

4,500  
workers  
SURVEYED



THE STATE OF  
CORPORATE L&D IN 2024

# FROM SKILLS TO SUCCESS

## L&D INSIGHTS FOR THE MODERN WORKFORCE

Exploring the evolution of L&D strategies and their influence on employee retention, motivation, and career advancement



# Executive Summary

Well-trained, productive employees are a principal engine for business success. But our latest research shows that inadequate learning and development is holding workers back, leaving them without the skills to progress up the ladder. As a result, many feel marginalized, dissatisfied and disengaged, which is threatening employers' ability to compete.

With research showing that satisfied employees are [12% more productive](#), keeping workers happy is not just a 'nice to have,' it's a smart business decision.

A strong learning and development (L&D) program can provide workers with a sense of appreciation and value. In fact, our 2023 survey of worker attitudes to training showed that respondents rank training within the top 3 workplace benefits, alongside health and wellness benefits and flexible working.

Effective L&D helps employees feel invested in an organization, while gaining vital skills that improve job performance. It has the power to make a difference at every level – making better managers, creating an agile workplace culture, and futureproofing businesses.

[Building on our 2023 research](#), we surveyed 4,500 workers within large organizations with 500+ employees across the US, UK, and Mexico to find out how attitudes have evolved and the impact L&D has on individual career growth and workplace happiness.



## We found that:



Employees want personalized training that is delivered in the right context, at the point of need, with a focus on soft skills, such as leadership and communication.



The quality of L&D has a direct impact on employees' sentiment towards their employer and their propensity to leave an organization - particularly for younger workers.



Yet many employees do not have access to the kind of high-quality training they need, leaving them feeling stagnant, side-lined, and overlooked.



Skill or competency in a role are often overlooked, as those who shout the loudest are more likely to be promoted - leading to a feeling of mistrust.



This issue is being compounded by a generation of managers who too often are ill-equipped to deliver training and support employees in reaching their potential.

The findings underscore the **urgent need for a revised approach to career development** – one that puts skill at its heart, with personalized training delivered at the point of need to unleash worker potential and drive both individual and organizational success.

## Key stats

### Perks and pitfalls



Almost a third of employees (30%) say the training they received has been "exceptionally rewarding" – but 70% are looking for more when it comes to L&D.

However, 16% of workers have had no workplace training in the past year - a quarter of whom say their organization has no training programme at all.

### Engagement and motivation

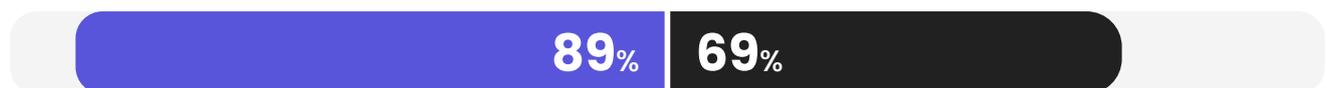


43% say their company's insufficient workplace training is holding them back from advancing their career - with 44% of 18-34 year olds looking to change jobs because of a lack of training and development.

### Ineffective managers

Over half of workers (53%) say their manager is under-equipped to help them progress in their career - with 55% saying their manager doesn't know enough about the skills they (the respondents) have.

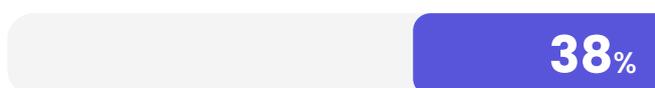
### What people want



89% of workers would feel motivated and enthusiastic if offered bespoke training for their role - with training in soft skills such as leadership being the most highly coveted.

69% of workers would welcome guidance and training to help them navigate the 'unspoken rules' of the workplace - but 54% do not trust HR to look out for their interests.

### No skills tracking



38% of organizations have no formal means of capturing information on employee skills or tracking employee progress.

“In a precarious economic time, having a workforce that feels valued, inspired and invigorated is worth its weight in gold. Businesses must ensure that those who rise to the top are those with talent. And that employees are given the support and opportunity to thrive. That is the power that a structured L&D programme can deliver. As the shape of the workforce changes, and expectations of employees rise, delivering personalized learning is a must. And importantly - it is achievable. Organizations no longer need to be shackled by time and money constraints. With a new generation of AI-enabled L&D, personalization at scale can be a reality.”

