

***Michelle Ockers:***

Today, I have with me the wonderful Tiffany Poeppelman from LinkedIn. Welcome to Learning Uncut, Tiffany.

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

Thank you, Michelle. Great to be here.

***Michelle Ockers:***

So lovely to have you here. I've been looking forward to this for about seven or eight months now. We met last May in San Diego at the ATD conference. That was a wonderful event, wasn't it?

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

Absolutely. Yeah, I'm looking forward to this year's event in New Orleans and just hearing what's going on. Hopefully I can see you there, but if not, I'll give you the cliff notes.

***Michelle Ockers:***

Yeah, that would be great. I don't think I will be there this year, but I'm being carried forward, not only by the memory of the conference, but by the wonderful event I joined you at, which LinkedIn hosted at the San Diego Park Zoo.

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

Yes, that was wonderful. Yeah, it was a great opportunity. Great to meet you and just such great conversation. So glad we could continue the conversation here.

***Michelle Ockers:***

Absolutely. So, Tiffany, I almost feel like the following question is redundant, but just to kick us off, you can keep this really brief. You work for LinkedIn. Who are LinkedIn and what do they do?

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

Great question. Happy to share. So LinkedIn is the professional network. We are a platform with over a billion members. We have 67 million companies on the platform. Beyond the platform, some may know our mission as a company is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. And our focus is truly on fostering and driving a skills-based future, which I know we're going to talk about. One that truly relies on, you know, I should say, no longer relies on old proxies like schools and pedigrees, but really trying to create equitable access. And just a little bit about LinkedIn from the inside. Our employees, we work to live our mission and vision every day. And I think it's why many of us came to this company and what keeps us here. Certainly, the reason I've been at LinkedIn for almost nine years. And as a company, we are very much a talent first. focused company, one that lives our culture and values. We definitely are a company that dreams big, gets stuff done and has fun and focuses on our relationships. And yeah, so as a company, we are a platform, but we are much more than that inside the house.

***Michelle Ockers:***

When you talk about the inside and the outside of the organization, it sounds very coherent. You know, sometimes I have worked in or with organizations where what you see on the outside is not the same as the experience people have on the inside. So the customer experience and employee experience are very different. But it sounds like there is a very

coherent link between what you're trying to create for your customers, your members, as you called them then, and your workforce, which is fantastic, Tiffany.

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

Yeah, 100%. It really is. It's incredible and I'm very proud. And it's why I've been here for so long and many of us, why we stay. It is a company that lives and breathes our culture and values and things we talk about, which I deeply appreciate and respect about our company.

***Michelle Ockers:***

Tell me just a little bit more about your workforce. What kind of roles are we talking about? Where are people? What's the size of the workforce?

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

So at our company, we have 18,000 employees. We are global. So we are across all regions, across North America, Asia Pacific, EMEA, LATAM. We've got folks in all sorts of roles. So everything from engineering, sales, We have our fabulous talent organization, which I sit within that really looks after our people practices and processes. You know everything you think of, you know, your finance office we've got all your traditional functions and, yeah, we are everywhere and it is truly a global company. Of course, we started in San Francisco in the Bay Area. But yeah, we have a footprint across the world, especially where our platform and we nurture our members and support our members. So you'll find us pretty much in most of the biggest countries.

***Michelle Ockers:***

Tell me your role. Let's, let's hear a little bit about your role, your team. And are you, do you have global responsibility then?

***Tiffany Poeppelman:***

So I'm the director of career development at LinkedIn. I have the pleasure of overseeing. It's a newly formed team, relatively new insider talent organization. We are currently, my team is focused on our talent architecture work. So this is a key driver of our own skills-based strategy internally. And as you know, the head of career development, we of course focus on our career development practices for the company. So my team's remit is truly around not only establishing clarity around the skills required for every role, but also creating greater visibility into career paths that exist internally. but also helping employees set their career goals, nurture those, and really pursue, you know, what their future focus is. So my team, you know, as I said, we look after our internal employee base, which is 18,000 employees. So it is a global role. We truly think about scale and equity from the center. The team would think about, my team would think about resources, building tools and programs, anything that's really going to support our employee base and that's going to scale. So our efforts really truly are aligned to our company business priorities. But I also, you know, really, what's really important to me is that we lift the employee voice up to also inform that career strategy within the talent organization. So definitely very energizing position to be in, I feel very fortunate to have this role. And, you know, I think it's inspiring just to see how we're creating greater career paths and clarity and opportunities so that our talent can truly grow their career inside of LinkedIn.

