



Ashley Kate  
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# HR Director Boardroom Notes

August 2020

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EVERSHEDS  
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# INTRODUCTION

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Ashley Kate HR & Finance along with Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP have been coordinating HR Director Boardroom events for over 10 years now. Each year we invite influential HR Directors to talk openly around topics pertinent to the HR Community.

The idea behind this format is to bring HR Directors together in a boardroom to discuss and debate the topic presented; Partners of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP chair these meetings.

This year, for obvious reasons, we had to adapt our program of both Employment Law Updates and HR Director Boardroom events to an online video platform. The first of which took place at the beginning of June.

Our latest event was led by, James Poletyllo Director at The Learning Effect, who welcomed questions and discussion around his key topic:

“An HR Directors Guide to the 'Real' Future of Learning”

Following are the notes from our HRD Boardroom. If you are interested in joining in on one of these events, or would like to be considered as a guest speaker, please do get in touch, email: [amanda.underhill@ashleykatehr.com](mailto:amanda.underhill@ashleykatehr.com)



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# DISCUSSION TOPIC

An HR Directors guide  
to the 'real' future of  
learning.



Presented by James Poletylo,  
Director at The Learning Effect



## LEARNING IN 2020

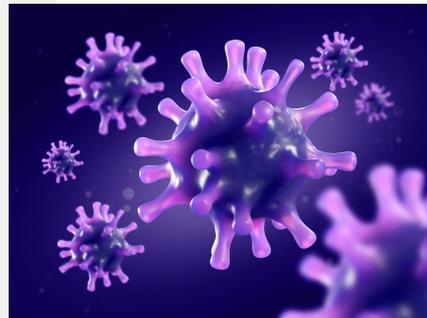
As we entered 2020, we were being told by industry leaders and the wider industrial world that learning had never been more important. Research from the World Economic Forum predicted that 54% of employees would need significant upskilling or reskilling within the next 3 years.

Additionally, 94% employees reported that they would stay longer with an organisation which invested in learning and development. Yet only 1 in 9 organisations are reporting they have an “excellent” learning culture.

Whilst the message appears compelling the underlying sentiment is similar to that promoted over the past 5 years. Whilst many learning teams have recognised there has been a need to transform, a number of barriers have made this more difficult.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

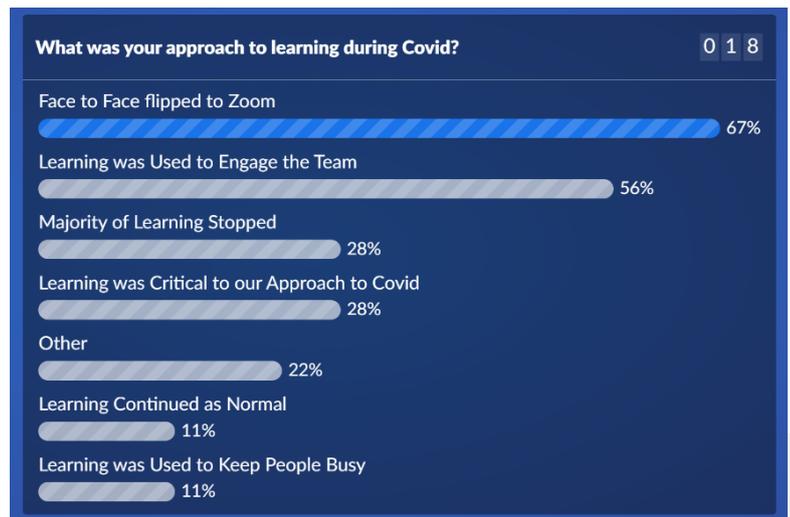
The impact of Covid through the first half of 2020 and for months and years to come has had a profound effect on work, society and, therefore, learning.



Terms such as social-distancing, furlough, home-schooling and zoom have become everyday language. Organisations and businesses are faced with business model challenges, regulatory and legislative restrictions and challenges relating to customers and financial viability. As we enter a recession what will happen to learning. Will it be the catalyst to rebuild better learning functions or will learning be a non-core service which is cut back as has happened in previous recessions.

# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM APPROACHES TO LEARNING DURING COVID-19?

An organisations approach to learning during Covid gives telling information about their historic set up and readiness to embrace a different future of learning. For many those organisations whose learning offer was still predominantly Face to Face many flipped to Zoom or ceased training all together.



(results from the poll)

The poll of attendees at the roundtable is representative of the approaches taken across the learning industry.

We have seen varying approaches to learning during Covid. Some organisations have ceased all training or any training which is non-essential. Others have upped training to keep people engaged or busy. Whilst others have seen their learning as critical to their continuity and success.