**Graham Glass,**

Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning



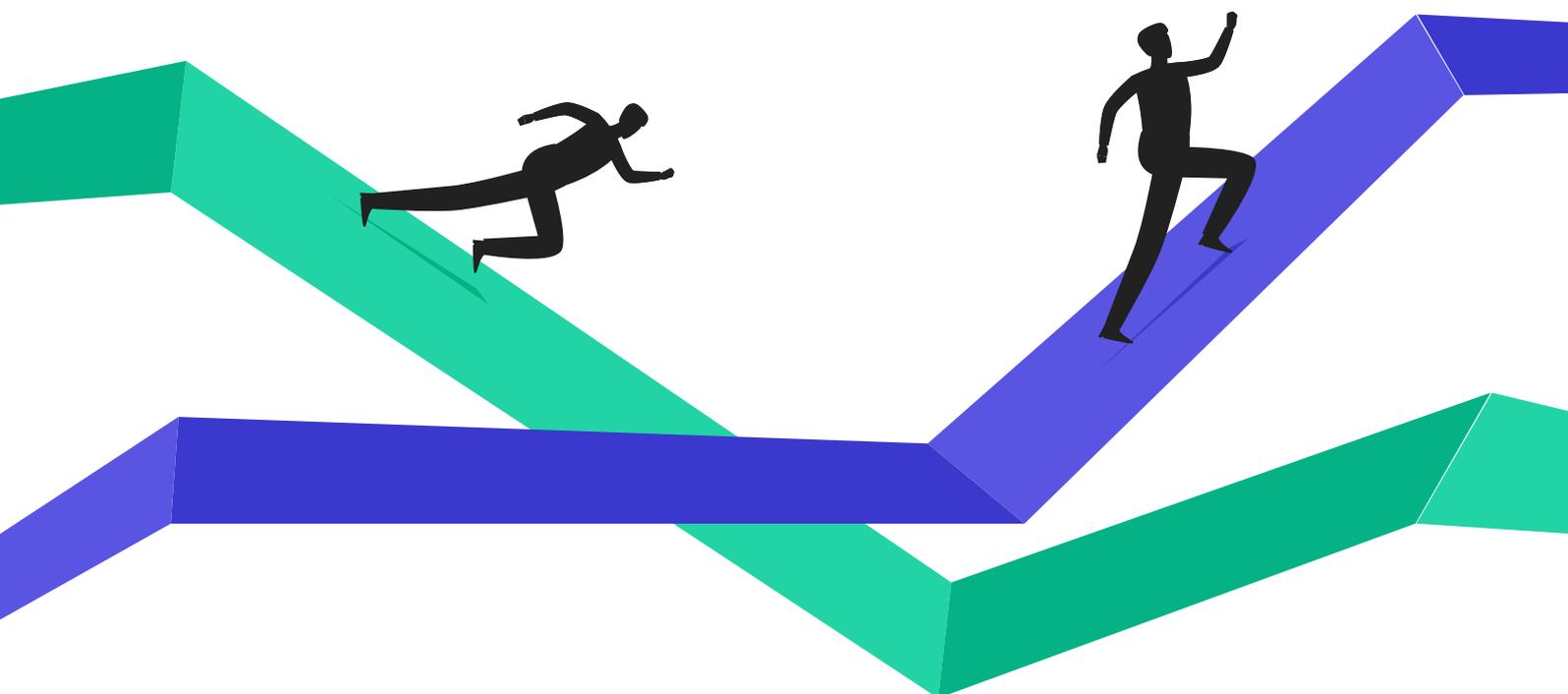
# Workplace L&D: the perks and the pitfalls

This fresh survey reprised and confirmed a key finding of our 2023 survey – that while 98% of workers value workplace training and see it as important, their experiences around training were generally varied. In the past 12 months, **16% of workers received no training**. This is compared to 20% last year, showing there has been some improvement overall. Encouragingly, of those who have had training in the past year, **one in three said they'd had more training than the previous year** – again, comparing favorably against last year, where just 23% said they'd had more training.

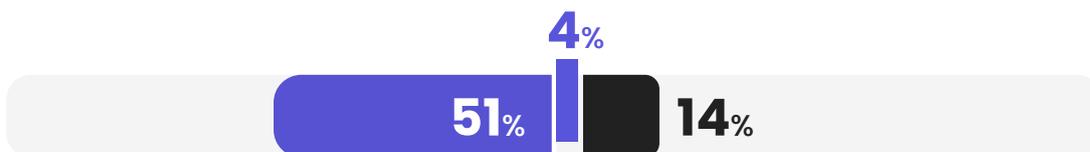
Of the 16% who reported having less training this year to the previous, the most common reasons cited were:

- Shifting business priorities (30%)
- Lack of resources (29%)
- There is no training program (25%)
- Insufficient budget (24%)

Of the 96% who'd received workforce training at some point in their career, attitudes to the effectiveness of that training varied. On a positive note, **almost a third of employees (30%) said that training they received was "exceptionally rewarding"**. They reported feeling "truly enlightened and invigorated", saying it has been a "game-changer" for their professional development and directly applicable to their work.



However, the remaining 70% say that there is room for improvement:



**51% said training was 'fairly satisfactory'**

but that there were 'missed opportunities for deeper engagement'

**14% said training was 'barely beneficial', and that they felt 'underwhelmed and disregarded'**

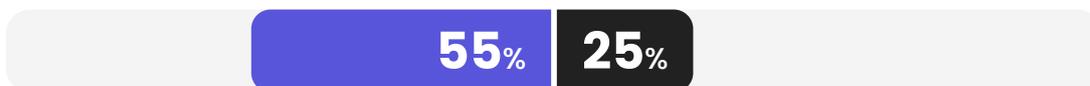
as the training 'lacked depth and failed to ignite their interest'

**4% said the training they receive is 'usually a waste of time',**

leaving them feeling 'frustrated and disrespected' as training entirely missed the mark

## Not all training is created equal...

Continuing the trend from last year, senior managers were far more positive about their training experiences than their employees.



More than half (55%) of respondents in senior management positions described the training they had received as '**exceptionally rewarding**', while less than 25% of middle and junior managers, graduates and clerical staff felt the same.

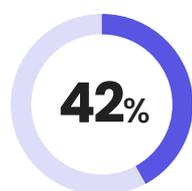
"Employers that offer continuous skills development and make employee development a priority are set to have an edge over the competition. When you consider that all respondents work at companies with at least 500 employees, it's quite shocking to see some have no training program at all. Of course, providing training is only one side of the story. To truly motivate and inspire employees, training should also be fun, engaging and relevant. Until recently, providing high-quality training to every worker was reserved for those at a higher job level, but now it is possible for every worker. And doing so will give companies a competitive advantage."