***Michelle Ockers:***

It's such an important topic these days. And we're going to talk about the talent market a little and some of the challenges and why skills are so important. It's really grown in prominence over the past four or five years. And there's a lot more talk about skills, about reskilling, about upskilling. So the challenges you're tackling with your skills-based approach are challenges that many organizations have. So I know people are going to find this

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conversation really relevant. Just in a nutshell, why is skill so important in today's business world?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, it's a great question, Michelle, and one that a lot of folks are asking. Well, if I look at our LinkedIn data, it does show that since 2015 job skill sets have changed by 25% and we expect that number to be around 65% by 2030. Just pause there. It's incredible.

**Michelle Ockers:**

What's interesting here is you're talking about actual data rather than forecasts, because you see a lot of these forecasts like from the World Economic Forum and so on that come out that say, you know, X percentage skills shift, X percentage roles change. But this is hard data. So since 2015. Was it 30 percent, 35 percent? Skill sets have changed by 25 percent. Yeah.

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

And we're going to see that number rise to about 65% by 2030.

**Michelle Ockers:**

How do you measure that?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

So ultimately our skills graph team is really looking at the economic graph data, looking at how much skill sets have changed from members on the platform from job posting. So it's truly just looking at all of our metadata and evaluating what is going on with the roles that we're seeing on the platform. So, you know, it's the power of the economic graph and the platform. It's incredible. And I'm sure there's a lot more sophisticated science behind it. But in a nutshell, yeah, it's definitely being driven by the platform.

**Michelle Ockers:**

People will be feeling that as well in many roles in learning and development and talent roles in organizations. So what then is a skills based approach to talent?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah. What is a skills-based approach? Yes, absolutely. It's yeah. So if you think about it, okay, if we look at the data that I shared with you and we take that in to understand how much skill sets are changing, it means that your team today is going to need new skills to do their same job tomorrow. And that evolution of how they do their job, where they do their job and why they're doing it is coming with constant changes for people leaders. So if you think about the shift from hiring, people are looking for talent in new ways. And this is stemming from the fact that people can access learning and development skills anywhere, which is expanding talent pools. It's expanding access to opportunity, creating greater economic opportunity. So that's shifting our hiring practices. If you think about a skills-based approach on development, there's a lot of, or even performance, there's a lot of shift in expectations in the recent years of our employees. Companies and managers and leaders are trying to keep pace with how do they follow those expectations, driving those business outcomes, which means our performance practices are shifting. It means our development practices are shifting. So ultimately we're just seeing a fundamental shift in how we nurture our talent, how we develop our talent and how we support them. I mean, ultimately I think it is our responsibility, especially within the talent development realm is like, It's squarely on us to make sure that our teams are set up to learn and grow and adapt to the roles that they're doing, and those roles are shifting regularly. So a skills-based practice is really around how we put skills at the center of that practice. How do we help, whether it be identify talent



based on those skills that are needed, identify what the skills that are needed. Whether it be, you know, helping employees make that pivot to understand how to grow that skill, finding new ways to nurture it. So it is truly changing talent management, training and development. All of us are feeling the shift and it's coming so fast. And so that is what these skills-based practices you're hearing about and you're talking about and we're discussing regularly. why there's such an emphasis on it, and each company is solving very different problems. Some people are feeling the pain when it comes to not being able to access the right talent, so they have to pivot on their hiring strategy. Some they're feeling it more on the workforce planning side. So it just depends. Each company is very different. But yeah, that's how I would ultimately describe the shift that's happening.

**Michelle Ockers:**

And I like the way you described it at multiple touch points on the employee lifecycle. And I think it really speaks to needing all of your talent or people and culture functions, whatever term you use in the organization, aligned around this approach to make the most of it for attraction, retention, internal development, career opportunities. It's, again, coherence right across that life cycle.

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Which is hard, by the way, very hard. And a lot of these teams and functions are very siloed and often really focusing on what they're trying to deliver. But now we're seeing this shift within talent functions, HR functions, where this cross-functional partnership is paramount. It is critical. And we're all in it. We're in the thick of it. We're struggling with it. We're figuring we're getting some wins. But it is. It's ultimately like, how do we think about the employee lifecycle in a more coordinated way? And this is where it's getting really exciting. I know at LinkedIn, we're really focusing on our skills-based strategy across the entire talent lifecycle. which is incredible because a lot of companies I talked to again they're very focused on one or the other. we're thinking very holistically, which is very unique, so I think over time you'll continue to see us share out practices and learnings because we're figuring it out, just like everybody else but. Yeah, it's very exciting times for our field, for sure.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, it is. So that stats around 25% of skill sets changing since 2015. You may not have a hard stat for LinkedIn, but just describe for me, what does this skills, this ongoing skills change look and feel like at LinkedIn? How does it manifest itself in your organization?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

