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CREATING AND DELIVERING

# Highly Engaging Learning in a Hybrid Work Environment

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## Current State

One outcome of the global pandemic has been a significant increase in the size of the permanently remote workforce. Another is that the instructor-led classroom was taken out of the mix almost overnight. Even as people have begun to return to the workplace and in-person training picks back up, there is still a critical need to deliver training to both on-site and remote workers. This new dynamic presents a host of synchronicity, communication, and collaboration challenges.

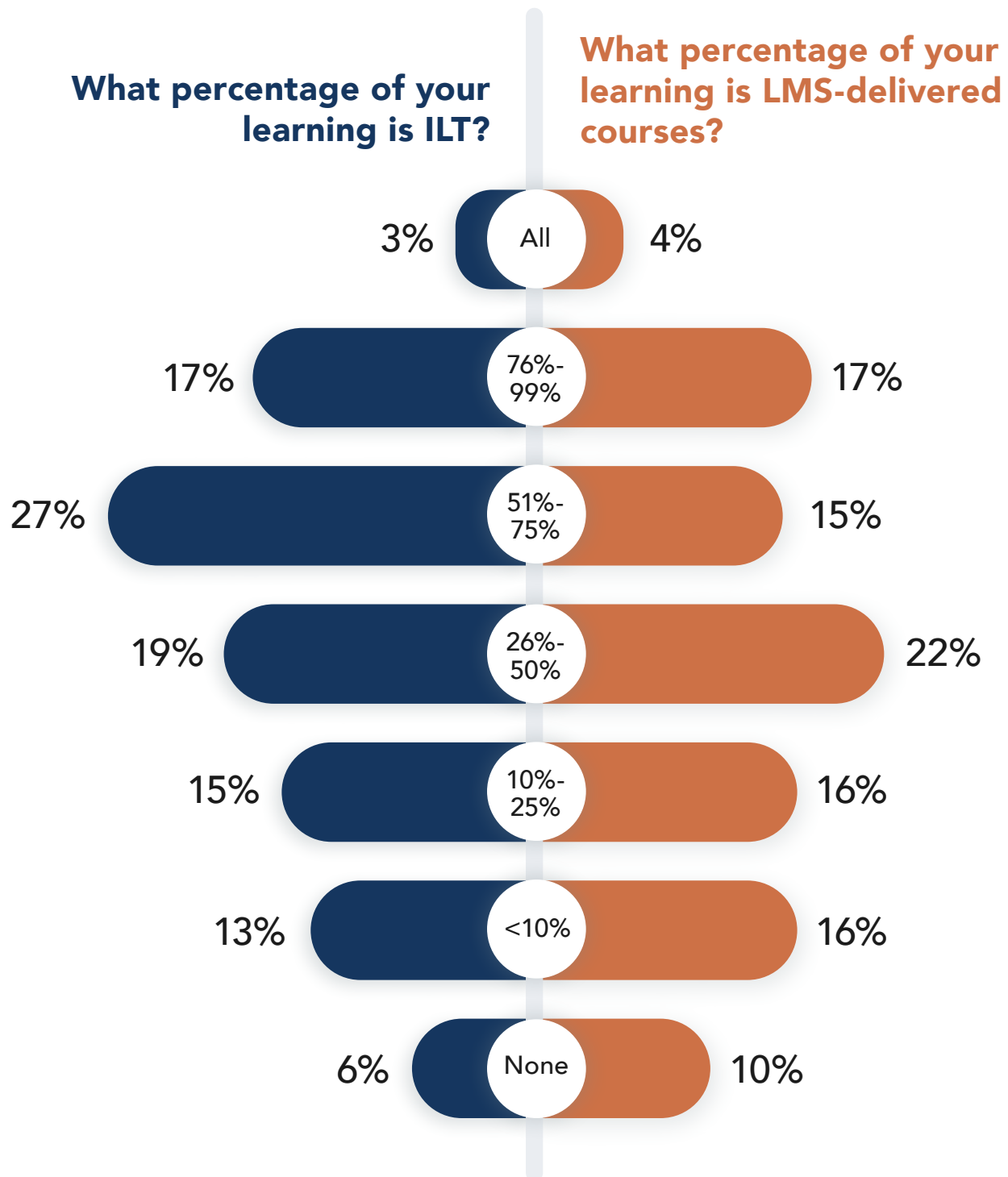


84%

More than eight in ten organizations  
plan to work in a hybrid model

Source: Brandon Hall Group, How Are You Adapting to Hybrid Work?

