



About the Emergent Series

This episode is part of the Learning Uncut Emergent series where we talk about rapidly changing business models, and how Learning and Development can support organisations to adapt. Exploring how learning professionals can emerge from disruption as relevant and effective. The series is co-hosted by Michelle Ockers, Laura Overton and Shannon Tipton.

Laura Overton:

Welcome to the next of the podcasts in the Emergent Series where we're looking at how we can support learning and development leaders emerge strong and thrive out of this pandemic situation. And today I'm so excited because I'm joined by two incredible women and I really, really mean this. The time that I've spent with them, I have been so inspired.

Laura Overton:

Rachel Hutchinson, thank you for joining us. The Director of Learning and Development at Hilti. Good morning to you. Early start for you in Colorado. Thank you for joining us.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Absolutely. My pleasure, Laura, and happy to be here.

Laura Overton:

That's brilliant. Thank you. And Sarah Lindsell, who is the iGlobal Chief Learning Strategist at PwC. Sarah, I've known you many years. You're based here in the UK, so lunchtime for us, and welcome to you as well.

Sarah Lindsell:

Thanks, Laura. It's good to be here with you both.

Laura Overton:

Brilliant. Now, I know the both of you spend a lot of your normal life flying around, making exciting things happen in your worlds of work, but this pandemic has impacted all of us. And I just wondered if perhaps Sarah, if you'd like to go first and just let us know what have been some of the challenges you've been facing during this difficult time.

Sarah Lindsell:

Yeah, thanks, Laura. No more flying around. The most commuting I've been doing is from the study to the kitchen and back again. So I think that's been quite interesting in itself to get used to just from a very personal perspective, used to being on the ground with a team, solving lots of problems and having to now convert that normal way of work into doing that continually online. I think that's been quite challenging.

Sarah Lindsell:

But I think for us in learning and development, oh my goodness, what a time we've had over the past few months! Because it has all been crisis management I think throughout. But I've

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seen it as a real opportunity for our profession as a whole to do things really differently. For us globally within PwC, we have been looking at helping all of our individual territories think about how they can convert some of their big classroom events into virtual experiences.

Sarah Lindsell:

So I think for us, there's been a lot of real rapid response, how can we help our learning leaders on the ground make decisions? How can we provide additional support and training for our L&D professionals who are suddenly being asked to do things very, very differently. Then as I look forward as well, I'm thinking a lot about how do we create new blueprints for learning?

Sarah Lindsell:

How do we enable people to create that fantastic experience or that milestone experience that they might have had in a classroom or an event and actually do that online as well? So there are some of the things that I've seen been impacted by and thinking about.

Sarah Lindsell:

Rachel, I don't know if any of those resonate with you.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Definitely. I think I was smiling when you said, "No more flying around." Of course, living in the U.S. where we're not flying anywhere working globally. So not only due to regulations, but also just due to personal safety. Luckily our team, about 50% of us, were already virtual, so there was some help there in being able to move forward.

Rachel Hutchinson:

That actually created a few challenges for us because we didn't necessarily think about how hard it was going to be for people to be forced to go virtual. So, much of the very early response was dealing with mental health wellbeing, separation between your personal life and your work life when you were doing both from the exact same location surrounded by your family.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And that was probably a significant initial part of early March for us, was focusing on some of those things and how we could help people deal with the situation of not choosing to go into a virtual environment, not having any time to plan for that, prepare, et cetera. Of course, there's also the additional challenges of classroom learning, things along those lines.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Again, we were pretty lucky in much of what we had done, we have over the last three or four years using the 70-20-10 Model, we've created very blended programs and solutions. So that was good. What we didn't have was, we didn't have any way to deliver virtual classroom experiences.

Rachel Hutchinson:

That was not something that we had done as a direct sales force. We had not been using any type of. It was either digital on-demand, coaching by a line leader, things along those lines, coaching through community management, et cetera, but not actual classroom experiences. So that was quite a challenge.