I mean, I think it's probably no different to any other company. If you look at a very specific position, you know, what are the skills that are just shifting for every individual employee? And I think depending on which function, perhaps if you're in engineering, you're seeing a shift in AI skills and AI capabilities and needing to have new ways of doing things or adapting to the demands of what's coming at you. And so I think like every team, you know, we're all looking at, well, where can we identify what skills are changing and then ultimately provide the right resources to support those individuals to do their best work. And, you know, I don't think there's anything unique about us that would be any different from any other company, right? We're all looking at our workforce trying to establish where the biggest shifts are happening. And I think there's also the common skills that are shifting. So a lot of roles, you know, we talk about hard skills, technical skills versus the, you know, soft human skills, and they're both equally just as important. So what we're trying to do is establish, you know, how do we help with our employees having greater agility, greater flexibility, um, you know, shifting around that growth mindset so that we can all pivot as needed. And yeah, I think at LinkedIn, we're very open-minded. We really do hire a lot of people who have a growth mindset and, you know, as a tech in the tech field and industry, we, we shift a lot. It's, it's

kind of a regular fixture in our world, but doesn't mean it's not happening just as fast as other industries either.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah. How important is internal mobility at LinkedIn? So, you know, we're going to sort of shift the conversation on to career, career development and approaching career development. So when you're thinking about career development used to be back in the day, we thought about career development as climbing ladders. These days, I like to talk about it more as being on a rock face on a rock wall and you're kind of moving around in a much more flexible way to move from one point to another. Maybe, you know, you go sideways instead of up or diagonally or whatever. So in terms of careers at LinkedIn, let's talk a little bit about, well, what do careers look like at LinkedIn? What sort of options do people have? You know, how much internal mobility is there for people, for the organization-wise, does that matter?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, at LinkedIn, we have a very similar approach where we talk a lot about how, you know, we encourage employees to think about, you know, designing their own career path and knowing that no two paths are the same. So we really try to reinforce that same mindset and acknowledging the career jungle gym or the career ladder, all of the analogies, which I love deeply, it's like there's so many possibilities. And we try to encourage our employees to look at where those might come from and really emphasizing the skill set underneath the roles that will enable the pivot. So that will enable the long-term mobility that someone might be looking for. So yeah, we share a very similar mindset. And the way we talk about it at LinkedIn is, you know, just encouraging people to shape their own goals and then get creative with what that could look like instead of assuming it's always the up and over. You know, it could look like a sideways move or some we've had incredible stories from leaders who even talked about downward moves they've made just to you know get experiences to then move into new directions so. We we celebrate all the movements and you know there's one no you know direct path, if you will, there's all sorts of endless possibilities. And so you know we've been using a lot of a travel analogy I'd say internally we kind of love a good analogy and, just helping people, you know, if you think about where you go on a trip, Michelle, you need to do a lot of research on that trip and learning about the destination. And in this case, and you know, our travels in your career, it's about knowing yourself, you know, understanding what you're looking for, what your destination could be. And so we provide a lot of resources to help employees explore what's possible. So we emphasize a lot of that career development, because when people do focus on, you know, what they're focusing on their goals, their next steps, then We can offer an itinerary guide, a way for them to create a career action plan to map out their travels, map out what they're trying to do. And like any travel, you know, it's about the journey. It's not about the destination. Sometimes we enjoy the planning just as much as we enjoy the actual trip. So we do try to emphasize growth in smaller moments, which is around building those skills. you know, a skill set that we cultivate over time will lead to bigger, you know, outcomes that people think about traditionally, which is promotions and next plays. And those are just as important, and those are exciting, and we celebrate those. But we also celebrate the project completion, the course completion. The other stops in the journey that are just as important and powerful that will ultimately lead to those bigger moments so yeah I think it's just you know, really celebrating all the facets of transformation and not just the traditional sort of rise the ladder in that success. That is not the case. You know, we try to help people really embrace their own journey as a unique one and then giving them options.