Despite the pandemic's impact, there is still a heavy reliance on ILT, with nearly half of companies saying more than 50% of their learning is ILT. Just 30% say the same for LMS delivered courses.



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Developing Learning for a Hybrid Work Environment



## Complexities

There is growing complexity in developing and delivering learning in the hybrid work environment. This not only presents geographical challenges companies may have not previously faced but temporal ones as well. Remote workers may not necessarily be keeping the same schedules as those on-site, meaning organizations may be dealing with synchronicity issues for the first time. Rethinking instructor-led and synchronous training are critical success factors for optimizing learning.

Add to this new workforce dynamic the growth of technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning and others, and these influences are converging

to make the next few years the most volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous time businesses will see.

While all of this is occurring, organizations are also feeling the strain of “The Great Resignation” as talent attrition rises, and new talent is hard to come by.

Despite the flexibility that a hybrid on-site/remote workplace provides, of organizations expect employee turnover to increase over the next year.

69%



For many organizations, the L&D skills, processes and technologies that have been in place for years may not be suitable to meet these new and changing demands.

## Which of the following are challenges to your L&D organization when it comes to **developing** highly engaging learning in a hybrid work environment?

54%	Not enough time	28%	Do not have the right competencies and skills
50%	Learners have too many demands on their time	27%	Managers don't support the learning
45%	Budget constraints	25%	Not sure what learners need
33%	Inadequate technology	16%	We are too dependent upon LMS courses
33%	Not enough headcount	16%	We are too dependent upon ILT



## Which of the following are challenges to your L&D organization when it comes to **delivering** highly engaging learning in a hybrid work environment?

54%	Not enough time	26%	Do not have the right competencies and skills
43%	Learners have too many demands on their time	24%	Managers don't support the learning
32%	Inadequate technology	16%	Not enough headcount
31%	Budget constraints	12%	We are too dependent upon ILT
28%	Not sure what learners need	11%	We are too dependent upon LMS courses

Source: Brandon Hall Group, Developing Learning for a Hybrid Work Environment



## Consequences

Companies will have to develop long-term strategies for meeting the needs of on-site learners, those who work from home and those who alternate between the two. Formal, informal and experiential learning must evolve rapidly to meet the new dynamic needs of the modern workforce. Organizations failing to consider these changes face an uphill battle in preparing for the future.

As it is, currently just **36%** of companies consider themselves in a good position to develop the skills the business will require in the future.

Learning paradigms have permanently changed. The in-person classroom event is no longer the foundation of the learning experience. Even before the pandemic, organizations were undergoing various versions of digital transformation. The pandemic shifted these plans into overdrive. As the world adjusted to new ways of working, so, too, must it adjust to new ways of learning. The good news is that the shifts in learning modalities and technologies are overall wins for the learners and the business. Learners can get more personalized, meaningful learning experiences that fit the way they work and the business reaps the benefits of continuous, impactful learning and development.