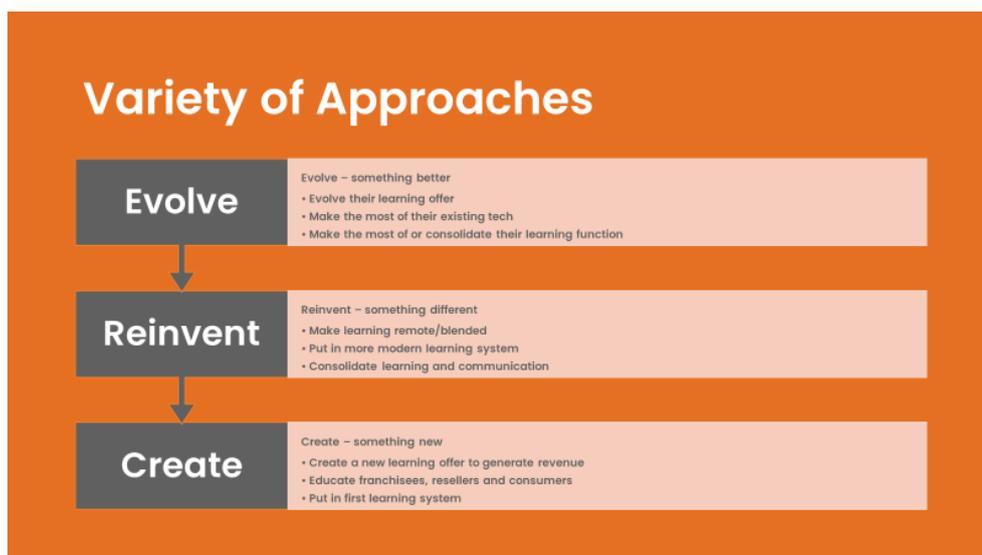
Stepping back and viewing what you have done to date will help set the basis for the future of your learning function and culture.

# BUILDING YOUR FUTURE FOCUSSED LEARNING FUNCTION

Organisations are responding in a variety of ways.

## Evolve

They have something which is near to what they believe they need in the future so they evolve and fine tune their function. This approach is also taken by organisations who do not recognise the importance of learning and will merely cut costs.



## Reinvent

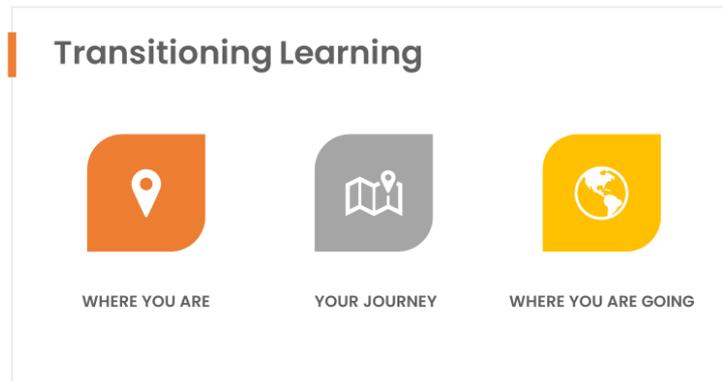
Some organisations have found their learning function lacking, and need to fundamentally overhaul their learning offer. This will include team structure, offer, tech and skills required.

## Create

A number of organisations have seen income streams disappear and therefore need to create something new or have not had a learning function before but now recognise that they need one.

# BUILDING YOUR FUTURE FOCUSED LEARNING FUNCTION

Each organisation will be unique in its requirements due to differing sectors, sizes, ownership models, strategies, resources and culture.



As with most change journeys, the process to follow is to assess where you are currently and identify where you need to be. During this process it can be helpful to not focus on learning but think about your organisational performance strategy and objectives. This will help you to focus on what is really needed as learning should and does not operate in isolation.



To identify out what your business needs start with your business's strategy and challenges. During the session we identified the following challenges the group were facing.

# BUILDING YOUR FUTURE FOCUSSED LEARNING FUNCTION

Once you have worked out what the business challenges are then you can think about what type of learning culture you need to meet these. During the roundtable the following were identified by the group.