**Michelle Ockers:**

So you're not laying out career pathways for people. You're not saying, well, here's the structured way to get from point A to point B. It's more about we're going to equip you to be more of an independent, well-informed traveller and create your own pathways from the endless possibilities that are here in the organisation. You talked about providing people with resources to explore what's possible. Can you give us an example, perhaps, of one particular resource that's been especially powerful and helpful to help people to take charge of their own careers?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Gosh, yeah, and we just launched a few new ones. And we sort of redesigned some of the ones that have been existing. But yeah, I mean, we just launched what is called a Career Compass, again, in the spirit of a travel theme, really thinking about how does one get clarity, build connections, and ultimately, how do they get the experiences they need? And this self-service resource tool that we created has really taken the best of all the activities courses, workshops, and all of the internal resources we have available and put those together in a comprehensive way that someone can find it depending on where they're at. Because what you're focusing on in your career and what I might be focusing on could be very different. So we try to create as much flexibility so that people can navigate their own journey depending on what they need. So I'm excited to see this career compass continue to get utilized. Underneath it is truly all the best of the workshops, the activities we've given people. So, you know, some of the activities and they're simple, right? These are, these are simple activities that we all do throughout our career, which is, you know, reflecting on what skills do you have or what skills you want to grow? What are your values? Really going back to basics around just like setting your goal and tracking your goal using our career action plan or CAP, we call it. So, yeah, we really do try to emphasize some of the traditional classic methods that any of us need to do over time, which is to set and cultivate our goals and then keep ourselves accountable. So those are just a few resources, both that we've had for a while, ones that we're launching and playing around with. But again, it's tricky. Careers is tricky because, like I said, everybody's coming at it with some with extreme clarity on what they want, some with very much a lack of clarity on what they want. you know, to create things at scale globally, you've got to meet people where they are. So we try to curate as much variety as possible for folks.

**Michelle Ockers:**

I love that the resource you picked, the compasses, is almost like a meta resource to help you find to get access to what you need. And that is such a common issue that organizations have all these great resources and people just don't know where to look or how to navigate through them. And they're underutilized. So that's a really good example of something to put in place. Another, well, a key initiative, which is where we want to go next, is your Career Week. So tell us a little about Career Week. What is it? Why do you run it?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yes, I love Career Week. And yes, so Career Week at LinkedIn is our global learning festival of sorts that is focused on, what it sounds like, empowering and encouraging employees to invest in their career goals and their career development. It is a week-long event. It is an amazing global organizational commitment that we make to inspire employees to invest in themselves. And we like to really reinforce that it's not just a week. It's not the week you do these things. It is just the beginning. It's the reigniting. It's getting people to sit down and reset, if you will, and then making sure they understand throughout the rest of the year where do they go to get the various resources, tools, or learn from others. So yeah, last year we, we hosted career week and our theme was all career paths are unique. It's very similar to what I was just telling you about in terms of celebrating all, all pathways. And this was

truly inspired by our CEO, Ryan Roslansky, who he wrote a powerful post on the squiggly career journeys, which really emphasized that no career paths are the same and we should really embrace our own. I'm happy to share the link with you. We can put it in the show notes if anyone wants to read it. It's, it's awesome. We took that. It had got so many hits across our platform, across members. It just really resonated, and it resonated internally. So we embraced that theme. We ran with it. And so Career Week is truly a week of offerings. We create a very dynamic set of experiences that are available that meet people where they are. So everything from live events, panel discussions with internal employees who talk about career tips or their journey, We host virtual workshops. We'll have in-office events that people can come and network. We have asynchronous content, because not everyone can step away sometimes. And that's just maybe their preferred learning style. Of course, we leverage LinkedIn Learning, so we'll create custom learning paths. So it is just a multi-modality endeavour, where we just give everybody lots of live and asynchronous content. And I think probably my favourite thing about Career Week is we really focus on amplifying the voice of our employees and their stories and their lessons learned. I think every one of us, myself, yourself included, We've learned throughout our career, learning from others, what worked for them, what didn't work, and just hearing those stories. So we like to encourage employees to share those stories. We even do it on the platform to get them to inspire their peers, but also their network, and usually offer a prompt of sorts to get them to share more widely. Yeah, it's sort of an outcome is our members are just as inspired and encouraged, which you know is such a beautiful thing to witness and see. So yeah, it's essentially a learning festival dedicated to the career goals of our employees. And it's very exciting. Everyone looks forward to it and my team and we do as well.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

So you mentioned then using prompts to help people to share their stories. I think one of the prompts you talked about at your presentation at the ATD conference was share a time when the idea of getting people to share pivotal moments, what did that look like? Where did you encourage people to share their stories? How did you use this prompt? And then were you harvesting the stories? Did you reuse them in some way? So let's talk a little bit more about the, the pivotal moments and share a time when.