However, just

**35%** of companies

say their use of ILT will decrease to accommodate the hybrid workforce

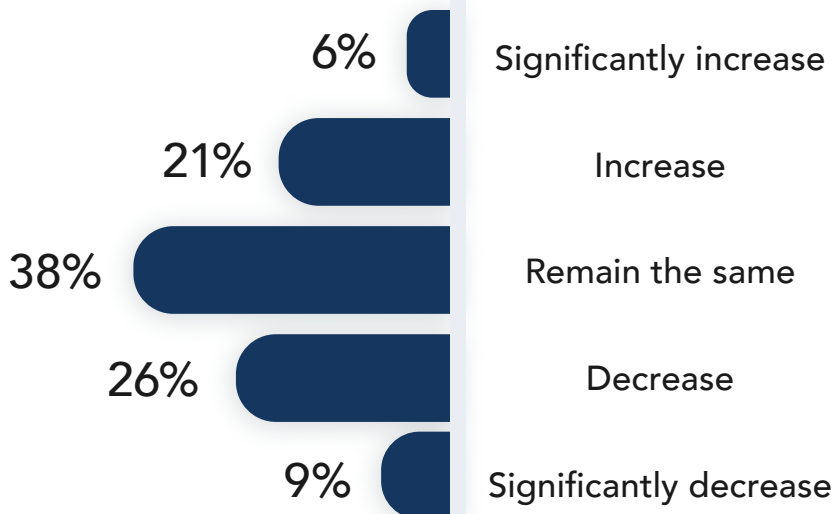
&

**54%**

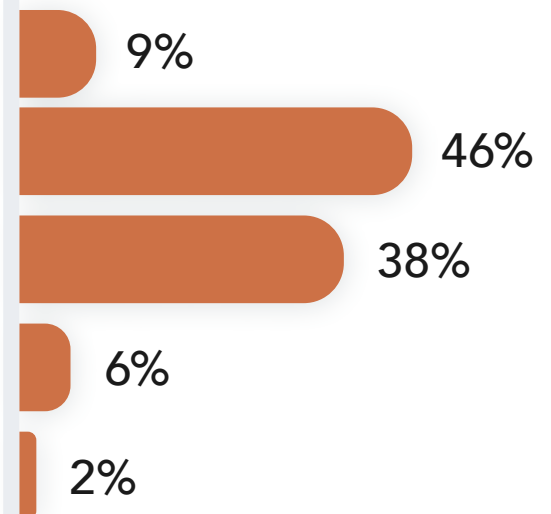
say their use of LMS courses will increase

This indicates a willingness to explore more digital learning but a reluctance to let go of the classroom's dominance.

**How will the percentage of learning that is ILT change to accommodate a hybrid learning audience?**



**How will the percentage of learning that is LMS-delivered change to accommodate a hybrid learning audience?**



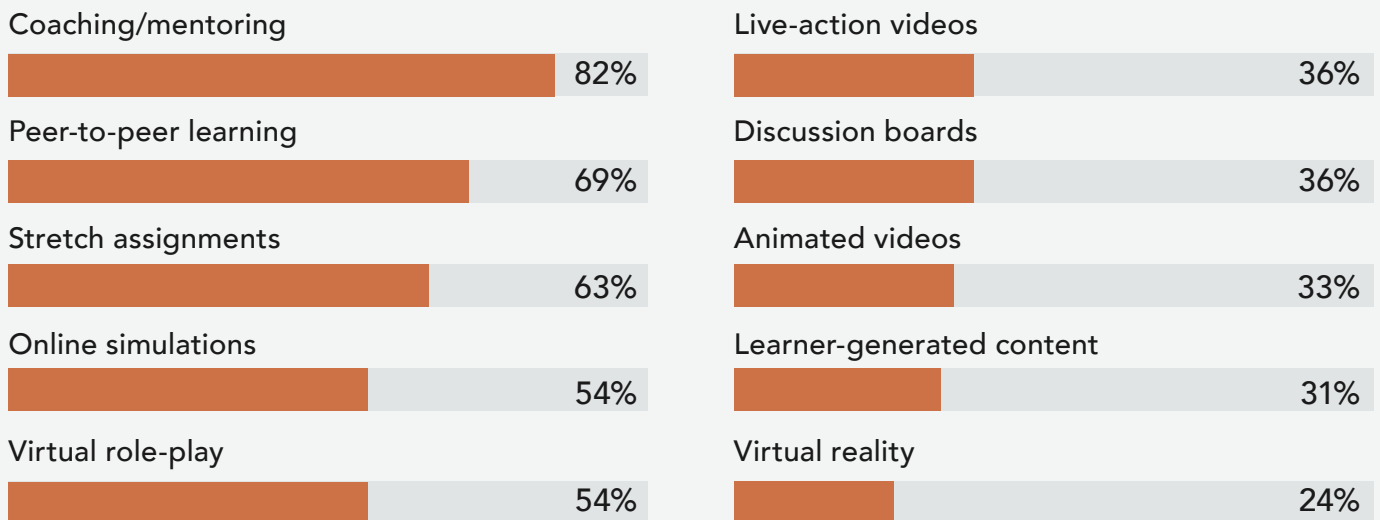
Source: Brandon Hall Group,  
Developing Learning for a  
Hybrid Work Environment



Despite this adherence to traditional methods, organizations are attempting to diversify as they seek alternatives to courses and classes. Many informal and experiential modalities are being considered as replacements, especially peer-to-peer learning, coaching and mentoring, and stretch assignments.



