

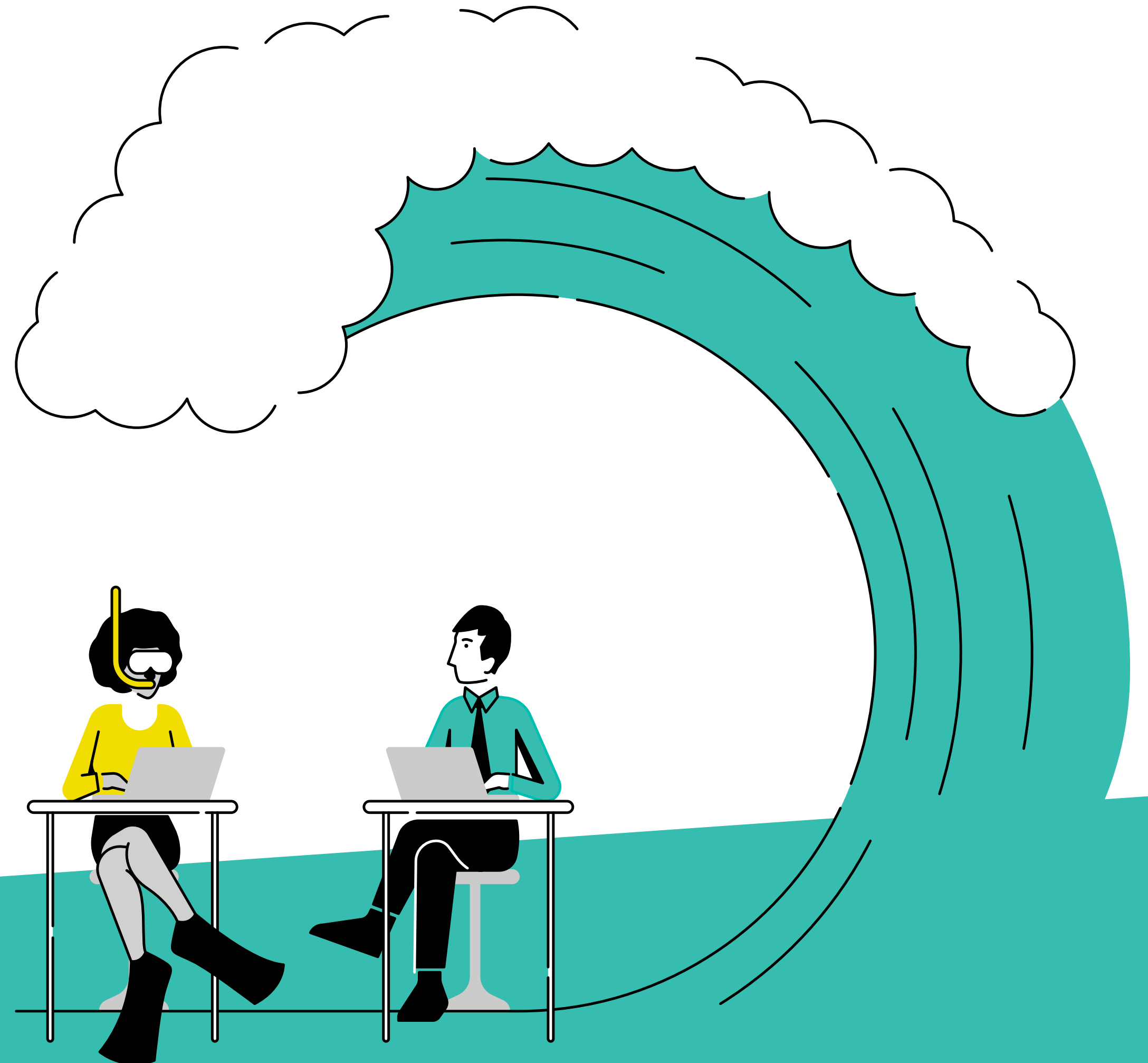
# **5 WORKPLACE DISRUPTORS THAT CAN KILL YOU...**

**OR MAKE YOU STRONGER**

*With 15 solutions to help your organization thrive in your new world of work.*

**actua** 

*In partnership with*  
  
**totara**



# 5 WORKPLACE DISRUPTORS THAT CAN KILL YOU... OR MAKE YOU STRONGER

BY LARS HYLAND

*No matter how quickly we thought the workplace was changing before, the events of 2020, triggered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, turned the traditional workplace on its head. Overnight, most office-based roles became remote, with millions of workers worldwide now facing uncertain futures while organizations and governments figure out how to tackle the fast-changing crisis.*

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But these workplace disruptors are nothing new. There has been an increasing shift away from the traditional 9-5 office job towards distributed workforces and working from home - a process accelerated by the global pandemic. In 2000, just 3.3% of US workers worked from home, while in mid-2020, this figure had dramatically increased to 42% - and this doesn't even include the significant proportion of self-employed workers.

This isn't a short-term challenge. Kate Lister, the President of Global Workplace Analytics, estimates that 25-30% of us will continue to work from home as part of the "new normal." In fact, in a survey by Perry Timms, just 1% of workers want to fully return to the office, with 57% preferring to switch to an 80% remote, 20% in-office model.



It's not just about remote working.  
**There are other key workplace disruptors to consider.**

- We're all grappling with complex, ever-evolving technology ecosystems to stay connected and collaborative.
- Many organizations are struggling for ways to support blended workforces, comprising full-time, part-time, freelance and casual workers.
- There's the rapid change in general that we're all navigating, and the need to do that quickly and efficiently.
- Then, there's the skills gap - which is rapidly becoming more of a skills chasm - that needs to be filled with workers who are now ill-equipped with outdated, irrelevant skills.

Andrew Shepherd  
Team Lead, Professional & Project Services  
CCDHB

**" WE'VE SEEN TWO YEARS' WORTH OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN TWO MONTHS."**

*Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft*

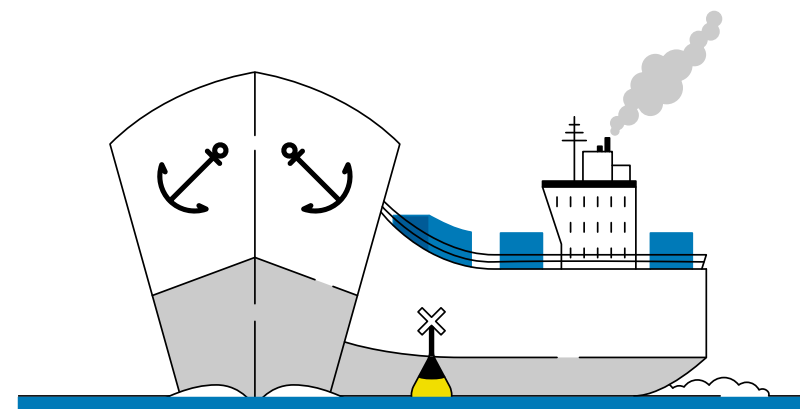
In these times of enormous upheaval, it's natural that we're all wondering how change will affect us in the short and longer term. This ebook explores the five biggest workplace disruptors that organizations are facing today, and how you can rise to the challenge of increasing uncertainty that comes with a fast-changing world.



*Workplace disruptor #1*

**CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY**

5



*Workplace disruptor #2*

**TURNING THE SHIP IN TIMES OF RAPID CHANGE**

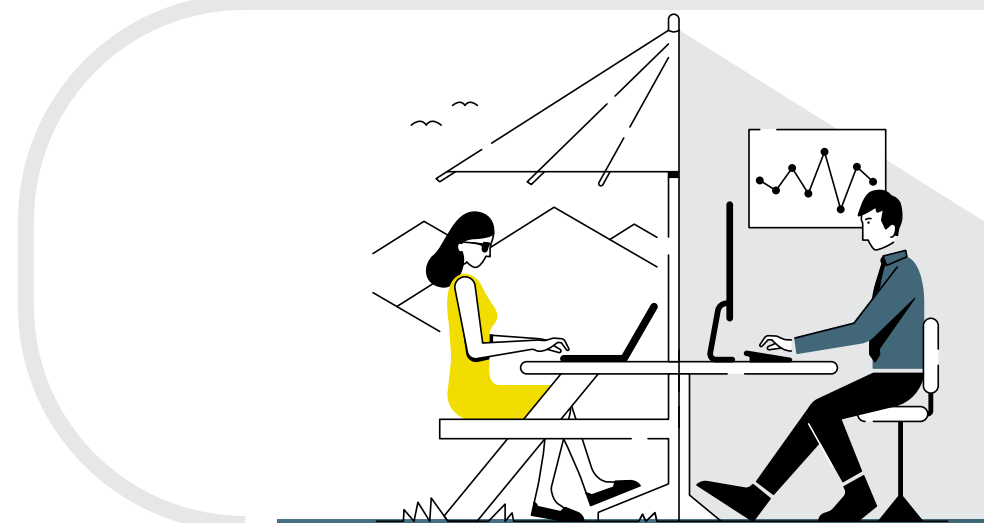
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*Workplace disruptor #3*

**WORKING FROM HOME IS NO LONGER A PERK**

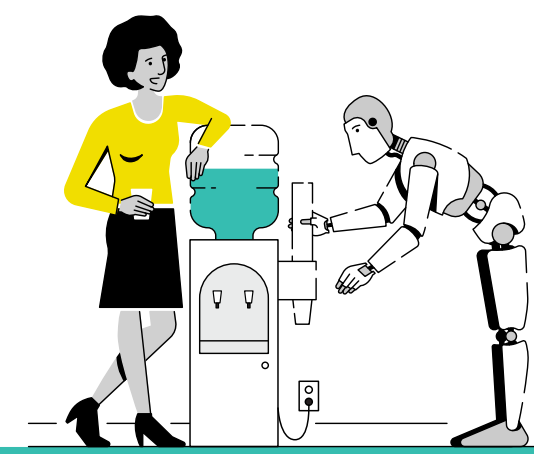
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*Workplace disruptor #4*

**REFINING YOUR TALENT MIX WITH A BLENDED WORKFORCE**

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**RESKILLING YOUR PEOPLE TO STAY RELEVANT**

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**THE EXPONENTIAL IMPACT OF ADDRESSING THE FIVE WORKPLACE DISRUPTORS**

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*Workplace disruptor #1*

# CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY



*The amount of technology we use each day is growing and changing rapidly. There have always been lots of moving parts in every organization's technology ecosystem, but the events of 2020 left businesses scrambling to plug the communication gap with Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Slack and more.*

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The new world of work brings with it a whole host of new systems and technologies. Your learning and HR technology plays an essential role in your organization's ecosystem.

Unfortunately, it is too often the case you're left grappling with systems that don't talk to each other, that don't integrate and that don't fulfill their intended purpose. As organizational structures become increasingly complex, your people increasingly work from home and entire workforces undergo extensive reskilling, it's crucial that you get it right.

Furthermore, your people are now completely dependent on technology, both in and outside of work. They are now glued to screens, and in the absence of in-person conversations, this will only grow. It's an increasingly challenging job to equip your people with the tools and systems they need to succeed, develop and perform to the best of their abilities.



## **THE TECHNOLOGY DISRUPTOR**

Switching from “water cooler chat” and boardroom meetings to buffering connections, accidental interruptions and the constant ping of instant messages is a giant culture change for most of us.

Too often, your people are grappling with a discordant mixture of multiple systems, set up in a panic to plug the communication gap. Digital noise is now rife, and it's not always clear which channels are right for which communication, leaving people tethered to half a dozen different channels to ensure they don't miss anything.