Rachel Hutchinson:



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Luckily our IT team has in the beginning of April launched Microsoft Teams and we were able to then adapt some of the functionality of Microsoft Teams to deliver trainings using that tool. And that's helped. Probably one of the most interesting things that occurred at Hilti during this time was we decided to change our customer relationship management platform, and that was already in the plan.

Rachel Hutchinson:

So we were going to go with a multi-phase rollout that began in the middle of this year, 2020 and ran through the end of 2021. And instead of doing a small group in phase one, we actually went worldwide in phase one with the launch. So that created some interesting times because if the salespeople can't go call on customers, then I think it was seen by management that they have time to pick up a new competency, a new tool, a new way of working.

Rachel Hutchinson:

However, obviously, construction was still happening, so people were trying to also learn how do I do sales over the phone? How do I stay connected and engaged with my customers? Things along those lines. So that's made for an exciting past few months that I think we're just coming out of at this point and heading into summer holidays in Europe to where we can maybe take a breath and reflect on what we've done so far this year and how we continue for the rest of 2020.

Sarah Lindsell:

It's interesting though, isn't it? Because you say like that rollout and you went big bang the way across. We are rolling out our network batch program across all of our territories at the moment and really had to just pivot very quickly and think about how we deliver some of that virtually versus actually doing on the ground implementation workshops where you're pulling people together.

Sarah Lindsell:

So I think there's just so many challenges, whatever you're doing. Whether you're trying to roll out some sort of big platform in the midst of all of this, I just think... That takes bravery and courage. So I think back to when we consolidated our learning experience and all our platforms about a year ago, which was a massive transformation effort for us, I was thinking, what would have happened if we were trying to do that this year?

Sarah Lindsell:

It would have been quite chaotic and it would have required some really different type of thinking, so I truly admire you for having done that over this period of time. That is a difficult one.

Rachel Hutchinson:

I think we hadn't already gone in and created and well engaged with learning platform, I would have been extremely hesitant. Because we had our employees already so engaged with the digital learning environment from the previous few years of work, that's the only thing that made it possible. So I 100% agree that if we were in the process of trying to launch learning software or get people invested in how do you learn in a new way, this would have been truly chaotic.

Rachel Hutchinson:

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Instead, we were trying to get a CRM software launched, a new HR software launched. Those were the things that occurred for us this year and they were enabled because we had that learning management software already in place and well utilized.

Laura Overton:

I think this is a really important aspect of some of the themes that are coming out of this series of Emergent is the fact that for some organizations like yours, there has been a certain level of change that has already gone on. And for others, they've been faced with incredible overnight change because their business models have been changing as organizations. And therefore the learning processes had to change automatically overnight without these platforms being in place.

Laura Overton:

So whether it's changing, Sarah, you talked about blueprints, shifting the blueprint of the way that learning is thought about, is developed, is delivered, is considered within PwC, it requires a certain level of attitude. It's not just about the platform, is it, ladies? It's not just about the current environment. It also is about our ability to be able to cope with that.

Laura Overton:

We wanted to talk today about confidence, lot of people might think that that might be arrogance, but that kind of belief that we can do this and the assurance that we know that we can actually tackle something different. And also about courage, which is like the ability to be able to do something that actually frightens you.

Laura Overton:

Because I think all of us are at different stages in this journey, but all of us are facing this phase coming on to us through the changes. How much has courage and confidence played a role in the examples that you've given so far through the pandemic for you?

Sarah Lindsell:

That's a really interesting question. I think for us, it's enabled us to do some experiments that we might not have necessarily done before. I also think that people are really open to people making mistakes or little missteps at the moment because everyone's trying to work in this new environment. So that almost gives you the ability to, I feel be more courageous and be more bold in some of the things that you might be trying.

Sarah Lindsell:

Rachel said, they'd never had a virtual learning environment before in terms of virtual classroom. We've been really lucky that we have had to have that as a core part of our offering. But just that opportunity to create some really engaging new pieces of learning that you can deliver in a new platform would be fantastic because people are going to be able to just see that.

Sarah Lindsell:

And if it doesn't all go particularly correctly, we've all had our meetings where you've got the dog barking, the delivery man coming, you've got kids coming in asking about, "Can you help me with my homework?" And stuff like that. I think people are much more used to

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having those slightly chaotic environments sometimes. So I think that gives you the permission to be able to experiment a lot more than you might not have normally done.