### What types of informal or experiential learning are you considering as a replacement for ILT and LMS-delivered courses?



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Developing Learning for a Hybrid Work Environment

## Strategies for Success

### 1.

#### **Evaluate what worked well during the pandemic and continue to use and improve those approaches**

The early days of the pandemic put organizations through their paces when it came to rethinking in-person learning. Many alternatives were tried, some with less-than-stellar results. Organizations quickly found that they could not simply take in-person content and instructors and put them in a virtual environment. Virtual classrooms require a different approach, content and skill set.

It is critical to focus on the learning elements that resonated with learners and delivered expected results and avoid things that did not make the grade. Instructors, designers and even admins got a good hard look at their strengths and weaknesses in the pandemic environment. The post-pandemic learning experience should leverage the strengths while avoiding or mitigating the weaknesses.

### 2.

#### **Ensure learning cohorts include remote and on-site learners to mitigate segregation and isolation**

One of the biggest challenges with the immediate shift to remote work is that many employees felt disengaged and disconnected. Using learning tools and technologies to keep people connected, communicating and collaborating will be critical to keeping remote staff from becoming isolated. Learning experiences can go a long way toward driving community and culture, even when people are not in the same place.



### 3.

#### **Leverage in-person learning for hands-on, collaborative exercises, rather than delivering information**

Before the pandemic, in-person ILT was essentially a catchall for learning. Now that in-person time is a scarce and precious resource, organizations should only use it in scenarios where they can make the most of people being together. It would be a waste of time and energy to gather people in a room simply to tell them the information they need. Instead, they should absorb the information ahead of time and spend the in-person time collaborating and sharing, starting on the same page. Find out from learners what they missed most about learning in person and begin there.

At the same time, leverage technology that can bring remote learners into the environment synchronously. If you use breakout groups, make sure they include on-site and remote learners. It can be a challenge meeting the needs of both groups simultaneously, but it helps to set ground rules ahead of time for how learners will contribute and communicate so no one is left out.



### 4.

#### **Consider reallocating the in-person training budget (travel, accommodations, etc.) to virtual/digital tools**

Budget constraints come in as the number-three challenge in developing and delivering engaging learning to the hybrid workforce. One-third of companies underwent a reduction in the L&D workforce and 42% had a reduction in the L&D budget. Given that many companies will be dealing with at least some kind of hybrid workforce moving forward, some of the L&D budget that was allotted to in-person learning and put on hold due to the pandemic may be allocated elsewhere. Now that people have been connecting and communicating virtually for some time now, it doesn't make sense to spend a lot of resources on travel and accommodations — at least not as frequently. This can free up resources for tools and technologies better suited to the hybrid workforce.



# 5.

## **Build or acquire new skills within L&D to meet learner demands**

L&D has been challenged to upskill and reskill the workforce in the dynamic wake of the pandemic. It only makes sense that the L&D function must do its own upskilling and reskilling. Taking stock of what the future learning ecosystem should look like, then running a skills-gap analysis, learning leaders can begin to identify places where they need to move, promote or hire people. Skills building next-gen content, analyzing data and better business acumen will continue to become increasingly critical.



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## About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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## About SAP Litmos

SAP Litmos develops eLearning solutions for top-performing companies. An established leader in the market since 2007, SAP Litmos offers the world's easiest-to-use LMS — SAP Litmos Training — and a comprehensive course library — SAP Litmos Training Content. Thousands of companies trust the solutions to centralize and deliver transformative training to employees, customers, and partners. Acquired by CallidusCloud in 2011, then by SAP in 2018, SAP Litmos continues to innovate award-winning learning technology and set the standard for customer experience and satisfaction. The solutions are used by more than 24 million people in 150 countries, across 35 languages.



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