## Solution #1

# PERFORM A TECHNOLOGY AUDIT



*When you're relying on your people to work and communicate in their own environments, their circumstances will vary wildly. Many organizations have adopted the home-based equivalent of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy, whereby employees are using their personal equipment for work, and it is difficult to ensure the consistency of internet connections when everyone lives in different places.*

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This requires you to perform a technology audit, and sooner rather than later. Work with your IT department to find out what people are actually using, their bandwidth and what they need.

Take a look at your HR systems and learning technology - are people using them, and if so, how are they using them?

If systems aren't being used, now isn't the time to push technology that just isn't working. Instead, be ready to adapt and meet

your people on the systems they're actually using, and look for gaps in your technology.

What would make work easier for people? For instance, ***second monitors can boost productivity by 9-50%*** depending on the task - a worthwhile investment for many organizations, as well as paying to upgrade employees' home internet connections.

## Solution #2

# **PRIORITIZE INTEGRATED, OPEN TECHNOLOGY**

*The more tools you add to your technology ecosystem, the more complicated it becomes to keep track of everything. That's why prioritizing open systems that integrate with the rest of your ecosystem is key.*

---

If you're already happy with your existing technology, ensure that any additional systems you add will "play nicely" with whatever you already have in place. Opting for open technology ensures that your disparate systems can be transformed into a single, cohesive ecosystem, with APIs, plugins and extensions put in place to bridge the gap between your technology platforms.

For instance, if you currently use Microsoft Teams, you may be looking for a way to bring collaborative learning into the flow of work. Perhaps you already have an LMS, but you want a way to encourage continuous learning on a day-to-day basis. In that case, opting for Totara Engage, the learning experience platform (LXP) with a built-in Microsoft Teams integration means that workers can

recommend learning and resources directly from your learning platform, making the learning experience seamless without the need to navigate multiple systems.

Integrated suites deliver a better user experience, which can lead to significant time savings, and benefit from much shorter learning curves. When compared with point solutions, integrated technology suites boast fewer technical issues, stronger vendor partners (who will have a valuable insight into more aspects of your ecosystem, including interactions between systems) and more cohesive support and service.

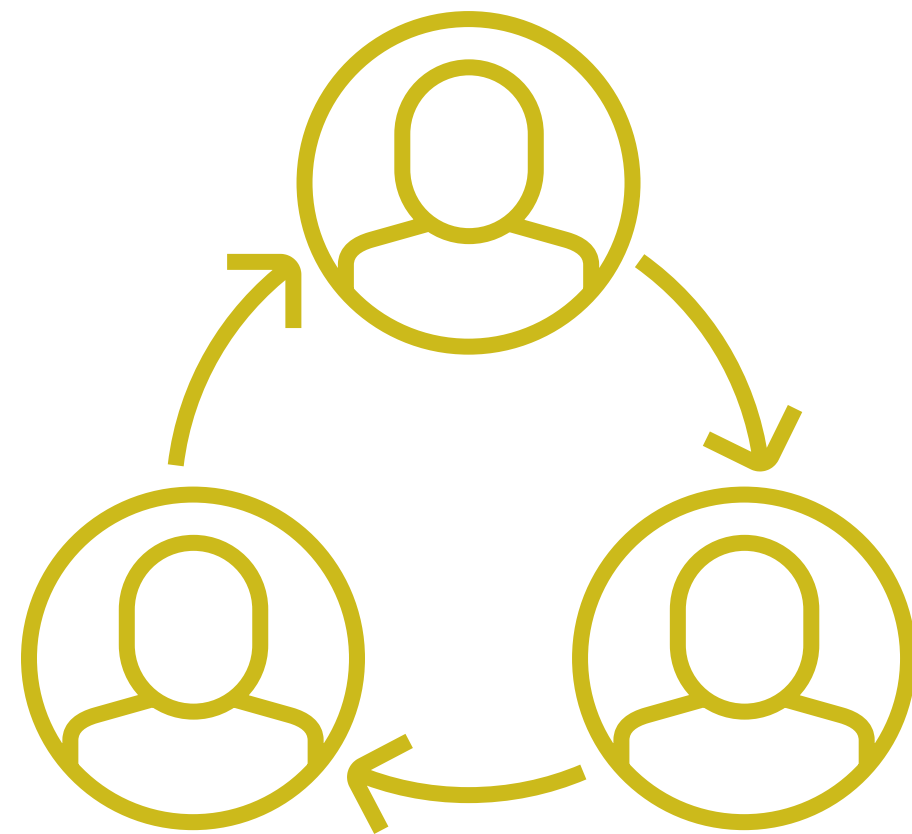
When procuring learning and HR technology, prioritize openness, flexibility and the ability to integrate for the best possible outcomes.





### Solution #3

## **INVEST IN YOUR TECHNOLOGY TRAINING**



*It's easy to assume that all of your people can competently use all your systems, but in reality, lots of your workers will be muddling by, sticking to the functionality they know and not making the most of the technology available to them. And even for your system experts, it can still be useful to set out some guidelines to ensure consistency across your organization.*

For most commonly used systems (such as Microsoft Office and the Google app suite) there are plenty of low-cost, third-party training options available - some of which you can access for free via the vendor. For more specialist use cases, you may wish to create your own systems training, whether that's e-learning, a simulation, video walkthroughs or user tours.

Tap into the expertise of your people by collaborating with them to share templates, workflows and guidelines to facilitate clear,

open communication. These resources can live on your learning platform as a constantly evolving corporate knowledge bank. Your internal subject matter experts (SMEs) and "super users" can help upskill everyone else by mastering that tricky spreadsheet function or revealing that handy hidden setting in your email program, and they can act as moderators or coaches to ensure that everyone is making the most of your technology.

# THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

*Cutting through the digital noise by harnessing technology*

**86%**

of people state that they **prefer meetings that embrace technology**

*Corporate Vision*

**85%**

of organizations expect **technological transformation** to continue as a **primary business disruptor**

*Mercer*

**58**

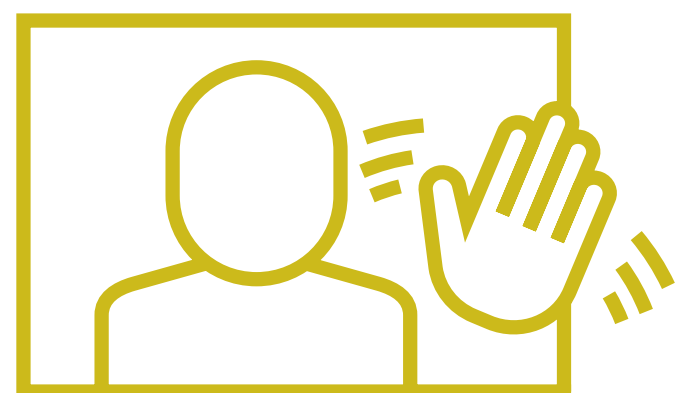
**Employees save 58 minutes per day** while increasing productivity by 34% **when they use their own devices**

*Samsung*

**\$637 billion**

**The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) market** is set to hit almost \$637 billion by 2022

*Corporate Vision*



**53%**

of meetings currently involve **attendees who join remotely**

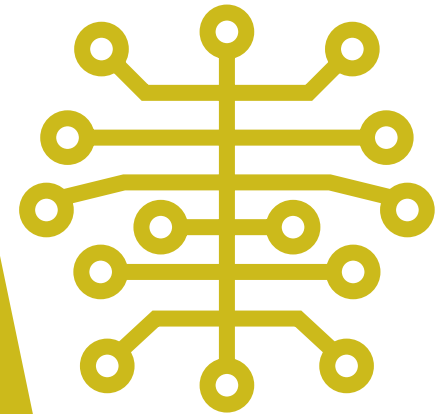
*Barco Clickshare*

**43%**

of remote meeting attendees **feel frustrated or disengaged**

*Barco Clickshare*





Business adoption of **AI-powered technologies** is **expected to triple** by 2021

*Spiceworks*



**36%**

of business leaders say that **technological innovation offers the biggest business opportunity** in the next 12 months

*The Telegraph*

**11**

There are typically **11 stakeholders involved in procurement decisions for collaboration and communication technology** at enterprise organizations

*Spiceworks*



**20-25%**

Better use of **communication and collaboration technologies** could **raise the productivity of knowledge workers by 20-25%**

*McKinsey*

## **THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY**

**20%**

The average interaction worker spends nearly 20% of the **work week looking for internal information or tracking down colleagues who can help with specific tasks**

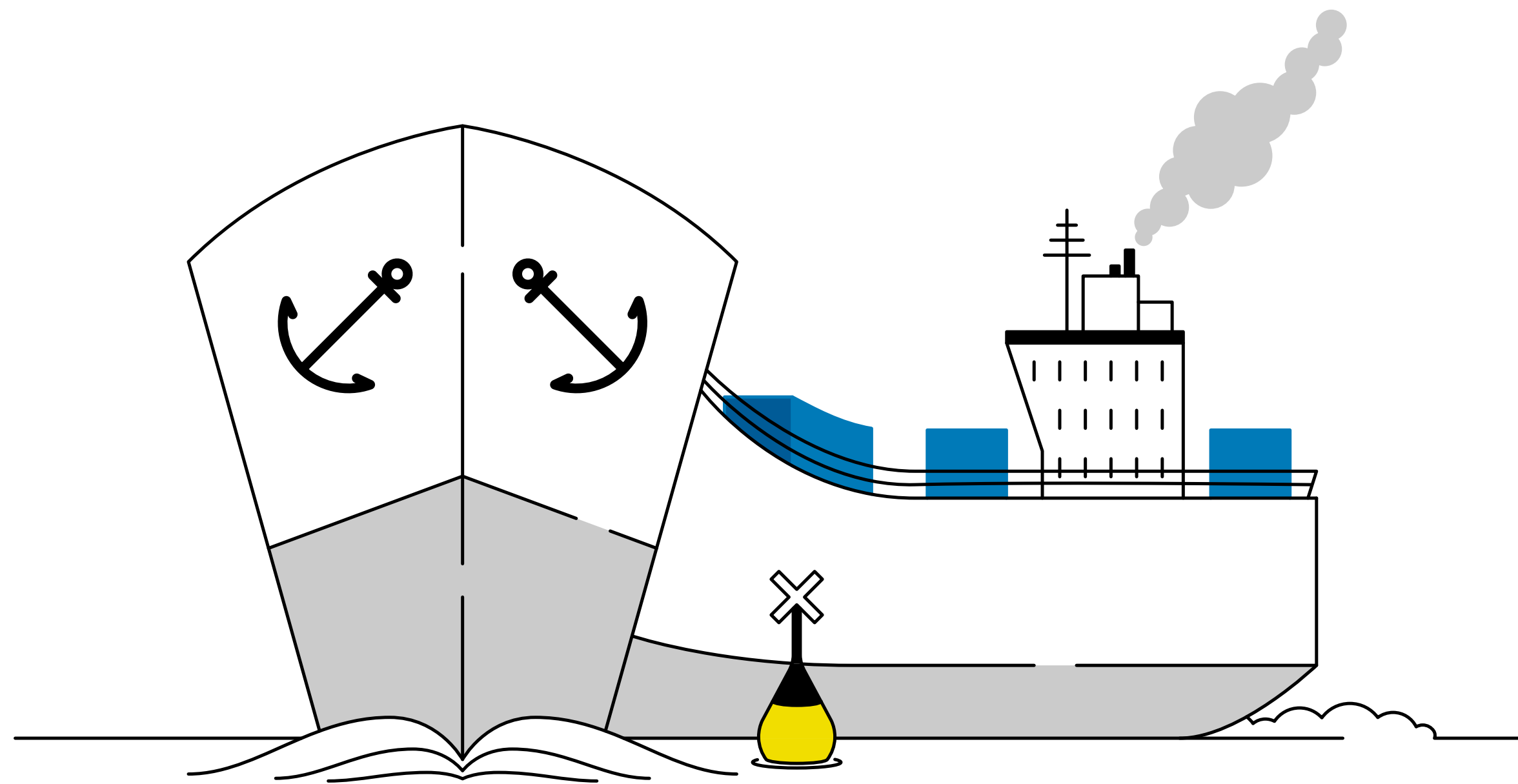
*McKinsey*

## **A SEARCHABLE RECORD**

**of knowledge can reduce the time employees spend searching for company information** by up to 35%

*McKinsey*





*Workplace disruptor* #2

# TURNING THE SHIP IN TIMES OF RAPID CHANGE

*Gone are the days of reliably planning far ahead in business. In the last few years, constant uncertainty has led to the shortening of business planning cycles from five years, to three, to one and now even three-month plans. In a world where we can barely predict what will happen from week to week, we must focus more on adaptability and develop the skills to react to new challenges at a moment's notice. On top of this, our workers are looking to us to provide some order in the chaos.*

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To make this happen in our own organizations, we must ensure that HR is involved as early as possible to help the company embrace chaos. The bigger the organization, the more likely it is you need to change the culture from the top down and literally train people to adapt more quickly.

