book your free consultation call



L&D CAPABILITY

Learning Uncut

Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants who work with business leaders and L&D teams to accelerate learning transformation and unlock business value. Our L&D specialists take the time to get to know you and your business, educate and guide you, and work closely with you to tailor our approach to meet your needs.

Whether you need to create or update your learning strategy, enhance your L&D team's capabilities, align learning to business value, or implement modern learning approaches, we're here to support you at every step of the way.

Founded by respected and sought after L&D expert, Michelle Ockers, Learning Uncut is your trusted source for organisational knowledge and advice. We've worked with businesses of all sizes across a wide range of sectors. We'd love to help you, too!

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