

LIGHT A FIRE

7 STRATEGIES
FOR DEVELOPING
ENGAGED, INSPIRED EMPLOYEES

FOR THE
FORWARD-THINKING
LEARNING PROFESSIONAL



Grovo

Hello. You rock.

A few words before we get started

We're glad you're here. It's a loud and noisy world, and there are millions of other things you could be reading right now.

But you're reading this whitepaper on employee development, and that says something. It says you care about people, and want to see them make a lasting impact at your organization. Which is nice to see because, frankly, that's what we care about too.

We hope you find the ideas and suggestions on the following pages useful. Our goal is to help you empower your people to do their very best work, through effective workplace learning.

Without further ado, let's begin!

IN THIS WHITE PAPER YOU'LL LEARN:

- Why development is so important to attracting and retaining today's top talent
- How long-term employee development positively impacts business
- 7 strategies for effectively engaging and developing 21st century employees



A quick look at the landscape

Work isn't what it used to be.

We all want to spend our working lives doing something valuable. But what was once considered ideal—a steady 9-to-5 with comfortable benefits and the promise of lifetime employment—is now slipping into the past. Yesterday's model doesn't seem to be inspiring today's employees, and companies are feeling the pinch:



DISENGAGEMENT IS HIGH

70%

of employees aren't engaged at work¹



RETENTION IS LOW

\$11B

is lost annually to employee turnover²



CULTURE IS HURTING

64%

of employees don't feel they have a strong work culture³

Why is this happening?

Perhaps it has to do with the vanishing barriers between work and life. Mobile devices keep us connected to our jobs 24/7. Better online communication and collaboration tools have made it more acceptable to work from home. Throughout the day, our phones buzz and ding with alerts about new potential work opportunities.

Today's employees find themselves giving more of their lives to their jobs—and, not surprisingly, wanting more in return.

***"For the first time in more than five years, employees are in charge.
The war for talent is over, and the talent won."***

— Josh Bersin
Bersin by Deloitte



People want more than a paycheck

Turns out, they want purpose too.

One out of four employees in the U.S. workforce will leave their jobs this year.⁴ Why? Many of the reasons seem to circle around a lack of effective professional development. Here are three themes that come up again and again when grappling with the problem of a disengaged and uninspired workforce:

Employees want meaningful work

According to Deloitte's 2015 Global Human Capital Trends report, one of the main reasons many employees aren't engaged is they feel their work lacks meaning. The desire to do work that matters is particularly strong among millennials, with 77% saying part of the reason they chose to work where they do is the company's "sense of purpose."⁵

Nobody likes to feel stalled

As human beings, we seek progress—and that's no different at work. But more than a quarter of U.S. workers report they don't have any training available to them right now.⁶ In fact, nearly half of employees that would prefer to stay loyal to their current employer admit that they'd have to go elsewhere to advance their careers.⁷

Everybody loves to learn

People feel more fulfilled when they're better at what they do. So it only makes sense workers are clamoring for chances to learn. Training and development is the #1 perk millennials seek in prospective employers—many want it more than 401(k) plans or even cash bonuses.⁸ Suffice it to say, today's workers would rather be taught than bought.

"Of all the positive events that influence inner work life, the single most powerful is progress in meaningful work."

— Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer
from *The Progress Principle*

Getting better all the time

The competitive advantage of great employee development

As we've seen, today's talent is hungry for professional growth and learning opportunities. But apart from attracting and retaining great talent, how else does an investment in employee development give your company a competitive edge? The reasons are plenty.

Employees are happier and work harder.

In the scramble to attract and retain top talent, many companies offer cushy perks like nap rooms, weekly massages, or free lunches. But what today's talent really wants is new skills. Seventy-two percent of employees say they even value on-the-job training more than a college degree.⁹ When your company makes development a priority, not only do you give people what they want, but they work harder for your cause—52% of companies cite training as an impactful driver of engagement.¹⁰

The whole organization levels up.

When people are in a constant state of development, they're able to add more compound value every hour they're on the job. Not only are they increasingly capable of handling the work in front of them, but they're also more confident and willing to step up and lead others when necessary. They need less supervision, which frees up managers to be more productive themselves—and the domino effect continues.

Your talent is always on the cutting edge.

New research is always surfacing in business-critical areas like leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. Up until a few years ago, a valuable trait like charisma was thought to be something you were either born with or not. Now we know it is a set of learned behaviors that can be studied and practiced. Ongoing employee development ensures that your people get the best of these new discoveries right away and can apply them to their work.