These large-scale culture change initiatives don't happen overnight, meaning it's important to get on top of the necessary changes as soon as possible.

Miles Herbert  
E-learning Developer  
Martin James Foundation



## THE RAPID CHANGE DISRUPTOR

During times of rapid change, even the best-laid plans can often go awry. When you don't know what is around the corner economically, socially or otherwise, those who thrive are those who have responded quickly and adapted to change.

For instance, restaurants who have switched to a delivery service, live music events which have moved online and drive-in movie theaters represent rapid adaptation to today's changing world. In contrast, the organizations which have faltered are those which have failed to adapt, such as bricks-and-mortar retail stores with no online presence.

One person alone cannot drive this culture shift. HR and senior management must be fully aligned to create a whole new culture of adaptability and flexibility.

If a swimmer gets caught in a rip tide, they must swim parallel to the shore to escape. If they swim against the current, they will quickly become exhausted. The ability to move with change rather than swimming against the tide is essential for today's organizations, who will find that being equipped with the knowledge and skills to embrace change will help them weather the unpredictable storms ahead and thrive long into the future.



**“THE WISE ADAPT THEMSELVES  
TO CIRCUMSTANCES, AS WATER  
MOLDS ITSELF TO THE PITCHER.”**

*Chinese proverb*

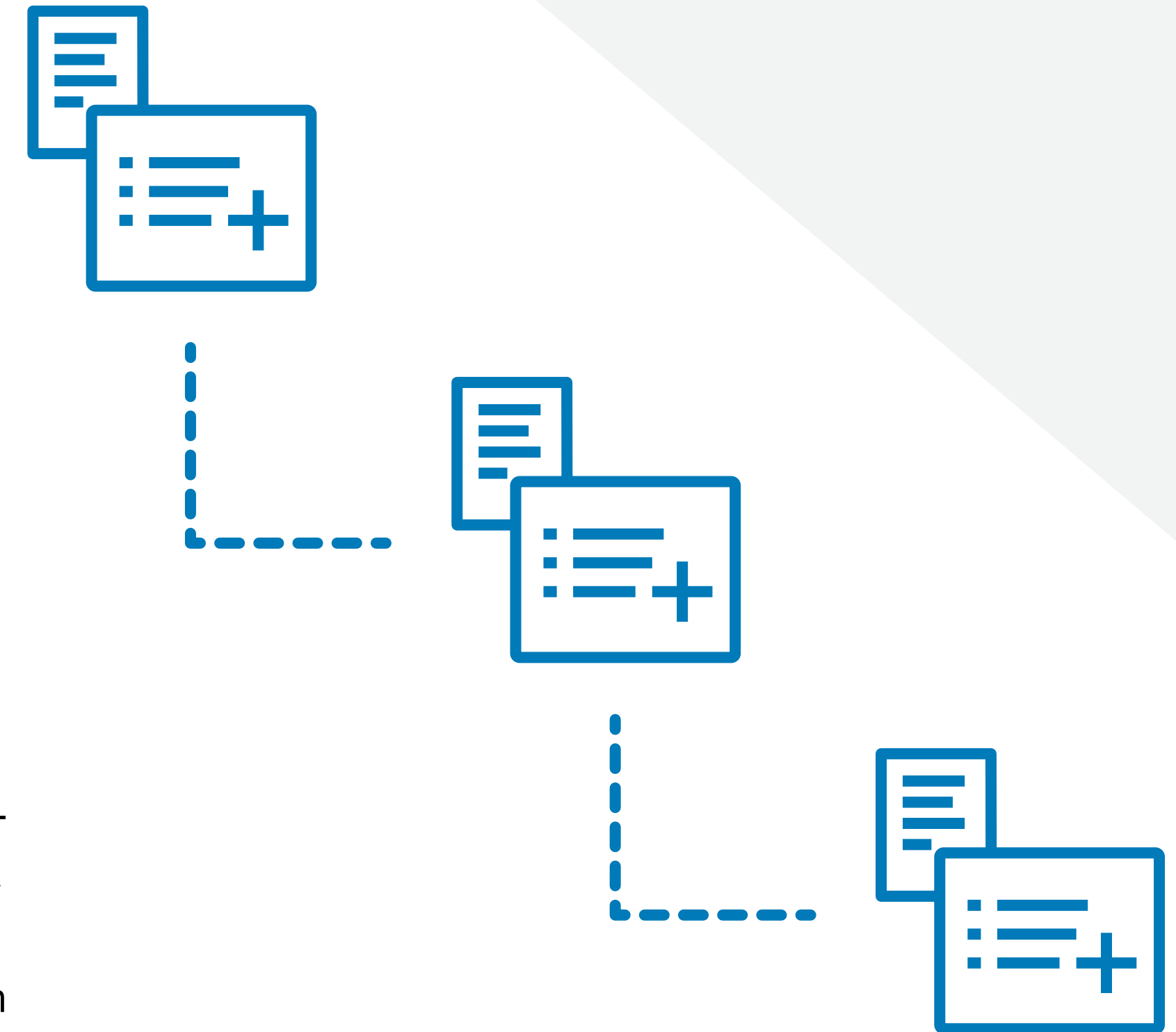
## Solution #1

# PLAN LITTLE AND OFTEN

*It's no longer feasible to spend a lot of time planning for an entire year. Adjust your expectations, plan in short bursts and build in contingency. Use agile planning processes and "living documents." Much of the value of plans is not the planning itself, but the thinking that goes into it.*

"Planning smaller" should also trickle down to your learning program. Instead of a giant, rigid program where every single activity is planned out, ensure that your learning is nimble by breaking your program down into smaller, manageable activities. Allow people to mix and match their own flexible learning programs, with access to just-in-time performance support that will maximize efficiency.

For instance, instead of insisting on specific in-person training on a set day every six months, why not invest the time in turning the content into microlearning modules which can be taken at a time that suits your workers? Smaller learning campaigns can then be swapped in and out, mixed and matched and updated separately to solve current problems as and when they arise, rather than needing to overhaul a meticulously planned training schedule.



## Solution #2

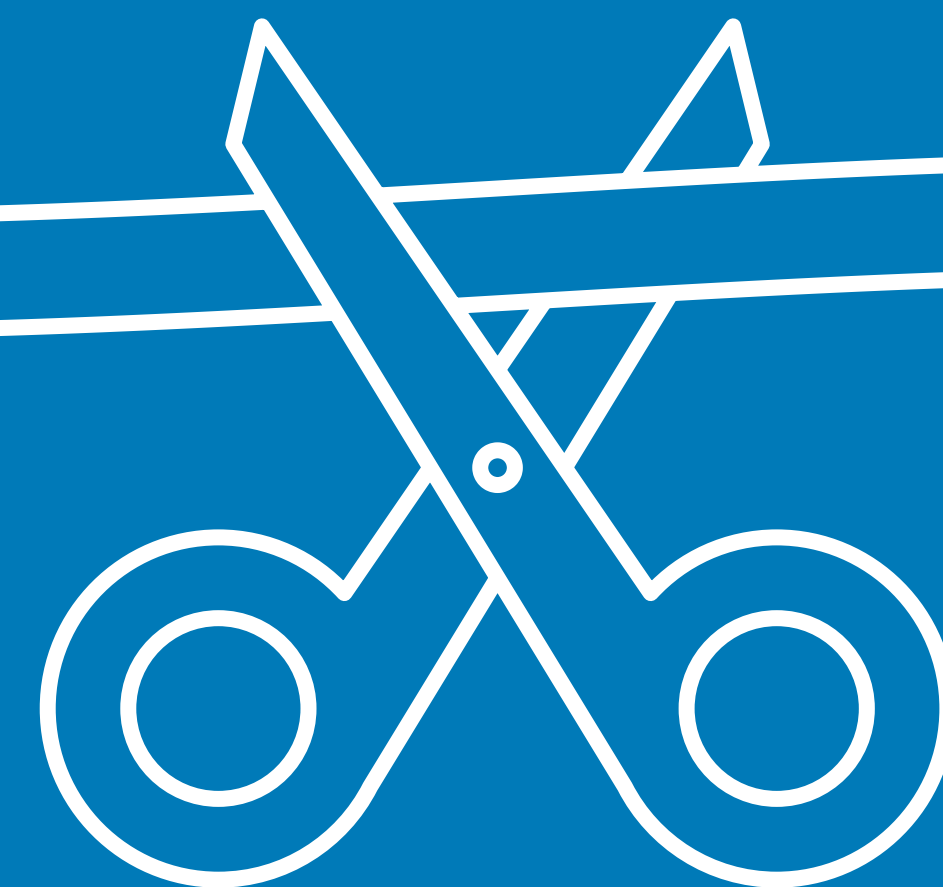
# CUT YOUR RED TAPE

*Virtually every organization will understand the pain of navigating a web of red tape. Help your workers out by figuring out which unnecessary hoops they have to jump through to complete their training.*

For instance, do learners need approval to participate in training? If so, switching to a self-enrollment process helps cement a more self-directed learning process, so your people can manage their own time and take ownership of their own learning and development.