**Graham Glass,**

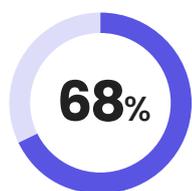
Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning

# Engagement and motivation: hidden benefits of better L&D

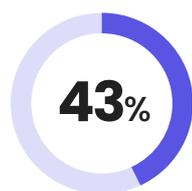
Training and workplace development is designed to help people improve their skills, positioning them well for progression and career development. However, many workers feel they are being locked out of such benefits due to a lack of training opportunities.



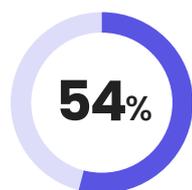
42% of workers say their workplace doesn't offer the training they need to do their role effectively.



68% of workers say workplace training is often a one-size-fits-all that doesn't feel very personalized to them and their needs.



43% say their company's insufficient workplace training is holding them back from advancing their career.



54% reported that although they would like to get more training, the further they get in their career, the more they are overlooked.

Quality of training impacts worker perceptions of their employers and how valued they feel. Clearly, high quality training can have a hugely positive impact on how employees view their workplace. However, once again, 70% feel there is room for improvement.



Almost a third of employees (30%) felt **'highly valued and empowered'** by their employer – a figure that correlates with the 30% who had described the training they have had as being exceptionally rewarding. They reported feeling **'deeply appreciated and recognized'** and that the fact their skills are continuously developed, makes them **'feel confident and vital to the team.'**

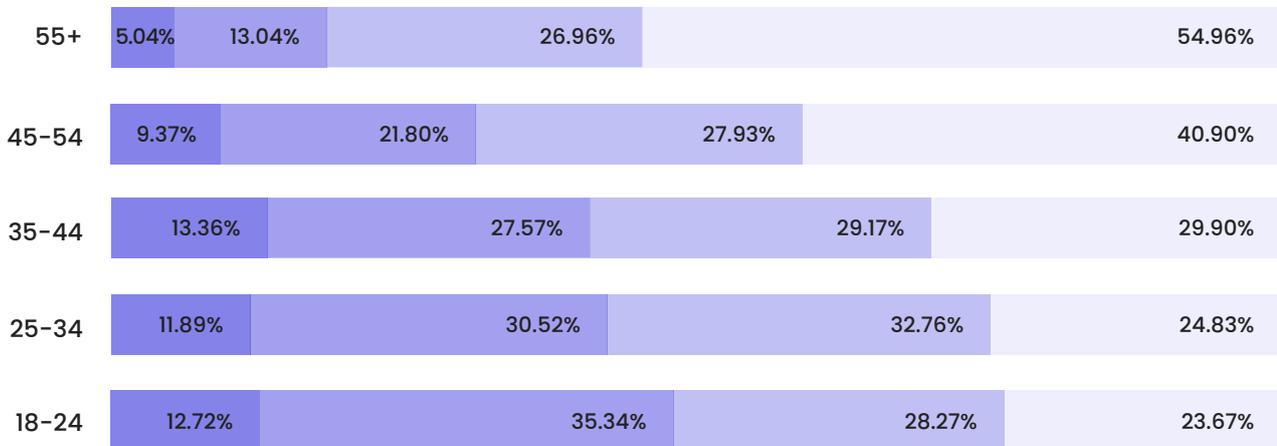


Almost half (46%) report feeling **'adequately acknowledged'**, saying that while they do feel recognized they would **'appreciate more initiatives focused on skill development'**.



One in four (24%) describe themselves as being **'undervalued and stagnant'** or **'invisible and despondent'**. Respondents reported feeling overlooked and underutilized, or **'just another replaceable part'**, with little to no opportunity for growth.

This lack of focus from employers on individuals' L&D is having a direct impact on retention. Of the 70% of workers who feel there is room for improvement in training:



- Strongly considering leaving:** 'I'm actively looking for new opportunities. The lack of development and growth has made me feel undervalued and stagnant, prompting me to seek a more fulfilling role elsewhere.'
- Somewhat considering leaving:** 'I've started to explore other options. While I'm not actively applying yet, the absence of professional growth is pushing me to think about moving on.'
- Occasionally considering leaving:** 'The thought crosses my mind now and then. The lack of development is disheartening, and while I'm not ready to leave, it's affecting my job satisfaction.'
- Not at all considering leaving:** 'Despite the lack of development, I feel committed to my current role. I believe in the company's mission, and I'm hopeful for future opportunities for growth.'

Over a third (36%) say the lack of focus from employers on individuals' L&D has pushed them to seek out other options – a figure that rises to 44% for 18-34 year olds

29% say the lack of development and growth is affecting their job satisfaction



“The survey suggests that companies that continue to sideline L&D may be courting a future retention crisis. Workers aged 55 and over were the least likely to be considering a change, with 55% stating that they have no intention of leaving their job – more than double the 24% of 18-24 year olds who said the same. Capitalizing on workers’ desire for growth is an opportunity that businesses should not overlook, and a culture of continuous learning will keep employees engaged, satisfied and productive.”