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, well, in the spirit of last year's theme, right. So looking at the squiggly career paths and unique journeys, we came up with a prompt, which is a question that we asked our employees to share. And we essentially just gave them the instructions. We said, we'd love for you to share on the platform what's been one of the most unexpected twists or turns in your career, and how did it help shape your path of where you are today? So really focused in on one simple question, if you will. And we gave them a hashtag. It was like hashtag career transformation, hashtag LinkedIn career week. We even included a little GIF, you know, something animated that they could put on the platform that would help them stand out, but also like as part of the campaign. And yeah, it was just a very simple prompt and it was an invitation. Now, to really get the flywheel going, so if you're thinking tactical, we really want to create momentum. So we preselected a lot of people across the globe. These are our career champions that we partner with on a regular basis and ask them to be prepared to share their story because we wanted them to get that flywheel moving. And we in talent development, we're all prepared to share our stories. And yeah, it's just like that's kind of the way in which we activated and sort of encouraged people to post on the platform. And what was great was, I mean, I think if I recall, there was like over 150 stories, there was like 12,000 reactions on the platform. So it was really cool to see it light up. But we also started seeing a lot of our customers and our members sharing their stories as a result. And, you know, even though it was like an internal event for us, they felt inspired to share theirs



because they love reading it. That's just a little bit about how we set that up and really got momentum on it.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

So this campaign approach is really interesting and something that people can pick up and use flexibly for all sorts of reasons. And one of the people I spoke to on the podcast last year was Michal Niezgoda from Amazon. And he spoke about a storytelling campaign that they ran. And one of the tactics they used was very much getting people to nominate someone else to tell a story. So seeding it with an initial round and then getting people to nominate. So I might share that link as well if anyone's sort of sparking some ideas around storytelling campaigns. I think that can be extraordinarily powerful. So there's so many opportunities you're offering to people for how they could participate in Career Week. What might that look like for someone? And maybe we think about, does it matter? Was it location specific? Would it have maybe looked different if I was someone who worked for LinkedIn in America versus in South Africa, for instance? So just talk us through from a participant perspective, what might that week have looked like for them if they wanted to kind of fully embrace this opportunity?

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, so ultimately we run pretty consistent experience across the globe. So I would say about 80% consistency in terms of, you know, the workshops we select, we run those in the regions. Now the time and days vary because we try to complement what might work best for that region. But we do have regional partners who we work with in talent development who would really think about where we want to put maybe a different spin on a panel or meet their employee base with a little bit of a different angle if needed. But ultimately, I'll tell you, a lot of the employees are getting the same experience. They're getting the same workshops. Now, the stories will vary. The people who are speaking are locally based, and so they're able to hear stories that are more relevant. But ultimately, we really try to take a consistent approach and light it up across the whole world. And I think it works really nicely. Now we will, in the next year, we're really excited about looking at more like functional partnerships and how can we bring more functional content in as opposed to it just being all global content. Because I think people really love specialized, more focused content that resonates. And so it's always striking that balance from a talent development leadership lens of how do you create scale and consistency while also creating that customization. So if you're an employee, you would largely see a lot of the same type of activities within your local language or your local time zone. From an employee, I mean, you're gonna feel, they'll feel the energy, they're gonna feel the excitement from the communication, they're gonna have FOMO because other people are talking about it, there's signs, there's reminders, we light it up across the virtual halls and the live halls, but there's a buzz, you know, during that week, there's a buzz happening as people are heading to sessions and panels, having conversations, managers, employees are setting aside time to have career conversations. So, you know, I think, what it feels like is employees are motivated, they're empowered, they're excited. And, you know, it's largely allowing them to select what is best for them. How do they want to learn? What kind of content is like resonating for them in that moment?

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

So it's a specific week. Is it like, how do you pick which week it is? Do you time it to align with something going on in your annual talent calendar, for instance?

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, we sequence it to fall right after our performance review season so employees will just come out of the quarter before reflecting on how things are going in their current role. You know, what their performance feedback skills they're working on. So usually the quarter after



performance will shift to having more of a career-focused lens so that they can take those learnings and that feedback and the goals they've set and carry those forward to think about their long-term goals. So we do strategically tie it right after the performance review season. So this year, it'll be the week of April 22nd. So watch the platform. It'll light up again. But we are going to essentially, it'll be right when employees are coming out of mid year review. We'll have this time for them to start reflecting on their career goals and their future.