No more technology roadblocks.

Today, 90% of employees don't feel comfortable with the digital skills they're expected to use every day.¹¹ Without digital fluency, employees lack both the competence and the confidence to function effectively in a workplace that's increasingly driven by technology. One of the big benefits of long-term employee development is that you make it a habit for employees to always be educating themselves on new tools—a practice that continually elevates their morale and increases productivity.

Loyalty becomes far more likely.

Weak or ineffective employee development may contribute to turnover. As Monika Hamori, Jie Cao and Burak Koyuncu noted in the Harvard Business Review, "Dissatisfaction with some employee-development efforts appears to fuel many early exits."¹¹ Don't let a lack of development be the reason people leave your company. Commit yourself to the continual improvement of your employees, and chances are they'll respond in kind.

Developing engaged, inspired employees

7 strategies for the forward-thinking learning professional

You now have a firm understanding of why employee development is so important to both your company and the people who make it work. Next up, we'll cover how you can break free from dull, stale methods of workplace learning and development to create programs that truly resonate with the 21st century employee.

STRATEGY #1: Go from mass instruction to microlearning

Traditional workplace learning solutions like long videos or lectures tend to be boring, impractical, and cognitively oppressive. Use a microlearning approach instead to provide employees with digestible, action-based learning resources instead.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Microfy existing learning.** Team up with an instructional designer to intelligently break larger content into smaller, more digestible chunks.
2. **Weave in short assessments.** Quick 1-2 question quizzes give employees immediate practice, increase retention, and improve on-the-job application.
3. **Keep things fresh.** Micro content is easy to update frequently, so your learning is always relevant to the challenges of your people.

STRATEGY #2: Go from generic to personal

In a world where Amazon knows exactly what products you'd like and Spotify mixes playlists to fit your exact tastes, one-size-fits-all learning doesn't work anymore. For employees to care, development needs to be personal.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Create career pathways.** Work with employees to plot out a long-term vision for how their career arc fits within your organization.
2. **Make learning accessible.** You don't want learning to be an "event," you want it to seamlessly blend in with your employee's work (and home) life.
3. **Give learners agency.** Redundant training kills morale—and quickly. Set up a system where employees can learn new things without haven't to suffer through concepts they already understand.

STRATEGY #3: Go from occasionally to daily

Effective development can't happen with a once-in-a-while lecture or offsite. It's an everyday thing. Only by helping your employees get in the habit of continual practice will you be able to help them realize their goals—and become consistently valuable performers.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Stretch current assignments.** Build development opportunities into current assignments, so employees can ease into greater responsibility or new skillsets while still getting their work done.
2. **Loop in managers.** Encourage managers to offload tasks that might be time-consuming or routine for them, but give their direct reports a way to tackle something new.
3. **Nudge often.** It's a busy world, and even the best performers need reminders of what to learn, do, or try next—and why. Email or mobile notifications are great, and a face-to-face meeting is even better.

STRATEGY #4: Go from required to rewarding

Let's face it, most training and development feels like a homework assignment that nobody wants to do. It's up to you as an L&D expert to create learning experiences that speak to people and provide real value.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Curate relevant learning tracks.** For example, you might put together a Sales learning track that includes content on persuasion, relationship building, and communication.
2. **Control quality.** Outdated or ineffective learning content risks damaging your employees' trust in you and your program. Make sure you're only giving them the good stuff.
3. **Connect people.** Don't forget, people can be learning resources too. Put employees in touch with appropriate mentors and coaches whenever possible.

STRATEGY #5: Go from inconvenient to intuitive

All the resources in the world are useless if you don't engage people. You need to replace old, clunky legacy systems with consumerized technology if you truly want to create a vibrant learning and development culture at your organization.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Get user-friendly.** Your learning platform needs to look and feel like the apps people use every day. This way, instead of getting annoyed, they can focus on learning instead.
2. **Go mobile.** Make sure your materials are accessible on smartphones and tablets so employees always have something to learn, practice, or think about—even after hours.
3. **Simplify administration.** Provide trainers with tools that make assigning, delivering, and tracking learning materials quick and easy. This way, learning can be continuous.

STRATEGY #6: Go from top down to ecosystemic

In the 21st century workplace, learning and development is no longer the sole responsibility of the L&D department. Everybody needs to be involved if you want to build a learning culture that drives business and retains talent.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Empower managers.** Give managers access to your learning tools so they can be more involved in assigning relevant training or exercises, and monitoring progress.
2. **Enable self-directed learning.** Don't be a gatekeeper. Make it easy for employees to learn and explore on their own—and encourage it.
3. **Promote sharing.** Get people talking about what they're learning or working on through meetups, brown bags, or even by setting up a "development" channel on an internal chat tool like Slack.