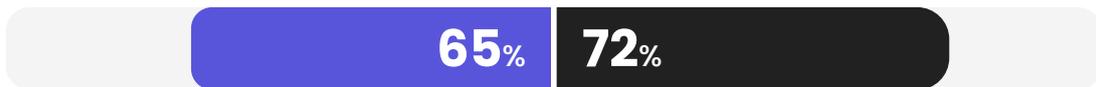
**Graham Glass,**

Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning



# Is progression an uneven playing field?

Most businesses strive to be meritocratic and promote those with the right skills or competencies fairly, based on their ability to perform the job. However, many employees feel this is not the case in practice.



65% of workers say **progression is often based more on popularity** than on competency  
72% have seen **people who don't deserve it** get promoted.



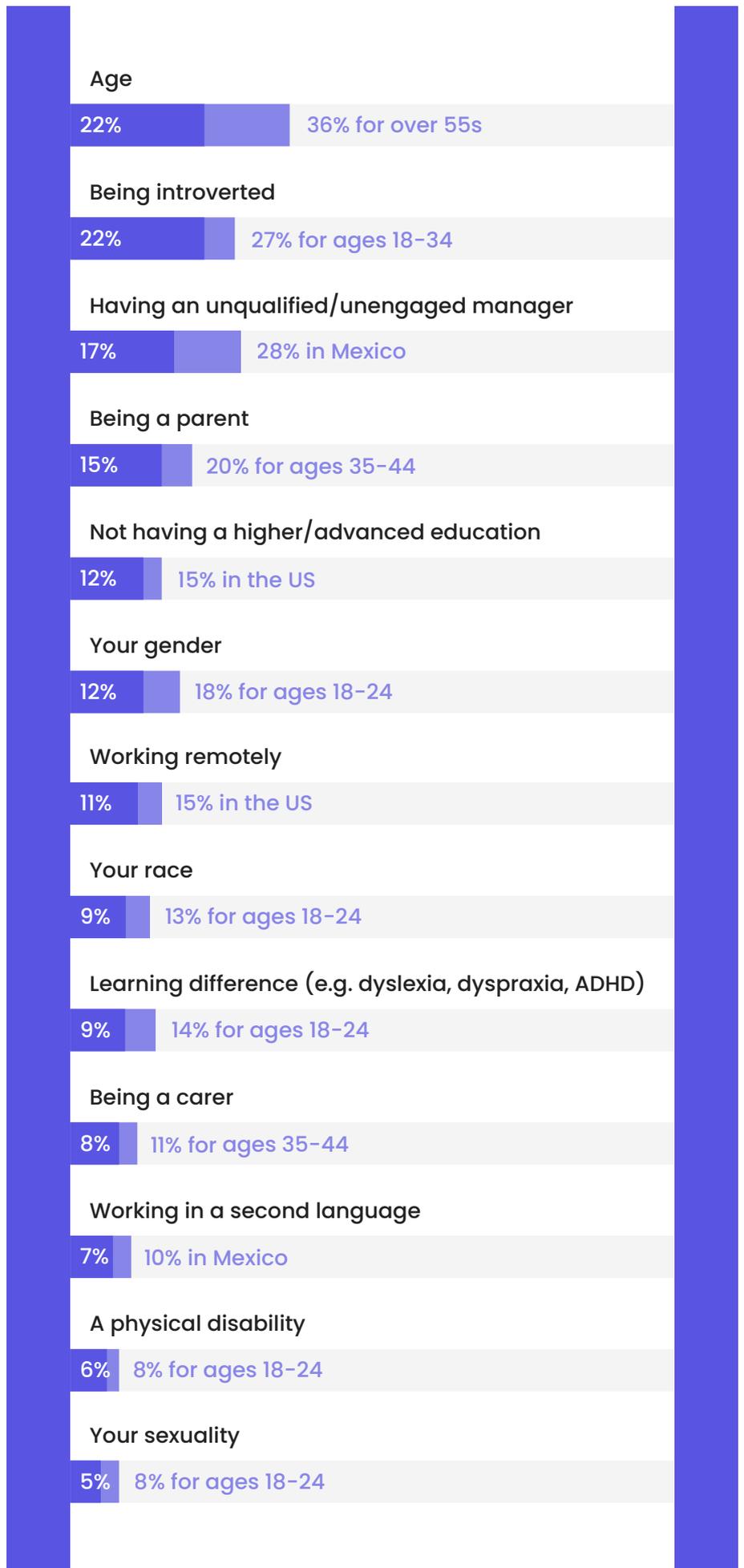
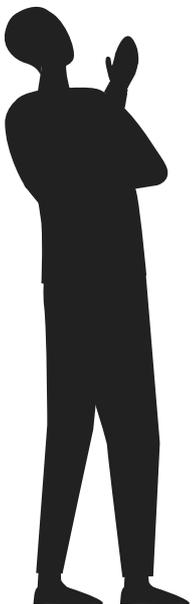
72% of respondents reported that they have **faced barriers to their professional development** – a figure that rises to 87% for workers aged 18-24.  
Interestingly, the top three barriers related to age, being introverted and having an unengaged or unqualified manager.