**Michelle Ockers:**

That makes sense. And of course, career development is not something we just do for one week a year. It's something that we encourage people to be working on consistently and continuously. So how do you build upon or leverage what happens in career week, any of the activities, any of the assets?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, exactly. You're 100% right. It is not just a week, and we really don't want people to think that. That's the only time of year they should be doing this work, if you will. So outside of these career weeks or career events, we regularly host career workshops. So there are other workshops that we would have available from our Connected Career Series. We partner with communications to make sure that we provide updates for our managers, reminding them of, you know, it's a great time of year to set aside. So we offer prompts. We, you know, encourage it through our HR partners, through our manager population. We make prompts to employees. So we sort of are there, but I don't think people quite know it, but we're always in the background sort of providing these nudges just to reinforce this practice. And you are 100% right. You know, it should be happening all the time. Reality is work gets in the way. Performance of where you are does get in the way, but what we're trying to do, especially this year, is really show the continued life cycle of performance and careers and how those two go hand in hand. One time I heard this, I wish I could take credit, it's so beautiful, from author Bev Kaye. She often talked about performance and careers like having hope without realism or realism without hope. So if you're only focusing on performance, you're focused on the realism, but you're not really focusing on the hope of what comes from that. Why are you investing in the skills today and how does it lead to tomorrow? But if you only think about your career goals and you don't have a sense of where you are today, then you have hope without realism. So you need both. I think sometimes employees, unfortunately, check the box and think of performance reviews as just like this administrative HR item that we do, but really trying to reinforce, even within the performance practice, to identify those skills, to think about career goals, and then creating space outside of that to reinforce and set actions and next steps. So yeah, we're trying to really create more of a fluid lifecycle through those things so that employees see the benefits of both.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Absolutely. It must take a massive effort to put this together. What has to go on behind the scenes?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yeah, it's definitely a village that it takes to pull off career week, no doubt about it. And I say that like we are incredibly fortunate. We have amazing talent development partners across the world who are so passionate. I usually have one point of contact per region who I'm coordinating with again around the events. Where do we customize to make sure everything goes off without a hitch? We have a lot of volunteers. I talked to you about these career champions that we activate and we nurture so that people can share stories. I mean, we have an incredible editor, video editor, video creator, designers, fabulous comms partners who help us make sure we get messages out in all the existing channels, an incredible

operations team so that we can launch, track, and report on events. You know, and I think above that, above all, we have unwavering invisible sponsorship from our executive leadership team and, you know, HR support to really reinforce, you know, the importance of this. And so it is truly amazing to see it come to life. It is a full production to do a full week, especially the way I described the way we activate as, and we're consistently, consistent way of doing that globally. Hope not to scare off anybody that's listening to this thinking that they couldn't do it without that much support. Because I think even if a company was to take a moment and just have a day or have some communications in a small way and get creative, it's just about creating that learning experience where people can learn and set aside time. And it's almost like just giving them permission, showing them that it's important. And so, you know, we do it for a week. I've seen some companies do month-long events. I've seen, you know, Microsoft, they do a Discover Day. They have a day-long event, and we all take different approaches to this, but, you know, it's all about meeting the employees where they are. So, yeah, behind the scenes, our career week, it does take a village to run. Absolutely worth it, and excited for next, this year's a big event that's around the corner.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, but what I heard you say there was or the subtext was don't let the scale of how LinkedIn does it put you off from starting somewhere that you can. And the signaling around permission that it's not just about giving people the information and resources, but giving them permission and saying this is important that we all invest time in this as well.

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

100%. Yeah. And one of the things I also really love about LinkedIn as a company is we have other types of learning moments that we do beyond career week, which, you know, every month we have what's called end day. And end day is a day for employees to set aside. There's usually a theme every month. It's a day to set aside to invest in yourself, the company, or the world. And you can use that day to, again, focus on your own development. You could use it to get involved in community events. We run activities, so it's not uncommon for us to create that space to encourage employees to take the time. And I think employees have to see that. They have to see it through their leaders taking that time. They have to hear it. They have to see executives doing it. And when you do create that space, it really creates such a beautiful, culture of learning. And I really do love a good culture of learning. It's it works, but it takes everybody leaning into it. And I think career week is just a great example of it. But focusing on specifically on careers and your career goals. So, yeah, I hope more companies can take time to do it for their employees. And even if it's small, right, doesn't have to be monthly, but just creating that space, I think, is so important.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Absolutely. So how many times have you done career week now?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

I think we are running into our third year officially. Yeah. So about three years in a row, we've done this.