Sarah Lindsell:

So for us, I think it's been about being safe to experiment, and then also thinking about how we make some of the change that we have been putting in place stick for the longer term.

Laura Overton:

Absolutely. Rachel, what about you in terms of the roles that you've been taking on? Your team have been taking on? Has it just felt safe, this is fine, or people had to gear themselves up for this stage?

Rachel Hutchinson:

I think you definitely have to gear yourself up for it. I think one of the things that, Sarah mentioned, having dogs barking or kids coming in, et cetera, one of the things that that has given us is we're so much closer to each other than we were before, and so it is safer. You now know what somebody else is dealing with at home on a daily basis. Whereas before I don't think we knew each other to that level, and that deeper level of connection, that more personal connection that you get because that does happen.

Rachel Hutchinson (15:27):

And you can either empathize or sympathize with the situation that they're going through. It gives you more confidence that everyone is doing their absolute best right now and bringing everything they can to the table. And I think that confidence ends up coming across in multiple ways. It changes our expectations of people and allows them, I love the permission word that you used, Sarah, allows them to make a mistake in what is an even safer environment.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And I say that because I think previously we did everything we could to professionally connect with each other. To create safe environments, to model and promote the courage, to make mistakes and do things. But the reality is, and I think even more so today in our insta worthy world, everybody else's life looked perfect. Everybody else's output looked perfect and now we see it's not perfect.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Everybody is like the duck under the water paddling madly even if on the top of the water it all looks smooth. And that means we're so much more open to taking risks and doing things because everybody is in the same situation right now. And that is so empowering.

Laura Overton:

I think that that is so important for us right now because it was interesting in the last episode that Shannon Tipton was hosting. Aaron Pradhan from Australia was sharing exactly on this

issue of psychological safety, but in the context of innovation and creativity. And actually what you're also describing is this environment which is giving perhaps those of us who are less confident more opportunity to feel safer about those risky fields.

Laura Overton:

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But I think I'd love to ask you both, I hope you don't mind, but I'd love to ask you both to go back to a point before the pandemic, to think of a time when actually you had to do something pretty bold without this environment of, it's okay to experiment, et cetera, et cetera. You either had to say no to something, you were doing some major experiments. First to draw on, what was it that pulled you through those kind of quite frightening change processes?

Laura Overton:

Because I know just the limited time that I've known you, Rachel and Sarah, you do bold things as women in learning, and you're known for that, and you get impact for that. But there must've been a point where you perhaps had to say, "Okay, we've got to do something different and I'm going to have to work this."

Laura Overton:

Rachel, I know that you fundamentally changed the business modelling, you talked about 70-20-10 earlier, but that was an example for you that I've known you talk about before. How important was courage and confidence for you when you were doing that? What did you draw on to build that up?

Rachel Hutchinson:

I think for me, what I drew on was the business needed it and the employees asked for it. That gave me the confidence and the courage that we were headed in the right direction. Before we changed the model of learning at Hilti globally, we talked to 20% of our employees and got their input, got their feedback.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And I think that's so critical, not just for management buy-in, stakeholder buy-in to move things forward, in our case to fund it and take the risks that we were taking with many, many years of successful learning and development, successfully achieving our targets and helping the business succeed, but also so that the team members could see a vision that they could follow.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And I don't just mean L&D team members, I mean team members across the organization could see that they had been heard. That we were maybe not able to give them everything that they wanted immediately, but we were able to head in the right direction and keep them talking to us, keep them telling us what they needed, while at the same time, realizing that a lot of times what we don't know, we don't know. So it's very, very hard to do that. And I think from that perspective, we needed external influences.

Rachel Hutchinson:

We benchmarked against probably 75 companies when we were on our journey. We joined consortiums, and think tanks, and people who were pushing the boundaries. Went to find

vendors who would help us push the boundaries, and so Laura, I don't think it's one thing. I think it's a combined effort and some of it has to come from internal, from your own belief that you're doing the right thing for whatever is your personal motivator.