**Employees feel these barriers often result in their skills and abilities being overlooked, making it harder for them to progress in the workplace:**

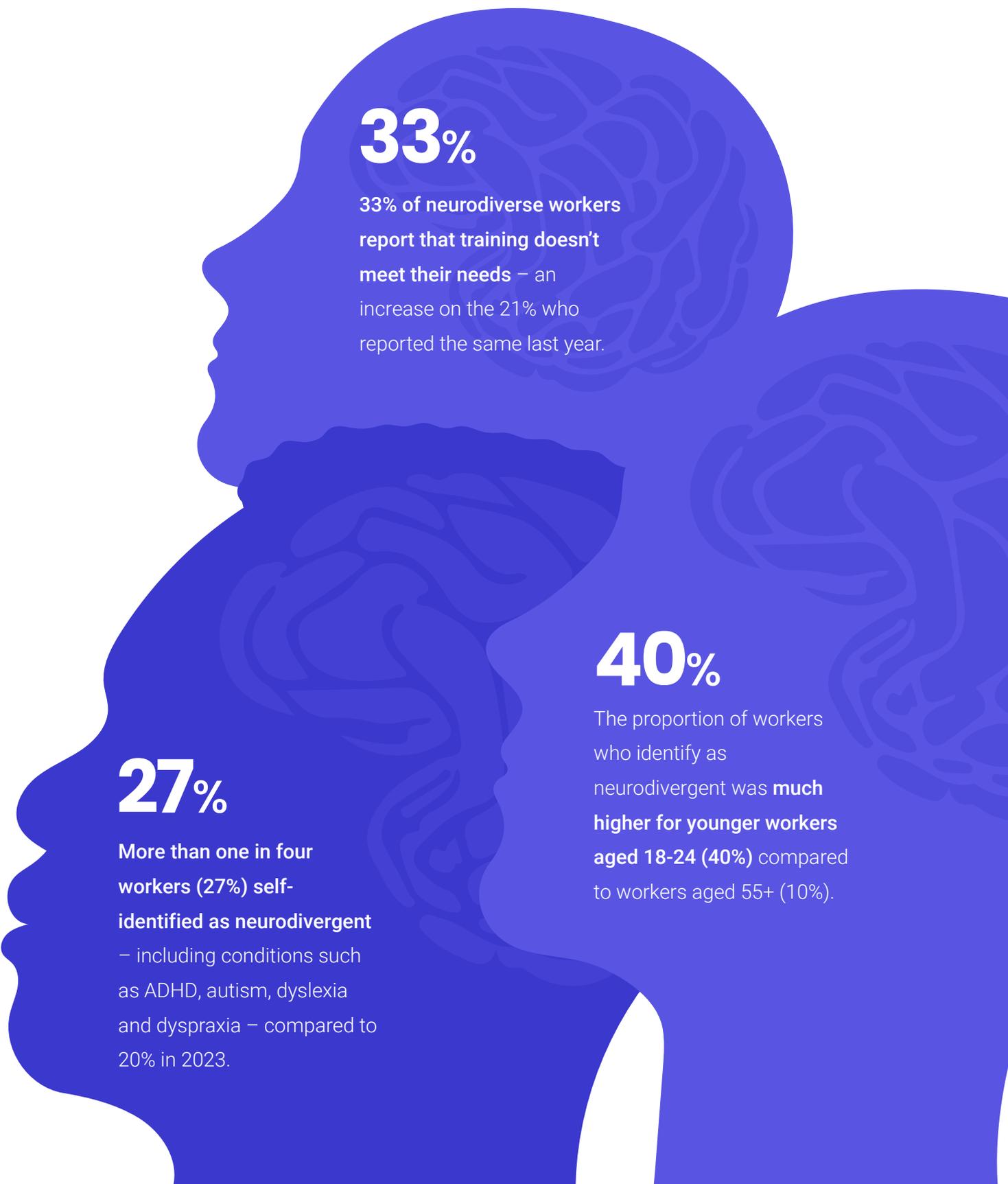
- 38% feel they are given fewer opportunities
- 32% think they have been overlooked for promotions
- 30% have experienced difficulty building workplace relationships
- 29% feel less visible in the workplace
- 20% said adjustments have not been made to help them succeed
- 19% said they have not been offered tailored training to meet their needs

Which, if any, of the below do you feel have been barriers to your career development?

■ Overall percentage of workers impacted by perceived barrier



The research also showed that the needs of the workforce are shifting year on year. Comparing 2024 data on workers that self-identified as neurodivergent – including conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia – against 2023, we found that:



**33%**

**33% of neurodiverse workers report that training doesn't meet their needs** – an increase on the 21% who reported the same last year.