**Michelle Ockers:**

Okay. So let's talk about, successes and lessons learned then, as you're thinking about preparing for the April 22nd launch of your next career week. What have you held onto what's worked really well that you've continued to repeat or build upon?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Great question. Yeah. Last year's event and the way we approached it, we really thought was just had overwhelmingly positive results. I mean, we saw that 94% of participants who

did get involved in these sessions and got to see the content said it was a valuable use of their time. So just like the results from the surveys and from what we read and what people shared as they were inspired, they were committed, they had never been a company where they felt like they were actively supported in their career growth. And, you know, there's just a lot of people who have continued to ask for it. Like, when's that week coming back? And when, you know, we're looking forward to that event. So I think for this year, we're going to keep a lot of our lessons, like the things that went really well, we're going to hold true to those, again, offering a lot of modalities and options so people can, we can meet them where they are. I think, you know, from an execution standpoint, our stakeholder management and leader support, how we engaged our leaders in the organization planning and helping activate them with us to be part of the experience. We're going to continue that. And again the custom career path on LinkedIn, incredibly well-received, we had I think it was like 1500 employees who completed a custom career path and, you know, a lot of things I was 1500 people who attended our fireside chat we had an external author and speaker comes we'll have another speaker again this year. So yeah I mean just again the format for us last year worked really well so we're going to hold on to that, I think what we will do differently, some of the things I called out to you were, you know, more functional opportunities. So we're partnering with the various functions like engineering, sales, and others to understand are there different sessions or events that we can, you know, pull into our run of show, our offerings, so that people can see something a little more tailored to their function, if that makes sense. And then I'm trying to think what else. You know, we, we did a couple of years ago offer a lot of content from senior leaders, that were, you know, dedicated videos around their career path. But I think what employees expressed is they wanted more variety and like, they loved hearing from leaders and they were excited to hear from others that were just like them. So we have continued to make sure that when we share stories and examples, that they come from everybody across the organization. Because some people want to hear from more leaders, other people want to hear from those that are more peers to them. So just really making sure we have variety. And then the last thing I'll say is, I think last year we put a lot of emphasis on the individual contributor population managers, where we didn't have as many executive offerings. So how are executives investing in themselves? So this year we're partnering with the exec dev team to think about some of those offerings that we can offer our senior directors and our VPs, they can also create space for themselves. So, yeah, just honestly small tweaks, but it was great to see how much it worked. So excited to see how it goes again.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah. I love the inclusivity of it as well. That's a key aspect that strikes me. So as we near the end of our conversation, Tiffany, tips. So we've got people listening to this and maybe they've never done anything like career week in their organization. Maybe they're just at that first little stage in thinking about how can they create something more positive to support people with career development in the organization. I often hear people, when I do strategy work with organizations, one of the things that rises up is that people are really unclear on What are my career options? What are career pathways look like in my organization? And they're looking for some guidance. So if anyone is listening and L&D professional, a talent professional listening to this and thinking, I'd really like to do a little bit more with kind of supporting people with career development in the organization. What tips or suggestions do you have for them to help them just get started?

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

I always like to, especially when I'm getting started, I like to look at not only what the data and the employees are saying. So, you know, go to the source, figure out what are, what are the employees asking for? What do they need? What are the managers looking for? And surely we all have data sources that can give us some signals. So get your hands on it,

figure out, you know, where's their momentum building. You might even have a function or a team that's already about to start putting some momentum in place and they want to start building some things out. So how can you jump in it with them? And just get started like just find that team find that function of that group who's ready who wants to pilot who's got a problem you need to solve and careers is vast so whether it's about helping people understand what's possible whether it's about creating project opportunities for employees, whether it's about resources. I mean, again, it just depends on what your company has already or where there's holes. But, you know, I'm a big fan of starting small learning, iterating, growing, like don't be the learning leader, trying to push the boulder up the mountain, trying to do some big splash global thing that no one's ready for. Like meet your business where they are, figure out where there's pockets and needs, try things. And then just like from there, you can cultivate a playbook, right? And just understand that some things will go well, some things are just trial and error. So yeah, I think it's, it's a lot of what we're experiencing in the learning area, but I think this is the time to try new things and just get creative and talk to other people in the space, talk to other companies. I love hearing what other companies are up to and we're all approaching it very differently for our organizations because our needs are different and our employees are different and our cultures are different. So, you know, but it's fun just to hear ideas and get inspired. So maybe another idea is just to, you know, listen to other approaches and see if anything sparks that might work for you.