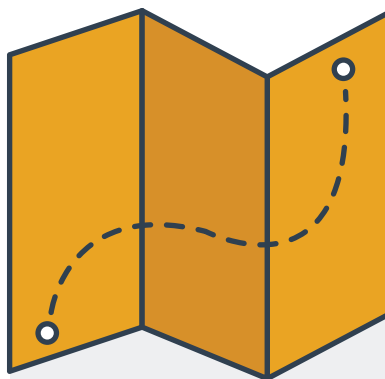


STRATEGY #7: Go from informational to transformational

Ultimately, great employee development is about more than transferring information. It's about transforming employees into people who are happy to lend their talents to your company in the pursuit of their own personal and professional goals.

3 ACTIONABLE STEPS:

1. **Inject emotion.** If your employees can't *feel* the development working, it probably isn't. Always opt for beautifully designed tools, clear and colorful content, and zest and gusto in your communications.
2. **Enable point-of-need learning.** The best time for someone to learn something new is in the heat of the moment, right on the job. There's nothing more thrilling—or addictive.
3. **Be a Sherpa.** Struggle is part of the development process. Be a source of light for your employees. Reassure them that the stumbles and falls are all inevitable steps on the way to success.





Your people need you. So does your company.

There's never been a better time to be in L&D

Everything is changing. Look around you. The world of work is vastly different than it was 10, even five years ago. And it's only going to keep evolving. As these transformations take place, companies will need to find new ways to challenge employees, create growth opportunities, and weave learning into everyday work.

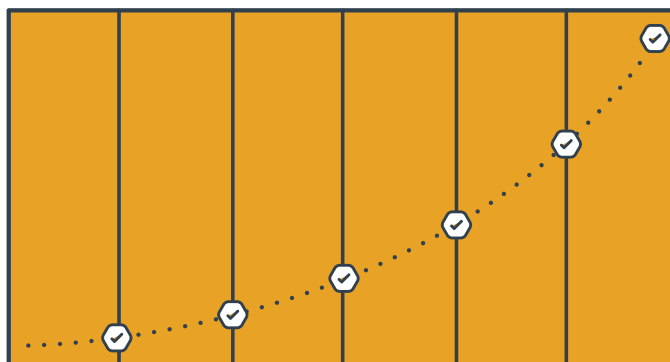
That's where you come in.

As a forward-thinking learning professional, it's up to you to guide your organization through these turbulent times. Not just because great development programs attract and retain top talent, but because they drive business too. In the new knowledge economy, skills related to creativity, empathy, communication, and leadership will become even more critical to your company's bottom line. In this whitepaper we've given you a few powerful strategies for how you can start leading the way.

You've got the talent.

It's sitting right under your nose. And as we've seen, they're hungry to learn and reach new professional heights. The only question is...

Will you be the one who takes them there?



Engage and inspire your people.

Give employees the development they crave, in a way they love with the help of Grovo's next-generation learning solution.

REQUEST DEMO

The world's best brands learn on Grovo.

Chevron



Capital One

pitney bowes



Grovo

Grovo is reinventing learning for the modern workforce. The next-generation learning solution combines beautiful technology, engaging microlearning content, and hands-on advisory support to deliver a better way to learn at work. From onboarding to leadership training, Grovo teaches everything today's employees need on a platform that learners and trainers love.

Learn more at www.grovo.com

Sources

1. Gallup Organization's 2013 State of the American Workplace Report
2. The Bureau of National Affairs
3. 2013 TINYpulse Employee Engagement and Organizational Culture Report
4. "Employee Distrust is Pervasive in the U.S. Workforce," American Psychological Association, 2014
5. Global Human Capital Trends 2015, Deloitte University Press
6. America's Workforce: A Revealing Account of What U.S. Employees Really Think About Today's Workplace, Kelton Global, 2013
7. The Towers Watson Global Talent Management and Rewards Study, 2014
8. Internet Trend 2015, Kleiner Perkins Caulfield Byers
9. Montini, Laura. "Glassdoor Survey: Employees Want More Training Programs, Not Degrees." Inc.com
10. The Impact of Employee Engagement on Performance," Harvard Business Review
11. The Harris Poll: The Digital Skills Gap, Harris Interactive Inc., 2014