Embracing informal learning is another very successful way to reduce bureaucracy around training. Your people can simply open up your learning experience platform to canvas responses and views from the

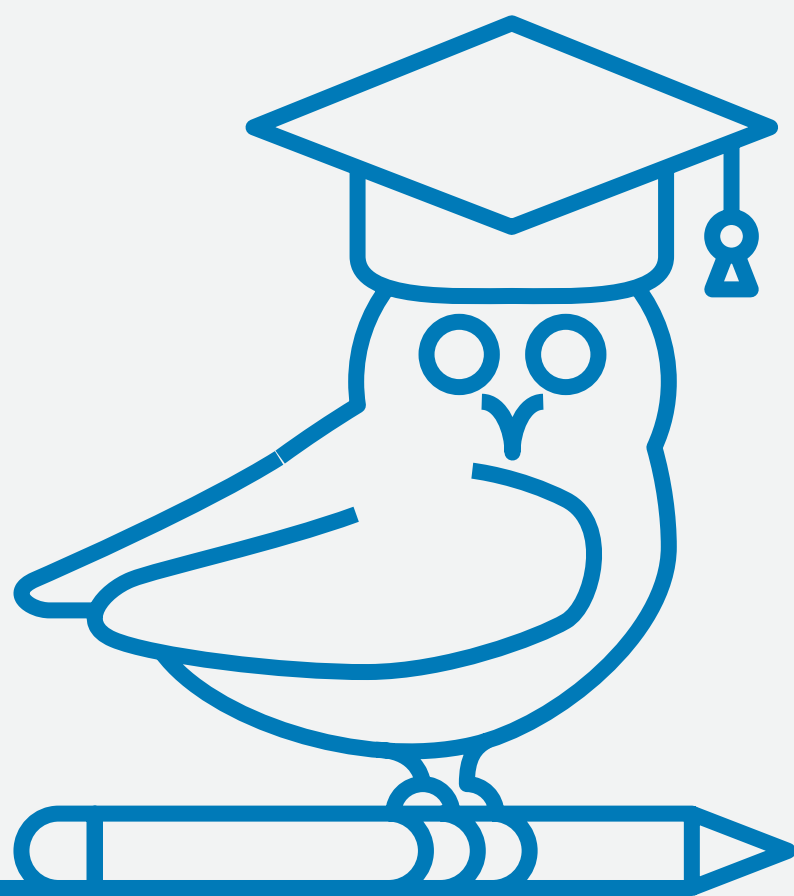
community, identify experts, refer to previous discussions and find answers quickly. It may take some creativity, but there are almost certainly plenty of ways you can “cut out the middleman” and more easily connect employees to the information they need. This will free managers up to focus on more important tasks, and gives employees the autonomy they need to develop their skills whenever it suits them.





Solution #3

## PROCURE TECHNOLOGY WISELY



*A common pitfall of technology procurement is getting locked into an expensive, long-term contract. Maybe you were offered an attractive discount for the first year, before costs skyrocketed for the remainder of the term, or you were promised a leading-edge learning management system only to find that you needed to re-engineer all the company's workflows to fit the software because that's how Vendor X prescribes you to do things.*

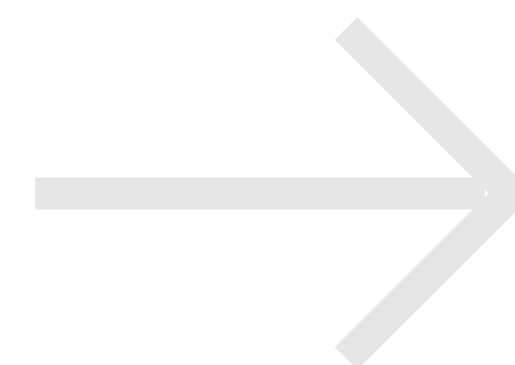
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To make a savvy choice, know what questions to ask when you're creating your request for proposals (RFP). Prioritizing flexibility is key to ensuring your technology will still be fit for purpose well into the future.

Here are five tips to help you make the right choice the next time it comes to procuring a new LMS, LXP, or performance management technology for your organization:

### **1 AVOID ENTERING INTO A "FEATURE SHOOT-OUT" BETWEEN VENDORS**

It's highly unlikely that the features you need today will be the same as the features you need next year, so instead ensure the technology you choose is flexible enough to adapt to your changing needs and the vendor is a partner you can trust.



## 2 BUILD A SUPPORT PACKAGE THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Do you need round-the-clock assistance, a local provider, hosting support or help with technical issues? The Totara Partner ecosystem, for instance, offers the freedom of choice of a wide range and type of service provider to ensure you always have the right level of support, and if you want change, you can, without being forced to change your technology.

## 3 TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO YOUR TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP (TCO)

This comprises all the direct and indirect costs of procuring a new system, including software licenses, hosting, data migration, training, maintenance, support and change management. The figure on the contract rarely reflects everything else that goes into making your solution work for you, so ensure you fully understand what your new technology will cost - including the exit costs. Don't get trapped.

## 4 CONSIDER RUNNING A PAID-FOR DISCOVERY PHASE

Instead of inviting dozens of vendors to submit proposals, consider conducting your initial research and then selecting up to three vendors to undertake a paid assignment to develop a full, shared understanding of how they intend to meet your needs. While this is an upfront investment, it saves money on the cost of a long, drawn-out RFP process and it will help you identify the standout vendor and hone in on exactly what you're looking for.

## 5 LEARN FROM OTHERS

*Procuring the right technology* is difficult, and it's very easy to end up with buyer's remorse. That's why you can benefit hugely from speaking to others in your position. The *Totara Community* is home to thousands of HR and learning professionals around the world, so join today and share your challenges with your industry peers.

For access to free training, resources and discussions with your fellow HR and learning professionals, [create your free Totara Community account today.](#)



# THE IMPACT OF RAPID CHANGE

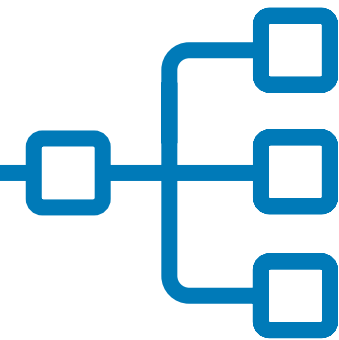
*Learning to adapt and thrive in an unpredictable world*



**45%**

of **C-suite executives don't know where to start** when developing their transformation strategy

*Celonis*



**98%**

of executives plan to **redesign their organizations** to make them fit for tomorrow

*Mercer*

**82%**

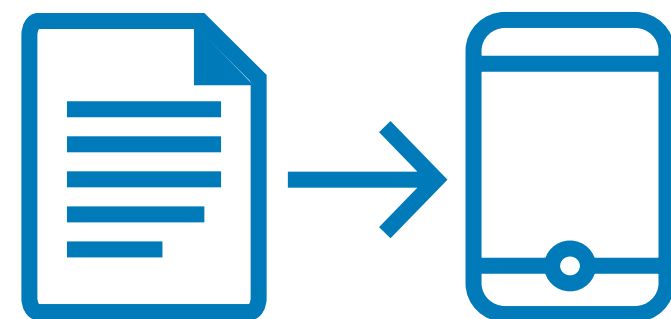
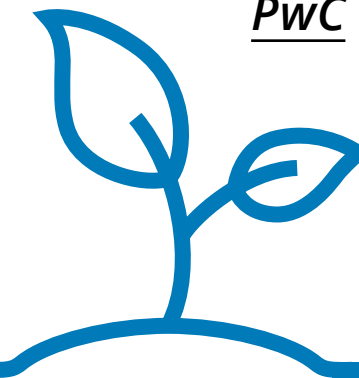
of **business leaders don't look at their internal processes** to establish priorities before starting a transformation initiative

*Celonis*

**86%**

of C-suite executives and 84% of all managers and employees say **culture is critical** to their organization's success

*PwC*



**Organizations with fewer than 100 employees are 2.7 times more likely to report a successful digital transformation** than organizations with more than 50,000 employees

*McKinsey*



**91%**

of HR directors say that candidates' **ability to deal with change** is a major **recruitment goal**

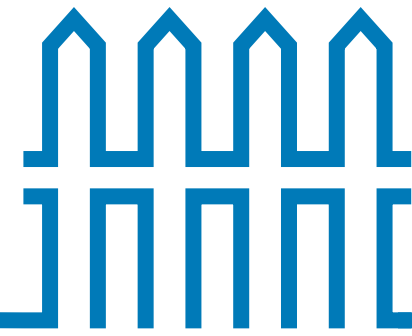
*business.com*



**80%**

of organizations have **adopted agile methods**

*Freeform Dynamics*



**46%**

of CIOs report **company culture as the biggest barrier to change**

*Computer Weekly*



**51%**

of business leaders say that **navigating change fatigue** is the **biggest frustration** in driving business transformation

*Gagen MacDonald*

**64%**

of the global workforce is experiencing **high anxiety over their personal job security**

*Accenture*

**18 YEARS  
VS 90 YEARS**

In the 1930s, S&P 500 companies had an average lifespan of **90 years**, compared to just **18 years today**

*Innosight*



**THE IMPACT  
OF RAPID  
CHANGE**

**84%**

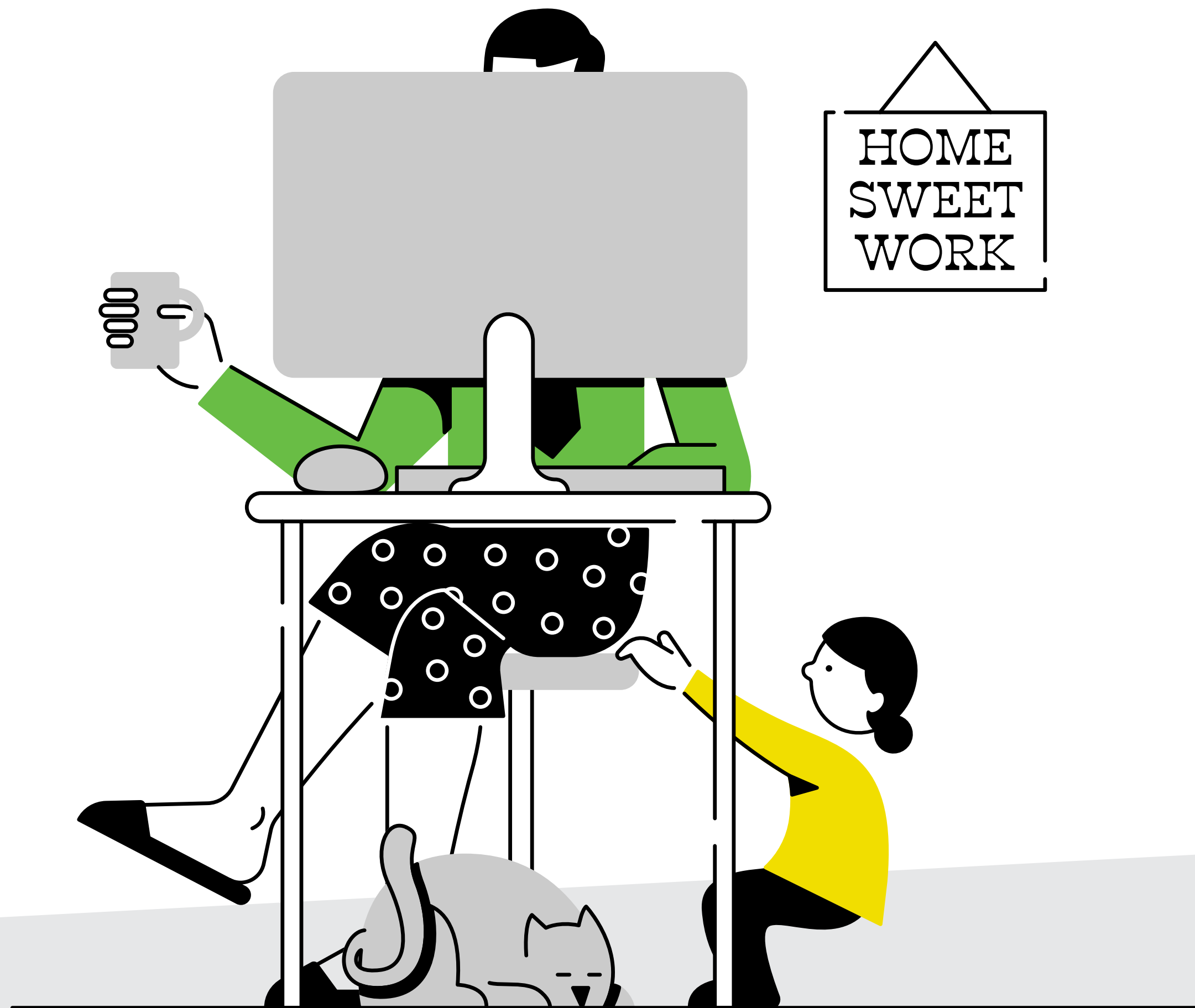
of executives believe a **shared purpose** contributes to **successful change and transformation**

*Interbrand*



Workplace disruptor #3

# WORKING FROM HOME IS NO LONGER A PERK



*Until relatively recently, many organizations have been skeptical about remote working. Managers don't always trust their people to have the self-discipline or motivation to be productive at home or away from the workplace, so many have insisted on having people come to the office every day.*

Now, accelerated by the pandemic, working from home is no longer a perk - it's essential for today's businesses to support it.