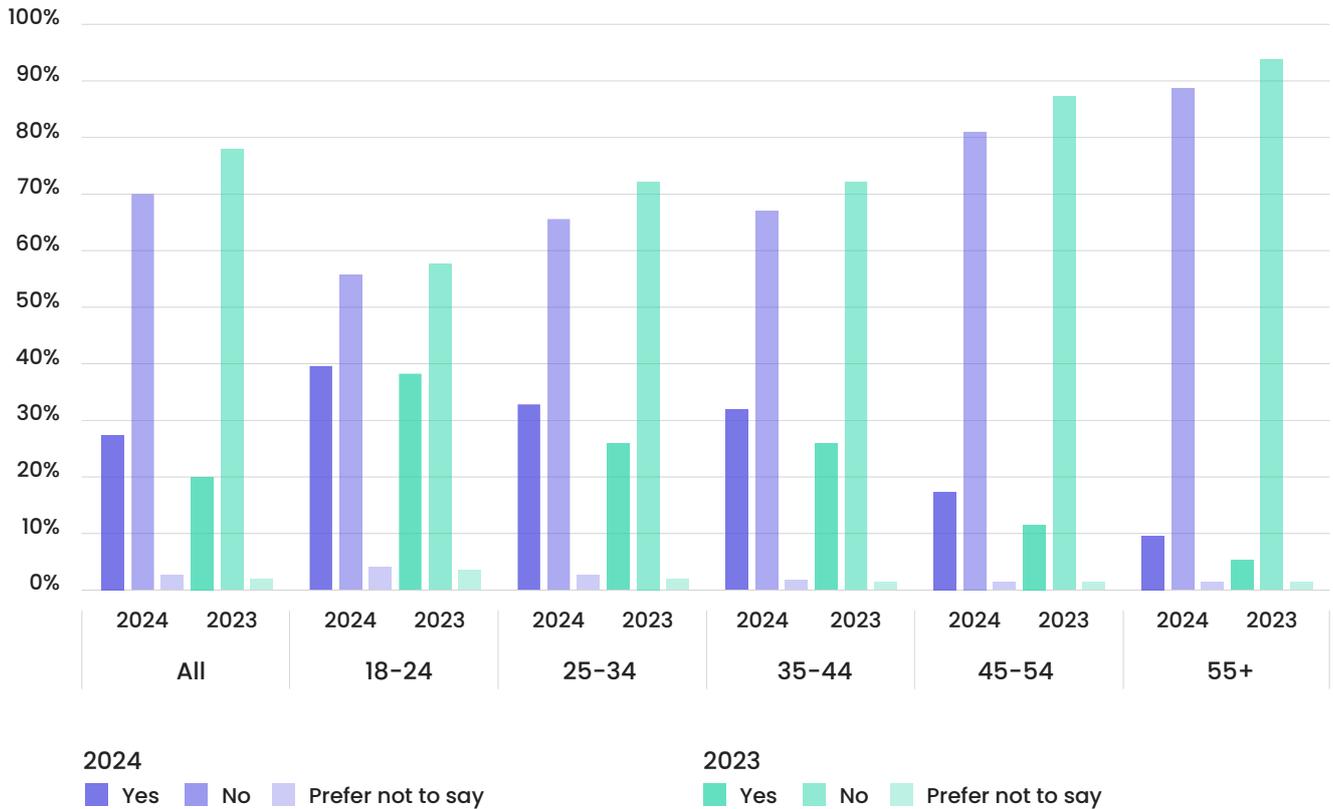
**27%**

**More than one in four workers (27%) self-identified as neurodivergent** – including conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia – compared to 20% in 2023.

**40%**

The proportion of workers who identify as neurodivergent was **much higher for younger workers aged 18-24 (40%)** compared to workers aged 55+ (10%).

## Workers who self-identify as neurodivergent



“Adjusting L&D to meet the changing needs of all workers is going to be pivotal in retaining and supporting staff. With the personalization offered by AI, employers can level the playing field. Training no longer needs to be delivered in one rigid format that suits only some learners. Catering for a wider range of workers can bring productivity gains, boost innovative capabilities, and increase employee engagement. Adapting L&D can allow everyone to reach their full potential, make the workplace more inclusive and build a true meritocracy.”

**Graham Glass,**  
 Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning



# Are ineffective managers holding workers back?

A key trend identified in the data was the impact of ineffective managers on employees' career progression – with 'having an unqualified/unengaged manager' being cited as one of the top three barriers employees said was holding them back from progressing their careers.

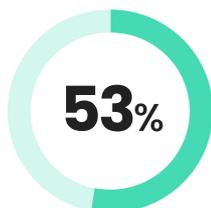
As the gatekeepers to training and progression, managers play a vital role in employee development. Yet many employees feel their managers are under equipped to support them in their career, and unable to develop the skills they need to succeed because they don't know enough about the skills they have. This is hampering their personal development and career progression.



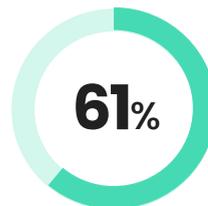
75% of respondents felt that people with more vocal and attentive managers are more likely to be promoted.



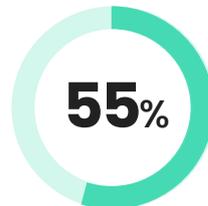
57% say the more facetime you have with your manager the more likely you are to be promoted.



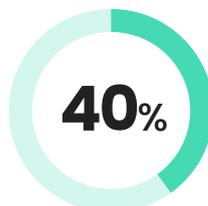
More than half of workers (53%) say their manager is under equipped to help them progress in their career.



61% say they know more than their manager about the skills needed to do their job.



55% say their manager doesn't know enough about the skills they have.



40% said their manager has wasted their time sending them on pointless training.



Reflecting on what training employees think *their* manager should have, soft skills such as **leadership, listening and team management** came out on top.

Giving constructive feedback also ranked highly on employee training wish lists for their managers – which is unsurprising, given that **71% note there is room for improvement in the quality of feedback they are given**, with 24% saying feedback leaves them feeling either ‘deeply disappointed’ or ‘confused and unmotivated’.

Employees experience in being managed is reflective of managers attitudes to delivering L&D support. On a positive note, **more than half of respondents (59%) who have responsibility for conducting employee training and development reported feeling ‘Highly Confident and Positive’**. They enjoy the responsibility and believe in both the value of training and development and their ability to deliver it effectively.