Rachel Hutchinson:

But it also needs to be coming from the business, it needs to be influenced by things that are different. So the best conversations are usually the ones where you disagree because you

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learn so much from the conversation around why the people are in disagreement. And that I think helps you build a lot of confidence when you are challenged later about things.

Laura Overton:

Rob Briner over here in the UK talks a lot about evidence-based management practice and decisions and drawing on multiple sources of evidence in order to build your business case. With my background, working in the field in Towards Maturity for that time, that concept of evidence creating confidence means that... So as you say, benchmarking, some people have been there before. You're not completely breaking through ground that has never been untapped before now. So that's really powerful.

Laura Overton:

Sarah, from your point of view, I know when it comes down to technology at PwC, you probably have been breaking ground actually given a lot of the decisions that you've been making, it's-

Sarah Lindsell:

Oh yeah.

Laura Overton:

Yes. Sarah is one of those people that we all look to say, "Okay, well, where the hell is all this stuff going next?" So how has it been for you?

Sarah Lindsell:

Do you know, when I was thinking about courage and confidence, I think over my entire career, there are moments that I can pick out where things were not as good as they could have been on a project and you have to make that decision as to whether you're going to keep going with something or whether you're going to stop something. And that is when you have to be bold, and you have to have confidence, and you have to have courage, and you have to be able to show that.

Sarah Lindsell:

And I think you get that from your team around you, you get that from having that support of people that you believe in, that you can talk to, that you can trust. You get that from the evidence, so for me you have a belief that you know what the right path forward is, but that's based on you having lots of different... Well, for me, it's based on lots of different evidence from different areas.

Sarah Lindsell:

So doing your risk management really well, having those conversations and balancing up that risk and reward as well. So yeah. There are times when you just have to take a deep breath and go, "Yep, we're going forward."

Laura Overton:

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Are you able to share perhaps an example, it's okay if you're not, of maybe a project or something that you rolled out, Sarah over the years, which was right on the edge?

Sarah Lindsell:

Yeah. Sure. I'll be really open and honest. We've consolidated over the past four years all of our learning systems and we've implemented like a learning experience layer on the top so that we now have this consistent learning experience wherever you are in PwC. That was a lot of moving parts to coordinate, to bring together. And I think that there was a definite point of just one weekend in all of that where everything had been going wrong for a few weeks.

Sarah Lindsell:

We were just coming up on like a major, major milestone of bringing some new territories on board. And we actually had to make a decision as to whether we were going to go forward or whether we were going to stop. That sort of Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday was 72 hours of writing PowerPoint decks, and this argument, and that argument, and having lots of conversations.

Sarah Lindsell:

We went forward past that particular thing, and now we've got this great experience for our people and it was really interesting. About six months ago, someone commented, "Oh, thank God we've got our system now because we would never be able to do what we are doing." And I just think now just from Christmas onwards and what's happened to us with the pandemic, thank goodness we did go ahead and we did have the courage as an organization to actually do what was an incredibly huge piece of work on little more than us talking about a vision.

Sarah Lindsell:

So we talked about a vision, we talked about what the benefits were, we told this story of how it could enable real change. And with that came some investment funding, with that came the ability to do it. And now it's here, but along the way, everything has its ups and downs, isn't? Rachel smiling at me on screen although everyone else can't see that necessarily when they listened to it.

Sarah Lindsell:

But I think we could all three of us in our careers probably point to real, I call them career-defining moments when you have had to make a really big decision that has been really tough and you've had to show courage and confidence. And it's not just sometimes going, "Yeah, we can go ahead." It's also knowing when to say, "Actually, no. It's got to stop." That takes more courage and confidence sometimes to say, "Do you know what? We've got it wrong," or, "This is not worth it," or, "It's not going to happen."

Sarah Lindsell:

And then be able to manage all of your stakeholders and the fallout from a decision like that just as much as it is to have courage of your convictions and know that you can push something forward and you can deliver it.