Remote working is already a popular option in Europe, with 23% of Danes, 21% of Dutch workers and 18% of Swedes working from home at least several times a month. But the US and UK have lagged behind - before the pandemic forced millions of workers to work from home, just 7% of Americans regularly worked from home as recently as 2019.

80% of US employees want to work from home at least some of the time, and 37% of employees would change jobs for more remote working

(with this figure rising to 50% of millennial workers). "Agile working policies," such as that introduced at law firm Linklaters, are increasingly becoming the norm, giving employees the freedom to choose when and where they work around mutually agreed core hours.

Remote working has a significant impact on employees. Gallup research has found that working remotely 60-80% of the time leads to the highest employee engagement, and they are the most likely of all employees to strongly agree that their engagement needs, relating to development and work relationships, are being met.



# **BENEFITS OF WORKING FROM HOME**

**65%**

of workers said they would **be more productive in a home office than a normal office**

**2/3**

of employers report **increased productivity for remote workers** compared to in-office workers

**75%**

of workers say they are **more productive working remotely due to reduced distractions**

**83%**

of employees feel **they do not need an office to be productive**

**89%**

of workers believe that **working from home is decreasing their expenditure**



It's clear that working from home really is working, and your people are fully on board with continuing to work remotely. Sounds good, right? Well, not necessarily.



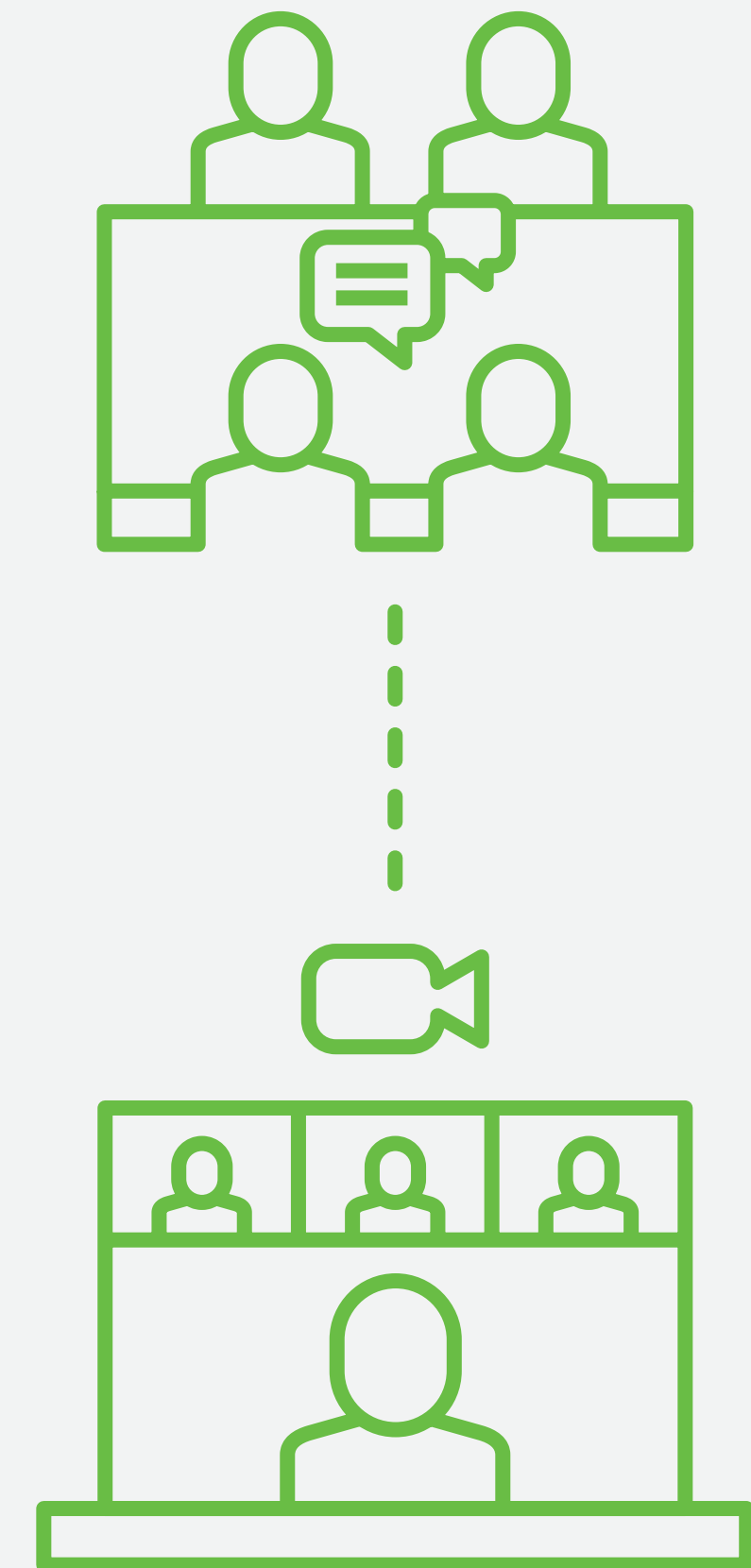
Remote working is having a huge positive impact in the majority of organizations and it may become the only option - as *some organizations are already giving up on the large office* completely and offering local shared work spaces.

But it comes with its own set of challenges. Learning and HR teams are now left scratching their heads when it comes to maintaining the company culture and providing employees with everything they need to work, learn and perform well at home. **So what's your next move?**

## THE REMOTE WORKING DISRUPTOR

One day, your people were in the office, sharing ideas around the coffee machine and collaborating with colleagues in a meeting room. The next, they were firing up their laptops at the kitchen table and screen sharing over Zoom.

As much as people like working from home (for the most part), there is an adjustment to make as your people adapt to doing it long term. How can your learning and HR teams ensure that your managers have the ability to manage from a distance, maintaining employee engagement and high performance, as well as supporting your people's wellbeing?





## Solution #1

# **MOVING FROM FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING TO E-LEARNING AND VIRTUAL LEARNING**



*While the majority of us have some degree of experience with e-learning and other forms of online learning, few organizations have a fully virtual learning and development program. While you may have e-learning programs and some resources uploaded to your learning management system (LMS), there is much more to be done if you want to move your entire program online.*

Firstly, your in-person formal learning will need to be converted into online learning programs and resources. Options include live webinars, recorded video and audio resources.

If you hold in-person workshops, think about how you can maintain interactivity - for instance, can you host an online discussion, move the conversation onto a forum or add “breakout rooms” into your remote classroom? Will you work with a partner to create your e-learning content, do it yourself with an e-learning authoring tool or is it just a case of uploading materials to your LMS?

The other key thing to consider, and the part that is often overlooked, is your informal and collaborative learning. This is where a learning experience platform (LXP), such as *Totara Engage*, comes in. Choosing an LXP that integrates with your LMS means that workers can move seamlessly between formal and informal learning, and can collaborate on projects, curate “playlists” of content and discuss ideas. Doing so supports continuous learning and skills development in the normal day-to-day flow of work and through informal means.

## Solution #2

# OPEN UP COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

*Microsoft analyzed data collected over several months early on in the pandemic. When working remotely, Microsoft saw a 22% increase in meetings scheduled for 30 minutes, coupled with an 11% decrease in hour-long meetings. This bucked the trend for increasingly lengthy meetings, which were notorious for draining productivity.*

What this tells us is that people are adept at finding ways to stay in touch. Contrary to the typical fear that workers won't keep each other in the loop, we can see that people are replacing their impromptu, in-person

conversations with scheduled times to talk and shorter meetings. And it's clear that this needs to happen: with everyone working from home, we should overcommunicate rather than undercommunicate. Talk less, but more often!



Now is a prime time to evaluate your workplace culture. You should ask yourself questions such as:

- Which communication tools would help your teams the most?
- How do communication requirements differ by and between teams?
- What is the right mix between synchronous communication (such as instant messaging) and asynchronous communication (such as a forum)?
- How will you replace the social side of work online?
- Would your people like a channel for socializing on your chat program, or informal weekly remote get-togethers?



### Solution #3

## PRIORITIZE WELLBEING IN ADDITION TO PERFORMANCE



*All HR teams will be aware of the impact of remote working on mental health and wellbeing. While most people enjoy working from home, 22% of workers report struggling to “unplug” from work, 19% of workers report feelings of loneliness and 8% struggle to stay motivated.*

Cases of managers and employees reporting feeling stressed and anxious are on the rise, and the blurred lines between work and leisure, *working through breaks* and feelings of isolation can quickly turn into burnout.

It's crucial that you provide your managers with the right training and performance management system when it comes to spotting signs that employees may be struggling. Make sure managers set up regular times to talk with their employees to give them the opportunity to discuss their wellbeing. One way to do this is to set aside

time in weekly or monthly performance check-ins, which can be managed through the performance management tools in *Totara Perform*. Simply asking “How are you feeling?” before diving straight into work discussions invites the employee to open up about any challenges they're facing, and makes them feel like a valued member of the team. If employees seem reluctant to discuss their wellbeing with their managers, think about setting up an employee wellbeing program, or directing them to useful support services and resources.





Some key signs that an employee may be struggling include:

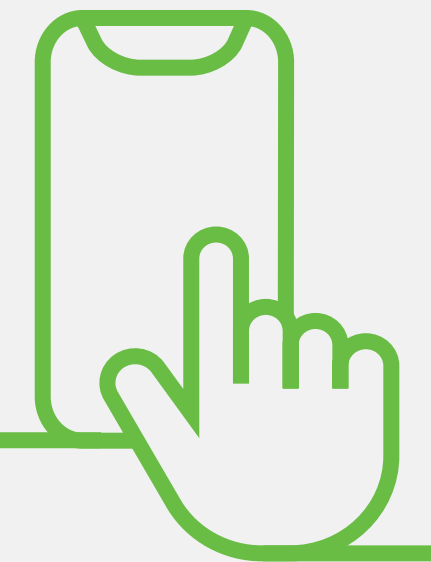
- ✓ *A decrease in productivity*
- ✓ *Less interaction in meetings*
- ✓ *Irritation or anger*
- ✓ *Constantly feeling tired*
- ✓ *Being quiet or unresponsive*
- ✓ *Less engagement in social conversations*
- ✓ *Having trouble focusing*
- ✓ *Missing deadlines or meetings*
- ✓ *A decrease in work quality*
- ✓ *Increased anxiety*
- ✓ *Asking for constant reassurance*
- ✓ *Negative language*
- ✓ *Taking lots of time off*

While HR teams should ensure that managers receive training to help them manage remotely, the number one thing managers can do to support their employees is to create an open dialogue and invite employees to share their concerns with them. While managers may want to monitor their employees, they shouldn't let this *tip over into surveillance* or *micromanagement*, which can quickly become demoralizing and create a culture of distrust.

**16%**

of **employers are using technologies more frequently to monitor their employees** through methods such as virtual clocking in and out, tracking work computer usage and monitoring employee emails or internal communications/chat.