However, **41% feel less confident:**

- 33% do it ‘because it’s part of their job’, but they’re not particularly passionate about it
- Almost one in ten (8%) reported feeling ill-equipped, inadequate, and ineffective – doubting that they have the necessary skills and training needed to perform the job

“Managers play a vital role in employees’ lives, and are often the ones who decide who gets promoted and who doesn’t. Yet not all managers are suited to employee development - with many lacking the interest and aptitude for the job. Their skills and passions often lie outside of L&D, which means employee training and development falls to the bottom of their priority list. Taking this into consideration, is it fair for an employees’ career to be in the hands of their manager? A better approach could be to have a learning platform that independently tracks and assesses employees’ progress, to ensure that success is measured fairly. This way success doesn’t have to just come down to the luck of the management draw.”

**Graham Glass,**

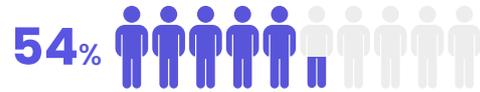
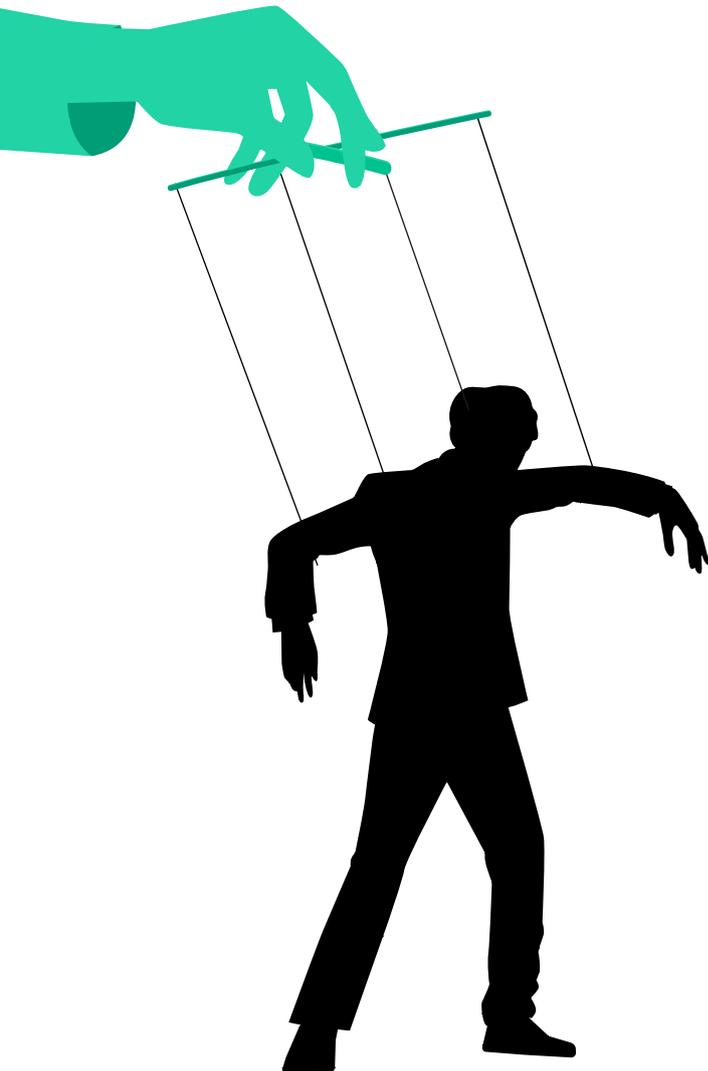
Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning



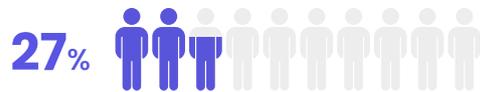
# An issue of trust

One of the themes that this report raises is the issue of trust. A striking percentage of workers do not trust their managers to steer their careers in the right direction, or that their skills will be recognized and they will be treated fairly in the workplace.

Part of the issue is that HR is seen as something of a dark art, with employees feeling suspicious of their employer and managers' motives:



More than half of workers (54%), said they do not trust HR to work in their interest, as 'they're more worried about protecting the company than the employees'.



27% don't know who to approach in HR if they have a workplace issue.



41% have felt a bit insulted by offers of training around soft skills – reporting it feels like a personal slight.



9% of employees would feel 'skeptical and unconvinced' if they were offered bespoke training, as they would question the motives behind it.



This skeptical mindset is compounded by a reported lack of transparency around how employees skills are tracked and how this contributes to their goals and workplace success. **38% of workers said there is no formal tracking of skills or competencies - with records being kept manually on file, if tracked at all.** Only 32% have a learning management platform that automatically records progress, suggests training materials and tracks competencies or skills acquired.

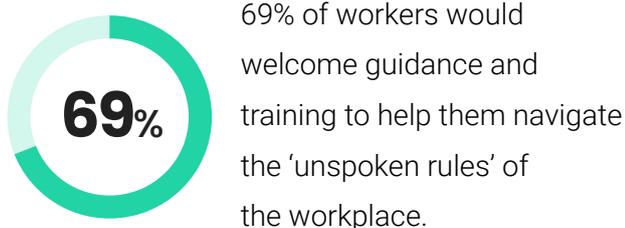
It is perhaps for this reason that employees feel their efforts at personal improvement are not sufficiently recognised, with **49% saying that attending training makes no difference to career progression.**

“Continuous learning and trust are closely intertwined in a company's dynamics. When there's a culture of continuous learning, employees feel empowered and motivated to improve their skills and knowledge. A lack of trust can undermine efforts because employees may be skeptical about the intentions behind training or development opportunities. It's not just the business that suffers, but also their workers. This is why transparency is so important. People need to know that if they work hard on building their skills that it will be recognised and rewarded.”