Laura Overton :

Rachel, you've been nodding

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Rachel Hutchinson

Yes. I have. It was reminding me, at the end of 2016, we made the decision to make a huge shift to go to a social learning platform and all that that entailed. And we did that as a conservative central European engineering-based organization. We did two things; one, we shut off our learning management system that we had previously with six weeks of notice. We signed the contract for the new and the new provider said, "We need 12 weeks at least to get live."

Rachel Hutchinson:

Then we said, "Okay, great. You have six, and don't forget Christmas and new year's fall in there, so good luck. Let's see how we can do this." Because we needed... If we truly believe that was the direction to go, we couldn't hang onto the old. Yes, it was safe, yes, there were thousands of employees starting on January 1st who needed to be onboarded. There were kick-offs, and new product releases, and all of those kinds of things that needed to be happening from a learning perspective.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And it was a big risk, but it was so critical. And I like the word conviction that Sarah used, that if you really have that conviction, you have to move. And sometimes those are hard decisions, they're risky decisions, but if you really believe that you are doing the best thing for your organization and for the people within your organization, you can't not do it. You absolutely must move forward.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Those are the things... if you're questioning yourself, then maybe you don't have the solution yet. Maybe you need to stop and rethink the direction you're going because there might be something that is instinctively telling you isn't going to work or whatever. But when it's right, I believe you somehow know that it's the right decision and you're willing to risk it.

Sarah Lindsell:

I can't agree with you more, honestly. That just makes the hairs on my arm stand up because it is true. I think you have that feeling, you have that... You just know that it's the right thing and you move forward with it. But equally I'm a great believer in listening to gut and what it tells you as well, and then you know also sometimes when something is wrong and when it is time to stop. So yeah.

Laura Overton:

So those courageous moments have got conviction, you talked about vision as well, Sarah. You talked about ability to use evidence What kind of other things can we work on in order to build our courage?

For me, I think the characteristic that helps the most is a breadth of business understanding. Whether that's your own business or multiple businesses but knowing what the business drivers are and which leavers will affect those business drivers. When you have that, I think that's a big piece of bringing you courage to do things and confidence to do things, to move things forward.

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Rachel Hutchinson:

I think there's a piece of understanding human motivations, or human psychology, or however you want to look at it from that perspective that also comes in

Sarah Lindsell:

I think there's also, Rachel, like that subject matter expertise that you have yourself. So you know your craft or you know enough. Sometimes I use that term, I know enough to be dangerous. But you also, you know enough about what you're doing to be able to move forward with something, and I think that's part of it. I think sometimes when people lack confidence, it's because they don't have that self-belief in themselves around their subject matter expertise.

Sarah Lindsell:

But I think knowing your craft and knowing that you're an expert in something or you're developing expertise, and that gives you that confidence and that courage as well.

Rachel Hutchinson:

I like that. I also think asking questions, being able to ask good questions. So the things that I don't know, I want to bring those to light. If I am good at asking questions, I can bring my gaps into the light where someone else can fill in those gaps. So I think that's probably one of the coolest things on my team is it's not just me. We have a team of people and many of these people come from different areas, et cetera.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And when you bring all of that together, you can be pretty confident that your outcome is going to have come at it from different angles. That doesn't mean slowing you down. I think that's the one thing that I'm always encouraging people is, asking questions doesn't slow you down. It actually speeds you up because those questions are going to come up at some point. They're either going to come up in the process of getting to the decision or they're going to come up after you've already gotten to the decision and you're trying to implement.

Rachel Hutchinson:

So getting those out of the way up front, I think somebody attributed to Albert Einstein, a quote about if he had an hour to solve a problem, he would spend 55 minutes or something on defining what the problem is, and then the last few minutes on creating the solution. And I think that is something which often gets overlooked.

Rachel Hutchinson:

I'm thinking even about a specific situation in the last week. We've been creating and generating a lot of business use cases for specific project. Then they were going through and getting some coaching from one of the stakeholders, and the stakeholder was like, "Oh, this isn't necessary and this isn't critical. This is going to be too hard to do." And when she came back to me, I said, "Okay, hang on. You guys are jumping into solution mode.