*Gartner, 2020*



# THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKFORCES



**48%**

of employees will likely work remotely at least part of the time after COVID-19 versus 30% before the pandemic

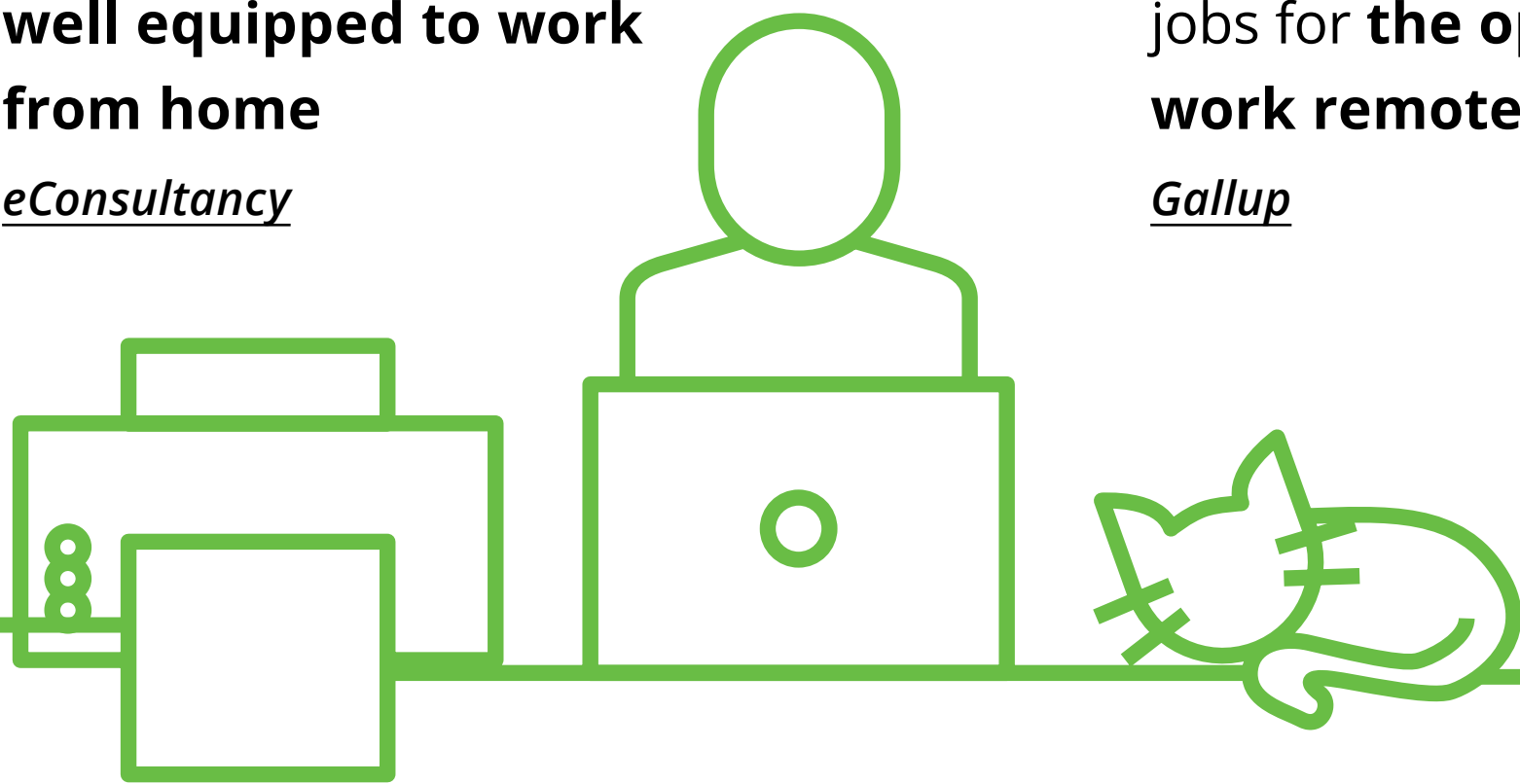
*Gartner*

*Making the most of the new normal*

**92%**

of workers believe they're well equipped to work from home

*eConsultancy*



**35%**

of employees would change jobs for the opportunity to work remotely full time

*Gallup*

**173%**

The number of employees working from home grew by 173% from 2005-2018 (excluding the self-employed)

*Global Workplace Analytics*



**60-80%**

Those who work remotely 60-80% of the time are the most engaged at work

*Gallup*

**57%**

**Flextime** during core hours is now offered by 57% of organizations  
*SHRM*



**\$11,000**

A typical employer can **save \$11,000 a year per employee who works remotely part-time**  
*Global Workplace Analytics*



**69%**

of **employers offer remote work on an ad hoc basis** to at least some employees  
*SHRM*

**\$2,500**

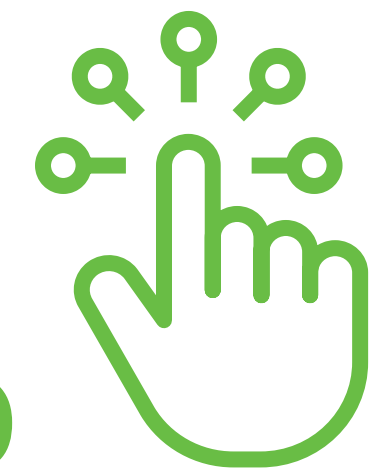
**-\$4,000**

Employees save between **\$2,500-\$4,000 a year by working from home half the time**  
*Global Workplace Analytics*



Employees working from home half the time **save the equivalent of 11 workdays a year**  
*Global Workplace Analytics*

**54%**



of organizations recognize the **high importance of transforming the employee experience through digital initiatives**  
*NTT*

## **THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKFORCES**



Workplace disruptor #4

# REFINING YOUR TALENT MIX WITH A BLENDED WORKFORCE





Ashley Pollock  
Global Innovation Director  
Terminix (US Customer)

*Over one-third of US workers participate in the gig economy, through either their primary or secondary roles, and more than 85% of these gig workers intend to continue into the next five years. The UK's gig economy doubled in just three years, and regions such as California and the EU have set out laws to improve the rights of workers operating under "atypical contracts."*

---

Your workforce today may comprise a blend of full-time and part-time permanent employees, contingent workers, freelancers, casual workers and more. When you're catering for so many audiences, it can be hard to know where to start. That's why HR teams must find a way to address everyone's learning and performance needs, while keeping both permanent, in-house and "agile" talent engaged.

If executed well, you will celebrate the differences present in your workforce, and these differences will provide a distinct advantage when it comes to productivity.

If the gig economy continues to grow at its current rate, more than 50% of the US workforce will participate in it by 2027. This presents a huge opportunity for organizations to properly support their blended workforce - and with it, the challenge of doing so effectively and efficiently.





## THE BLENDED WORKFORCE DISRUPTOR

The dramatic shift towards freelancing, self-employment and “gig work” is accelerating.

One in six traditional job workers would like to become an independent earner, suggesting that our workforces are set to include more contract workers. With 32% of organizations saying that they are replacing full-time employees with contingent workers, it appears as though this is a desirable shift from both sides.

This presents a unique and exciting challenge for HR. While “traditional” learning and performance initiatives may work for your permanent staff (though even this can no

longer be assumed), you are now dealing with workers that range from freelance copywriters, outsourced customer service teams, self-employed delivery drivers and much, much more.

These workers will increasingly be involved at all levels of your organization, requiring a varied approach to learning and engagement.



*Solution #1*

# **EXTEND LEARNING TO YOUR EXTENDED ENTERPRISE**

*Your first action should be to extend your learning and HR technology to those outside your organization. An extended enterprise system will enable you to create learning programs for each type of worker.*

When you're creating an extended enterprise learning program, there are three key considerations:



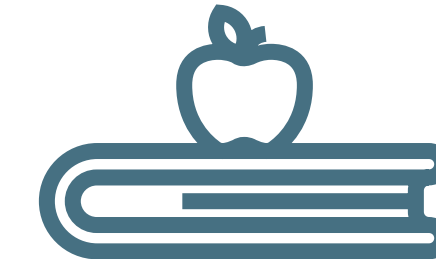
## **1. COST**

The license fees from many vendors make it cost prohibitive to truly extend your system reach to all stakeholders in your extended enterprise.



## **2. TECHNICAL CONCERNS**

How will those outside the organization access your systems? Will you implement single sign-on? Can they use their personal email address? Are there any security concerns to consider? Is your system accessible across devices? Is your content localized or translated?



## **3. LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

What content is relevant to each group? What is the best format with which to ensure knowledge and skills transfer? How will progress be tracked? How can you make the best use of everyone's time?





For instance, a freelance hairdresser may not have access to a “work computer.” Therefore, you should ensure that your extended enterprise LMS can be accessed on a smartphone between appointments.

Alternatively, a self-employed courier may only work for you a few hours each week, and never come into your actual work site. In that case, they will need to access your system from their own device, using their own login credentials, and only be required to complete essential learning.

Essentially, ignoring the workers outside your organization means you’re missing out on the full potential of your entire workforce. An extended enterprise LMS is the ideal way to reach out to the workers outside the traditional bounds of your organization for improved productivity.

## Solution #2

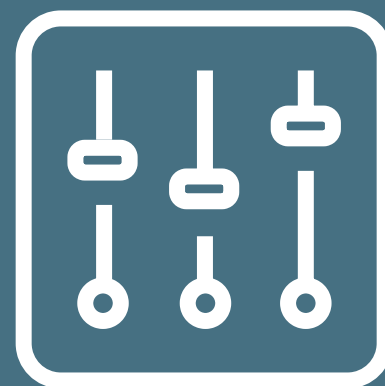
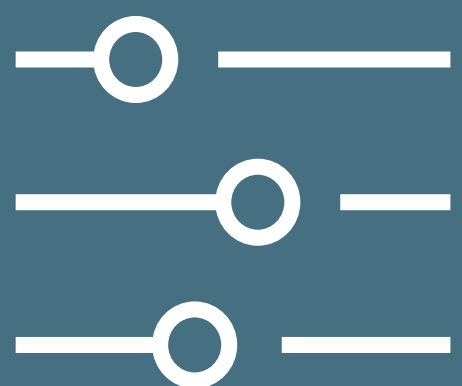
# **PERSONALIZE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

*The learning requirements of a permanent, full-time employee will be very different to those of a casual, self-employed worker who only works with you a few times a month. The employee may need a full training program covering health and safety topics specific to your workplace, role-specific training and technical training focusing on your systems.*

However, expecting the same training commitment from your contingent workers is unrealistic.

Senior learning strategist Lori Niles-Hofmann refers to this as the “learner social contract,” whereby we as HR and

learning professionals have a duty to ensure that the learning we provide avoids having our workers invest an unnecessary amount of time and energy. This is where personalized learning comes in.



*To find out more about designing and delivering learning for contingent workers, download [The Learner Social Contract ebook](#) by Lori Niles-Hofmann and Lars Hyland.*

Think carefully about the individual needs of each of your worker audiences. A full-time employee working 40 hours a week can spare more time for training than a delivery driver who only works with your organization a couple of times a month.

While it's important to invest in training all your workers, this shouldn't be at the expense of anyone's free time. With Totara Learn, you can set up audiences to create personalized

learning programs according to each group of workers, and ensure that each worker receives the most relevant training.

One way to ensure you're not burdening your external workers with excessive training is to minimize the number of mandatory learning activities you set for them. However, you can also make additional training available so that the option to learn more is there if they want it.

Totara customer **Envigo** reported that after they opened up their LMS to their entire workforce, a janitor in the US got in touch to say that he was excited to access the training for the first time ever to pursue his goal of becoming a supervisor.