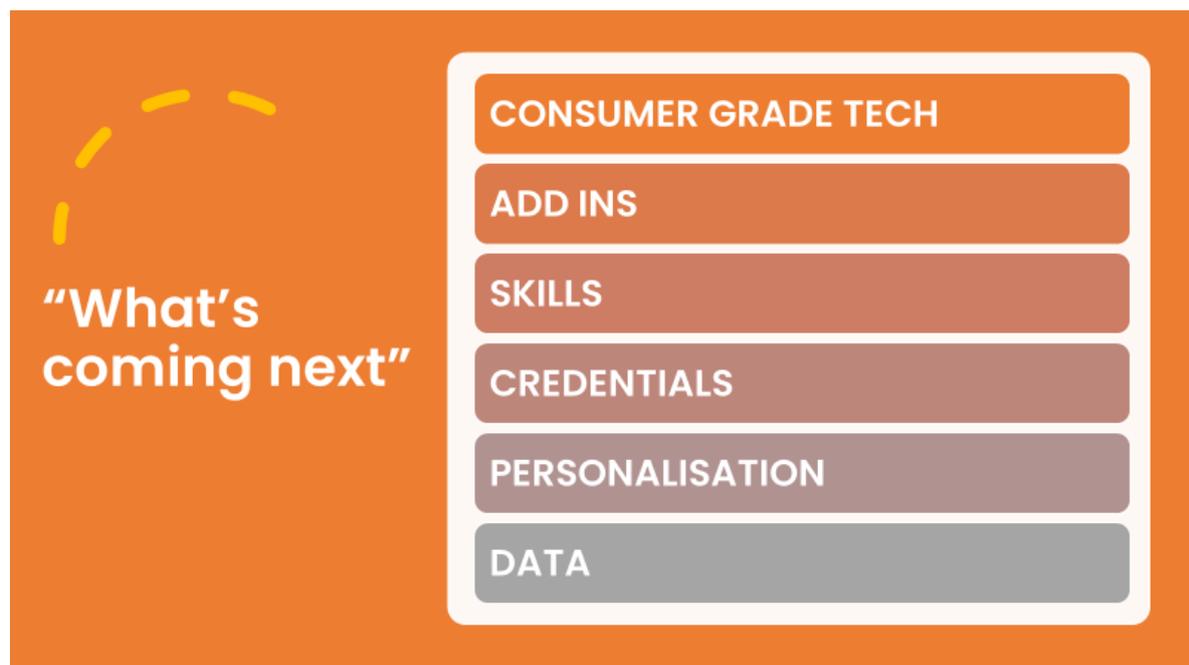
Creativity, agility and innovation will be absolutely critical to future of successful organisational learning functions. With the business landscape changing rapidly and solutions and answers changing regularly, learning can no longer focus on courses and content but instead need to focus on the ability to create collaboration, allow your teams to test and learn and freely access and share knowledge. Whilst there is no one size fits all any future focussed learning culture will include the following elements.

Learning Culture

- Curiosity
- Questioning
- Challenge
- Feedback
- Outcomes
- Agility
- Collaboration
- Self Awareness
- Problem Solving

## NEXT ON THE LEARNING HORIZON

The past few months have given learning and other functions the licence to relook at what they are trying to achieve and throw off the shackles of old processes, systems and ways of working. Of the many trends in learning and development, the following are the ones which are likely to last.



### Consumer Grade Tech

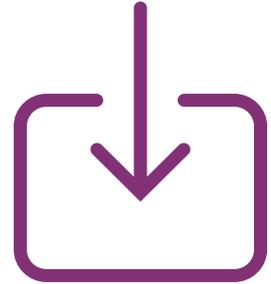
Employees no longer accept poor experiences and the recent development of many cost effective and highly user-friendly tech solutions in the tech space mean that now is probably the perfect time to review and possibly replace any cumbersome and costly learning tech or online learning resources which no one uses. These are often eating up budget without returned value.



# NEXT ON THE LEARNING HORIZON

## Add Ins

Learning in the flow of work has been a buzzword for a few years and organisations such as Slack and Microsoft are developing add ins and functionality to try to surface learning content into everyday work applications.



## Skills

As the career landscape and job roles become less rigid, skills are becoming the currency of development. This is really an evolution of the concept of transferable skills and the identification of skills which will be required in the future of work such as innovation and the ability to learn. The ability to map the skills of your workforce and focus on the best way of acquiring or building these skills will become ever more important. The transfer of knowledge and ability to remember and repeat this is becoming ever less important as knowledge worker roles become supported and supplemented by technology.

## Credentials

Employers and employees are both looking for more validation of skills. For employers this help with skills mapping and organisational performance. For employees this helps validate their experience and help them stand out in a competitive labour market.



# NEXT ON THE LEARNING HORIZON

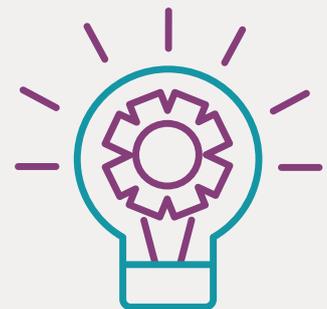
## Personalisation

Organisations and individuals do not have the time, energy or resources to collectively “sheep dip” individuals through learning. Targeted, specific effect learning is possible and will become the expectation. Learning is borrowing skills and approaches from other functions such as Marketing and product Development to up their game in delivering highly personalised and effective support.



## Data

Data and analytics will be core to any successful learning function, knowing what is working, identifying areas of need continual improvement will all be driven but data and evidence. By harnessing data and curiosity learning functions will ensure continual relevance and impact on their organisations.



## FURTHER SUPPORT

As there is no one set template for your future learning culture. To access ongoing support, materials, tools and a safe space to collaborate join -

**The Learning Effect Community.**

**[www.thelearningeffect.co.uk/communityregistration](http://www.thelearningeffect.co.uk/communityregistration)**

If you would like to talk through your individual needs in more detail please either call, email or connect with James on Social Media



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