Rachel Hutchinson:

We're still in problem definition mode and it's actually not even our problem to solve in this particular situation." I said, "You can have an opinion, you just don't get to voice your opinion right now because these are the cases that are coming from the business." Not from

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learning and development and us pre-judging those is going to then affect the outcome. And we just have to be super cautious that we spend enough time upfront.

Sarah Lindsell:

I agree with that wholeheartedly. We had one of those situations just recently ourselves where we were asked to come in and consult on something. We were constantly trying to define what the actual problem was, whereas everybody else had already gone to what the solution was and buying a new piece of kit.

Sarah Lindsell:

And it was, "Can we actually go back and think about what you're trying to do here and what you're really trying to solve?" So yeah. We all have the same issues, Rachel.

Laura Overton:

I think what's really interesting here you've both picked up on, you actually need as much courage to say no to things and say, "Hold on, stop, wait. Let's challenge this, let's think differently," is to actually implement a new idea. I was really struck, there's been a piece of research over here in the UK by the Fosway Group about learning and development in the COVID environment.

Laura Overton:

And it said like, "71% of these L&D leaders said their users are asking for more digital learning, and 82% of their business leaders are asking for more digital learning." And I'm just wondering, how many learning professionals will actually have the courage to say, "No," exactly as you just said, Sarah, "let's just, hold on a moment. What are you trying to solve?"

Laura Overton:

I think the three of us are probably used to doing that in our day-to-day jobs. We probably got a reputation for doing it. But Sarah, with your team, have they got the same level of confidence and bravery as you have or what have you had to do things to build that up in them?

Sarah Lindsell:

Look, you're only as good as the people you've got around you, right? You're only as good as your team, and it's no one individual that does anything, it's a collection of people. I am really privileged because I work with some absolutely amazing people who make me better on a day-to-day basis. And there also, we have an environment where you can challenge each other quite openly and you can have those really tough discussions.

Sarah Lindsell:

If I think one way and somebody else thinks another, it's great to have those conversations because you each learn something. But I think also as a leader, you have the... it's your responsibility to develop your people, and to fill them with the confidence, and give them the power of their own conviction so they can be better themselves and have those really difficult discussions.

Sarah Lindsell:

And that's one of the things that I will always try and do with my team is the people that work with me, is to have backend discussions. So if there's something that has got to be said in a project or whatever, is to not take that decision away from them, but allow them to present that decision, but know that you are there to support them and that you've got their back at

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the end of the day. And I think that helps them, especially as there are more junior coming through.

Laura Overton:

I think that's also really interesting because you're modelling a safe environment for the team as well, to be able to do those things.

Laura Overton:

Rachel, I heard you talk a while back in a fireside chat with Vivian Heijnen and Charles Jennings about the different routes that some of your teams have been down. And I thought that was a really interesting story on courage. You said that they'd all been through a learning process to shift to this new model of doing learning and asking questions, surfacing the problem.

Laura Overton:

But some as a group, you've got to correct me if I've got this wrong, some of the group said, "Actually, I'm confident in the old way of doing things and I'm not going to go fully down this route." And others in the group said, "You know what? I'm willing to say no to the old way of doing things and I'm actually willing to actually try on these new skills and capabilities."

Laura Overton:

Can you pick up the story for me there because, there was different outcome, wasn't there? In COVID for both of those two groups

Rachel Hutchinson:

The thing is, is that it's important for people to realize where are their strengths? Where can they bring their passion into play? The reality is that not everybody is meant to always stay on your team. Sometimes they can be much happier if they go to another company, another team, et cetera that fits with their own personal vision and direction that they want to take their life and their career.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And that takes a lot of courage from those team members as well, which I think is one of the things that you can't punish people for not following your vision. If it doesn't align to their

vision, then it doesn't. And we need to do everything in our power to help those people be the best selves that they can be, whether that's on our team, or somebody else's team, or somebody else's company because that's our job.

Rachel Hutchinson:

We're learning and development professionals and we should be focused on people development inside our own team and outside our own team, people development in general should be our primary purpose. And I think that is one of the things that sometimes we get scared for a lot of reasons.