### *Solution #3*

## **FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT - FOR EVERYONE**

*Typically, workers view the permanent, in-house workforce as “the team,” with part-time workers and freelancers not considered part of this group. Very few organizations currently challenge this train of thought, meaning that those in the “out-group” feel less invested, motivated and supported.*

However, as your workforce becomes increasingly blended, harnessing a sense of real community for everyone will be essential for the success of your organization. While many (or most) of your employees are working outside the normal workplace, it’s even more important to take these conversations online, whether that’s meetings, training sessions, virtual brainstorming or informal socializing.

Totara Engage is an ideal place to start. Giving all workers, whether they’re inside or outside the organization, access to your learning experience platform (LXP) is a fantastic way to drive employee engagement and create a collaborative, inclusive company culture.

Even simple acts such as voting in a poll or commenting on a coworker’s post can help foster a sense of community and build good will. And of course, moving learning and communication online also supports your growing remote workforce.

Finally, make sure your contingent workforce is included in your company communications, such as internal newsletters, company updates and announcements. Bear in mind that workers in this group may be less available than your permanent workforce, so ensure that any live communications are recorded or summarized and made available as soon as possible to help keep everyone up to date.



# THE IMPACT OF BLENDED WORKFORCES

*Uniting and engaging workers in and outside your organization*

**85%**

of HR leaders admit to **investing insignificant time in agile talent**

Toptal



**25%**

of professionals would **prefer the flexibility and independence of freelancing**

McKinsey

**50%**

HR executives expect that **50% of the corporate workforce will be made up of people who are not full-time, permanent employees** in the coming years

Toptal

**x3**

The **freelance economy is growing three times faster** than the overall US workforce

Wonolo

**41%**

of freelancers surveyed **also have a permanent job alongside** their freelance work

Wonolo



**63%**

of freelancers say that a **portfolio of clients is more reliable than a single employer**

*Wonolo*

## THE IMPACT OF BLENDED WORKFORCES

**63%**

of **people who freelance do so by choice** rather than necessity

*Forbes*

## HALF OF ALL FREELANCERS

**undergo reskilling or update their skills each year**, compared with one-third of permanent employees

*Edelman Intelligence*



**47%**

of **millennials are freelancers** - the most of any generation

*Wonolo*

**57%**

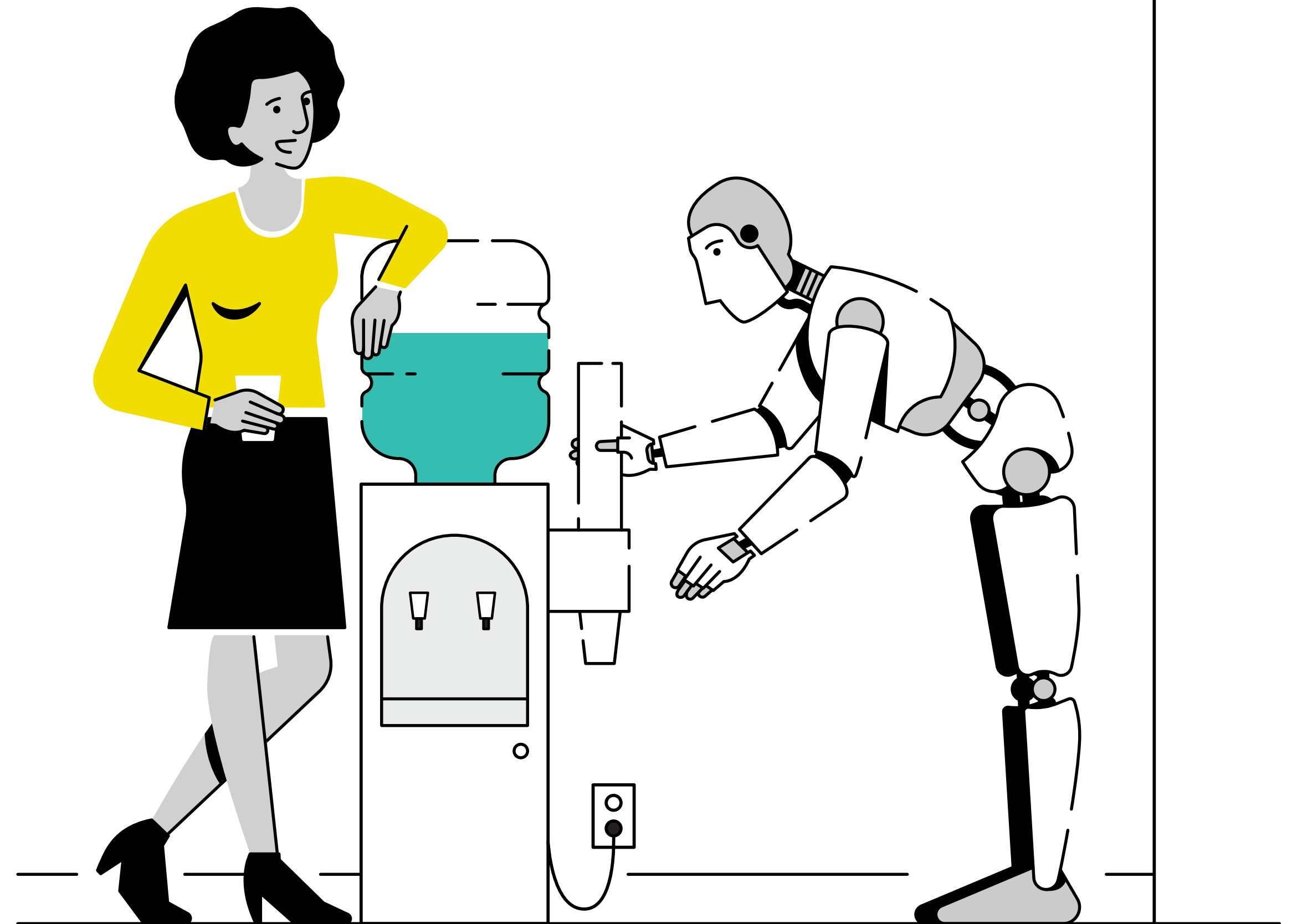
of **workers work in a similar location** as their colleagues 100% of the time

*Gallup*



Workplace disruptor #5

# RESKILLING YOUR PEOPLE TO STAY RELEVANT





*Many job roles are being phased out as the **Fourth Industrial Revolution**, which harnesses digitalization and increasingly complex, sophisticated technology, takes hold. Coupled with this, industries such as healthcare, technology and manufacturing are facing rapidly expanding skills gaps, leaving them without the skilled employees they need to grow. Whether it's cashiers being replaced by computerized self-checkouts, factory workers being replaced by advanced machinery or travel agents being replaced by the rise of online bookings, it's clear that technology is, and will continue to be, hugely disruptive in many industries.*

---

While these challenges existed long before 2020, the year's events have certainly accelerated these issues. In the UK alone, ***almost 25,000 jobs were lost*** in a single month in mid-2020, and 195,000 worldwide. For instance, the live entertainment industry and the hospitality and travel industry have particularly felt the impact of a changing world, which has raised two major issues: that workers are now left out of work with skills that

are no longer valued, while the very same sectors are now experiencing a massive shortage of workers with the new skills they now need.

This skills gap is rapidly becoming more of a skills chasm, and the consequences of failing to adapt could be catastrophic for certain industries. What will happen to all those cashiers, factory workers and travel agents, and everyone else in a role at risk of automation in the years to come?



## THE RESKILLING DISRUPTOR

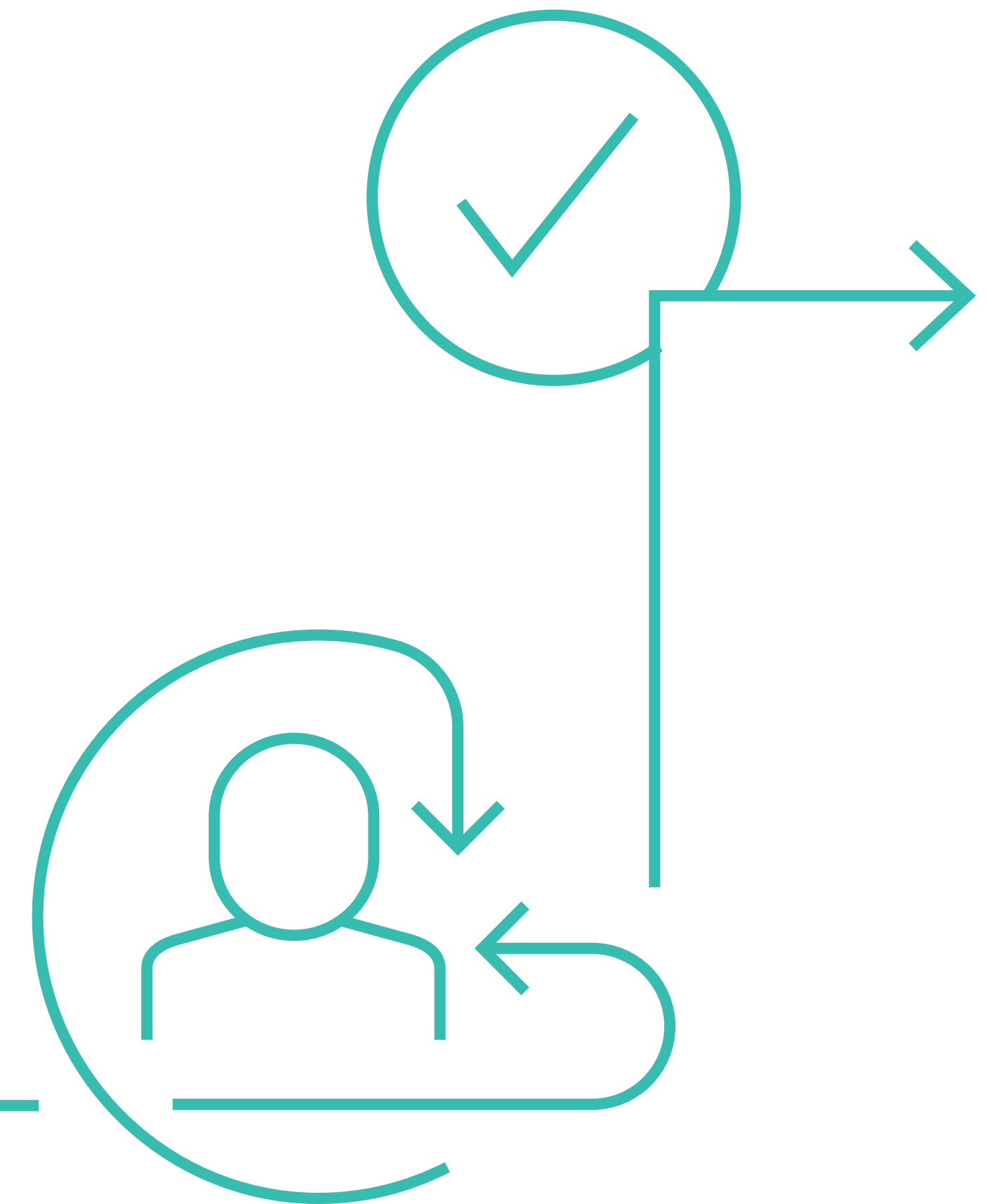
In 2020, the travel industry was hit particularly hard when the tourism industry effectively ceased for months on end. Unfortunately, many jobs were lost, not just in travel, but also hospitality, retail and academia. In stark contrast, the healthcare sector and delivery and logistics firms created thousands of new roles, many of which they struggled to fill quickly.