**Michelle Ockers:**

I love the idea of creating your own playbook, just as there are lots of options for career pathways and you need to build your own. I think at another scale within your organisation, if this is part of your role, it's create this career clarity or pathway clarity for people in your organisation to support them to build their own. There's no one answer. You need to get in there and try different things and build your own playbook. I love that, thank you, Tiffany. Of course. Now, April 22nd is the kickoff of your next career week. If anyone, including me, is interested in taking a peek on the platform to see what's being shared out publicly, what's the hashtag we would use for that to search?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Oh, good one. You're ahead of the curve. We have not set our hashtags yet, but I'm guessing it's going to be #LICareerweek. We'll definitely be one of our standing hashtags that we use so LICareerWeek. But yeah, I'll start posting some more. I'll also post alongside this. I'll promise to include some of the latest and greatest because we're just in the middle of planning right now.

**Michelle Ockers:**

That's fantastic. There's some great tips there, Tiffany. Thank you very much. And I believe you've got also thinking more broadly about a skills based approach, some tips for others who are thinking about doing more with a skills based approach. Can you share those with us?

**Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Oh, I'd be delighted to. Yeah, I mean, this is such a broad space. And as you said, so many people are interested in figuring out how to crack this. What does it mean to be skills-based? What are the approaches? What are companies doing? So definitely recommend starting with reading up on the skills-based practices that are happening. And this can be listening and learning to others in the industry, how they're approaching it. I'm certainly happy to share some articles. And we have some amazing LinkedIn learning courses on being skills-first. some of those for leaders. I actually had my own course that I recorded, which I'm thrilled for managers. So how do we set up skills-based practices for managers, which has a

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lot of good tactics. So anyway, lots to read, lots to watch. But I would also say a tip, and I think for many companies and talent practitioners and talent leaders, really being sure that you're aligning your learning strategy to your business strategy. And I know we talk about this a lot, but giving yourself a seat at the C-suite table by showing how career development drives business impact is so important. And you would have seen from our recent 2024 Workplace Learning Report that we are finding that companies with strong learning cultures are seeing higher rates of retention. In fact, 57% more higher rates of retention more internal mobility, which is up by 23%, and healthier management of pipeline. And that's a 7% increase. And it's incredible compared to those companies with smaller levels of commitment. So the biggest takeaway is providing learning opportunities is your number one retention strategy above anything, above competitive salaries, flexible work arrangements. So if you haven't read it, check out the Workplace Learning Report 2024. Great resource and data of what's going on. But again, just reinforcing, align your learning strategy to your business strategy, and you will see the outcomes that you're looking for. We are very confident in that based on the data. So those would be my tips. I'm happy to share more resources in the show notes.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Yeah, you're very generous with those resources and we will share them. And, you know, the Workplace Learning Report is one of my go-tos every year. Great to have that data because it's one thing to create assertions and say to your senior leaders, this is important and will help with the company's growth or help with retention and so on. It's another thing to have the data to show them and some stories as well. So that's fantastic. And I believe you're going to be at ATD24 in New Orleans. Speaking again, Tiffany.

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Yes, I will be there. I've got a couple sessions on specific to skills-based practices and our LinkedIn data. I'll be providing some good tips and tricks and nuggets there. So if anyone's listening and they're going to be at ATD, I'd love, come check it out. Love to meet you there.

#### **Michelle Ockers:**

Fantastic. Unfortunately, I won't be there. I would have loved to have been there again, but maybe next year. We'll wait to hear from others as to the experience with the conference. And I'm sure many people will come along and listen to your sessions, Tiffany. And for those who want to follow your career week, this year, kicking off on April 22nd, we'll share your LinkedIn profile. And I'm sure probably the quickest way for them to get to stuff is to take a look at your profile. And from there, they'll discover the hashtags and some of the activities and resources and they can follow the trail. So thank you so much for sharing your work and insights with us. Thank you for your ongoing generosity at talking about your work, sharing resources with others. It's so deeply appreciated, Tiffany.

#### **Tiffany Poeppelman:**

Thanks, Michelle. I appreciate that. It's great to be here with you and good to see you again.



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Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that work with learning teams and/or business leaders to accelerate learning transformation. We specialise in supporting organisations to create or update their learning strategy, enhance their learning team's capabilities, align learning to business value, and implement modern learning approaches.

We are highly collaborative and pragmatic. We partner with organisations to align learning to their business needs, unleash continuous learning, and build capability to help them thrive.

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### About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the founder of Learning Uncut. She is an experienced, pragmatic organisational learning strategist, L&D capability builder and modern workplace learning practitioner. She also delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D *Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development*
- Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – *for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning*



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