**Graham Glass,**  
Founder and CEO, CYPHER Learning

# What people want from training and development

Targeted, personalized L&D can improve skills development, worker satisfaction and retention. The research shows that employees value and desire personalized, relevant, timely and quality training to help them develop in their careers.



Moreover, specific training designed to unleash worker potential can also be beneficial. **56% of workers feel that school / college / university left them unprepared for the workplace**, a figure that climbs to 67% for 18-24s - suggesting more support in the transition between school and work would help workers to acclimatize.

Furthermore, of the 27% of workers that identify as neurodivergent, 64% said their colleagues have received neurodiversity awareness training, of which 83% say it has been useful, with 49% saying it was very effective. Of those who said their colleagues haven't had training in this area, 79% feel it would be useful if they did. This suggests that specialized training can really help to ensure everyone in the workplace is enabled to meet their full potential.

When looking at the specific training people want in the workplace, it's evident that 'soft skills' are highly valued. **Skills such as leadership, team management and project management are some of the most sought after** by workers.

"The world is changing quickly, and training is going to be pivotal in not only keeping up with the changing technology landscape, but also in adapting to differing working practices and expectations. Being delivered the right training – at the right time – in the right way – can truly make a difference. When a continuous culture of learning is created, employees are given the tools to thrive and seek growth."

- Graham Glass

## Final thoughts

### Listening to workers, it is clear that:

- **People want to learn and to be treated as an individual.** And the companies that invest in their workers are rewarded with loyalty.
- **They want to operate on a level playing field,** where they are rewarded for their efforts and not how loud they shout.
- **They want to be recognized for - and have access to developing - a broad range of skills,** beyond technical, role-specific competencies.
- **They want to trust that their employer values them** and to feel empowered to build their career.

Yet many companies are taking a haphazard approach to L&D. There is a lack of visibility and transparency that is damaging trust. Such choices can in turn damage the fortunes of the business by impeding its ability to rise to competitive challenges.

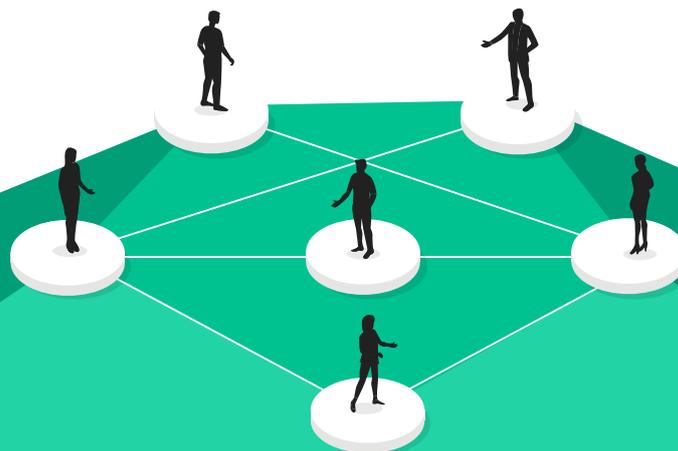
Without a formal, centralized learning platform, management, HR and L&D teams cannot get an accurate and granular view of the competencies their teams possess.



# Creating a competency-based meritocracy

When continuous learning is enabled, everyone in the business has a fair opportunity to succeed. An AI-driven learning platform that delivers modern, personalized learning experiences for everyone in the organization can make all the difference, helping businesses to ensure that:

- **Personalized training can be delivered at scale**, at a low cost to the business, with automated competency mapping to ensure all workers are given the chance to succeed.
- **Employees are not held back by disinterested managers**, as all their training and development is captured centrally meaning they can be compared against peers free of bias.
- **Skills or competencies can be verified and assessed**, in a range of different ways, giving organizations a true picture of skills in their workforce.
- **Training is connected to progression goals**, giving managers insights they need to support their teams, and giving employees clarity on what they need to work on.
- **Learners can access all types of training materials to suit their way of working** - with gamified, multimedia materials that bring training to life and drive engagement.
- **Training is delivered in the right context, at the point of need**, to increase relevancy and drive better outcomes.



Ultimately, by having a centralized platform that supports learners and captures information about their skills and progression, businesses can make more informed decisions on progression. This will help level the playing field, while also helping to make training more enjoyable, dynamic and personalized. In the final analysis, employees will be more productive and engaged company advocates who reward the business with their loyalty.

# About CYPHER Learning®

CYPHER Learning is leading the necessary disruption of learning platforms to unleash human potential with modern learning. The company exists to ignite lifelong passions through personalized, engaging, and limitless learning experiences for all. CYPHER gives trainers, learning and development (L&D) pros, HR pros, and educators more time to teach and train, builds human connection into everything they do

- and delivers tailored learning experiences that are meaningful and measurable. The CYPHER platform is easy-to-use, beautifully designed, and infused with AI-powered technology. Every aspect beams thoughtful innovation and engineering that puts people first. Millions of users experience their “just in time, just for you, just the way you want it” approach in 50+ languages with the CYPHER award-winning platform.

See the AI learning platform at

[cypherlearning.com](https://cypherlearning.com)