Rachel Hutchinson:

That person is incredible at what they do and you would love to keep them on the team. Or it's a matter of, that person brings such a diverse perspective and you're like, "Oh, I love having that challenge. Sometimes it's frustrating, but I always know I'm going to get that challenge from them."

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Rachel Hutchinson:

But the reality is, if they can go somewhere where they can feel like they're doing their best work and that's not always with you. I totally think we need to be okay with that. With that being said, we have such a unique team because we bring people in through dynamic development positions, from different areas of the business. We promote people out to different areas of the business.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And so we don't have a lot of people who spend their career in learning and development. But what we found over the years, I've been here for 15 years now, what we've found is that if you're developing people and you're helping them see what a difference people development can make to the organization. Then you start getting those people in as trade manager over a region, or as a sales director here, or as an HR head here, or a talent acquisition manager there, or whatever roles they move out into.

Rachel Hutchinson:

Those people take that passion for people development with them if you have done your job correctly inside the learning and development team to help them see how powerful it can be. And now you have L&D advocates, you have people who understand the learning strategy, the direction that you want to go, it changes their leadership styles.

Rachel Hutchinson:

And I think it's one of my favourite things working at Hilti is this zigzag approach we take to career development that ensures that people should be able to have the space to define what are they good at. How can they bring their best selves to work? Where in the organization does that fit? And if it doesn't fit, that there's no punishment because it doesn't fit.

Laura Overton:

So what I'm hearing you saying, ladies, is that actually our role in learning and development is not just to make courageous decisions and confident decisions to actually drive our organizations forward, but to actually in our very essence that we are encouragers. And that we are building courage, and we're building confidence in the development capabilities that we're delivering.

Laura Overton:

It's come into my head, Are you aware of the Bayeux Tapestry over in France? There's a little guy who runs behind the warriors in battle with a spear and prods them a little bit just to keep going, keep going, keep going. And actually that character is called the encourager. So sometimes we have to do it through our building up, and sometimes, it's through challenge as well.

Laura Overton:

I could listen to your wisdom for forever, but we are going to have to bring this to a close. And what we're asking all of our guests on the Emergent Series is to give us some advice about what you believe learning and development professionals who are in this place of uncertainty and complexity right now, one thing you'd recommend them to start to accelerate or to stop?

Rachel Hutchinson:

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I would say that we've got to stop being reactive and thinking about programs. We should start looking outside of our doors and seeing how we can impact the business as it continues to change, especially now. And accelerate, I think I would say we should accelerate our decisions and our proactive movement to advance capabilities across the organization.

Rachel Hutchinson:

We need to be seeing the future a little bit, and we need to accelerate faster and faster on that because we can see that the world can change at an absolute instant, and we need to be preparing people for whatever the next changes are.

Sarah Lindsell:

How do I follow that?

Laura Overton:

You just have to, Sarah, you do. Be bold-

Sarah Lindsell:

How do I follow that?

Laura Overton:

... be courageous, be confident.

Sarah Lindsell:

I would say one, stop doing anything that's not adding any value. Use this time to really look across what your processes are, your courses, your programs, whatever it is. And if it's not adding any value, stop because there is no time to be doing stuff that's not adding value to your business. Take a long hard look at all of your content, retire the last 30%. If it's not being used, get rid of it. Don't continue to do stuff.

Sarah Lindsell:

Start by being really bold, make some really bold moves. Do something very different, suggest something different. I would accelerate any experiments that you've got going and get those out there, but I would also accelerate your relationships with the business. If you don't have really strong relationships with the business, I would accelerate the need to get those first because learning and development has an opportunity to have a moment right now, but you have to be serving the needs of the business.

Laura Overton:

Ladies, thank you so much for that. It's been such an encouraging conversation. And I think what the two of you have shown is that the courage and confidence that you've taken in the decisions that led you up to the pandemic has only accelerated the progress that you've been able to make it through, and we will have to start somewhere. So you have, I think, emboldened all of us today, and I just like to, on behalf of the listeners, thank you both.

Sarah Lindsell:

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Thanks, Laura. That was lovely.

Rachel Hutchinson:
Thank you, Laura.