The result is that millions of workers worldwide are left without jobs. What this requires is mass reskilling - and fast. As much as this is a concern for governments globally, this also presents a major opportunity for organizations looking for specialist skills. Savvy employers will use this as a way to attract talent through comprehensive

reskilling programs, ensuring that the people who are keen to get back to work are trained in the most-needed skills.

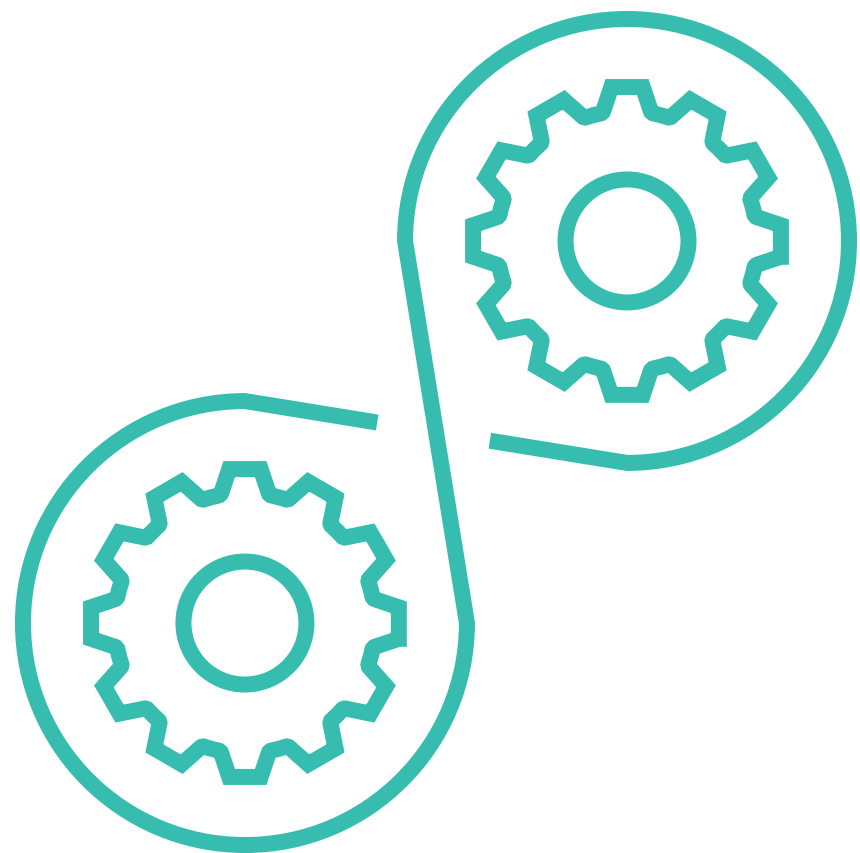
The healthcare and technology industries are particularly struggling as a result of skills gaps, so now could be the prime time to develop training programs for your future workforce - both in and outside your organization.

Whereas previously, experience was king in the workplace, today's organizations must prioritize adaptability. This spans all ages, skill sets and tenures, and it reflects an ability to move with the organization's needs, rather than being resolutely stuck in your ways and unable - or unwilling - to reskill.



## Solution #1

# **IMPLEMENT CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**



*As HR professionals, it's our job to identify skills gaps before they affect performance and put jobs at risk. Put measures in place to guide employees towards the right learning opportunities to gain the skills they need.*

---

HR must work with managers to discover any mismatch between the skills possessed and the skills needed within their teams. This information is then mapped out with a competency framework, which you'll find in a performance management system such as Totara Perform.

This will help you join the dots between what you have right now and the skills you will need in the future, and enable you to help people reskill into new, more needed roles.

Continuous performance management, comprising regular performance check-ins, means you can keep a close eye on progress, and act as quickly as possible when you spot a skills gap emerging.

You can use this as an opportunity to forewarn workers, direct them towards learning and resources to help them pivot to new skills development and monitor their progress. You can also discuss how this will impact their job role and performance long term.

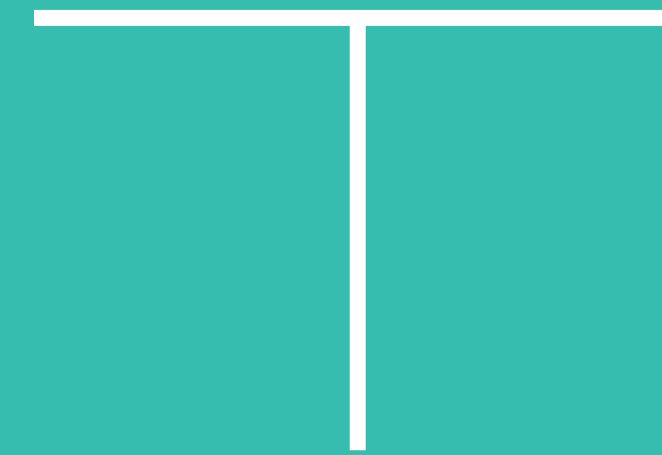


For instance, if a certain process or technology is being phased out, they keep themselves relevant and valuable to your organization by working on the skills you'll need instead.

Future-proofing your talent will benefit both your organization and your people. Your organization will stay one step ahead of the game, and your people will stay productive with relevant skills.

Waiting until skills become obsolete before you start the reskilling process means you will always be lagging behind, so help your people develop expertise in multiple areas.

T-shaped expertise represents broad experience in multiple areas and deep mastery of one area, while π-shaped expertise represents two areas of mastery, M-shaped expertise represents three areas of mastery and so on.



*Learning  
Design*



*Learning  
Design*

*&  
Digital*



*Learning  
Design*

*&  
Digital*

*& Data  
Analysis*

## Solution #2

# CREATE AN INTENTIONAL LEARNING CULTURE

*The World Economic Forum recently declared a “reskilling emergency” with over a billion people needing to reskill by 2030. That’s why you should create an “intentional learning culture”.*

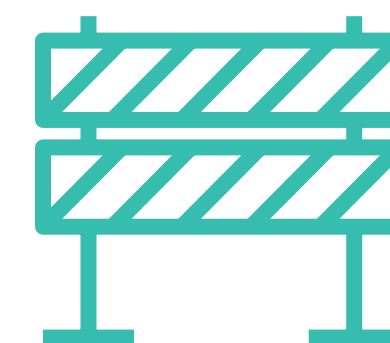
This means adopting both a growth mindset, with its openness to change and self-improvement, and cultivating curiosity, which sparks inspiration and drives self-directed learning throughout your entire career.

*McKinsey* highlights five core skills of intentional learners, which will ensure your people develop an optimal mindset for skills enrichment and improvement:



## 1 SET SMALL, CLEAR GOALS

Tangible goals ensure that curiosity is used as an effective tool rather than a distraction. In particular, adopting a “once-in-a-career” mindset will help you enjoy and learn from every opportunity, as it might be the only time you encounter it in your career.



## 2 REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

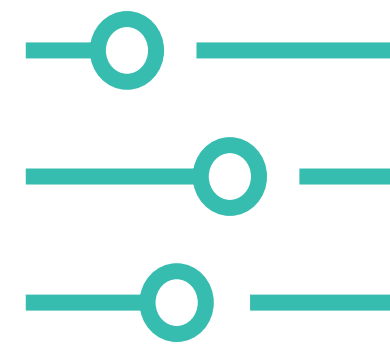
Intentional learners *protect time for learning*. This often means deliberately building time into their schedules, minimizing distractions in the moment and being flexible.





### **3 ACTIVELY SEEK FEEDBACK**

Ask, ask, ask for feedback! Prime others to tune into the behaviors and skills you're working on so they can provide more meaningful feedback, and don't be afraid to ask for clarification or press further. You should also ensure that you accept feedback openly and gracefully to ensure people feel comfortable being honest with you.



### **4 DELIBERATELY PRACTICE SKILLS**

Very often, practice means learning through failure. Trying over and over again means you can constantly refine your approach. Just make sure that your practice still challenges you, rather than being too simplistic or so difficult that it becomes demotivating.



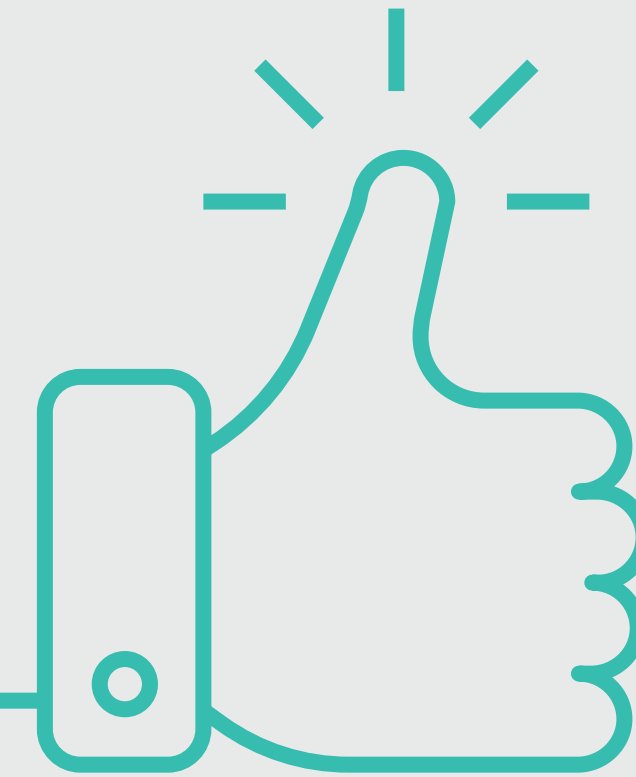
### **5 REFLECT REGULARLY**

Reflection is a vital skill in intentional learning. This should take place before, during and after a task. Beforehand, think about what you want to achieve and why. During the task, you can correct any mistakes and make adjustments. Afterwards, think about what went well and what you can improve next time, and what the next challenge might look like.

**With intentional learning mindsets, your workforce will find themselves better equipped to learn new skills effectively, as more of a development tool than a box-ticking exercise.**

### Solution #3

## **LET “GOOD ENOUGH” BE GOOD ENOUGH**



*Relying purely on formal learning will slow down the reskilling process. Move faster by empowering your subject matter experts and “super users” to create their own content.*

This could be as quick and simple as checklists, videos of experts talking to camera or a screen capture showing them carrying out a complex process. When you're used to slick learning programs comprising professionally built e-learning content, this can feel “scrappy” at first - but in reality, most people care more about what they learn than how they learn it.

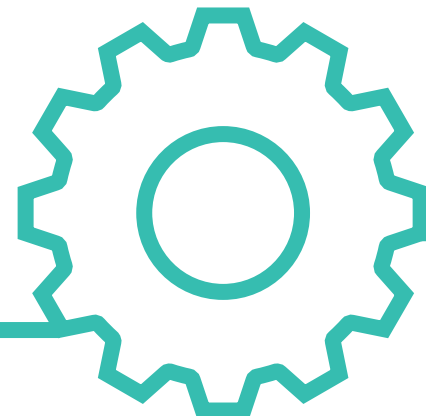
Don't wait to create the “perfect” resource - it doesn't exist. If you send a subject matter expert to a training course to learn a new skill, it is better for them to share their rough notes the day after than waiting for two months for them to build a beautifully branded e-learning module.

Facilitating rapid knowledge transfer is crucial when it comes to reskilling your people, and once again, your learning experience platform (LXP) should play a key role in this process. In the right culture, it will quickly become a knowledge bank of “good enough” resources, and other people can always jump in to have their say, clarify points or ask further questions.



# THE IMPACT OF RESKILLING

Reskill your workforce before it's too late



**25%**

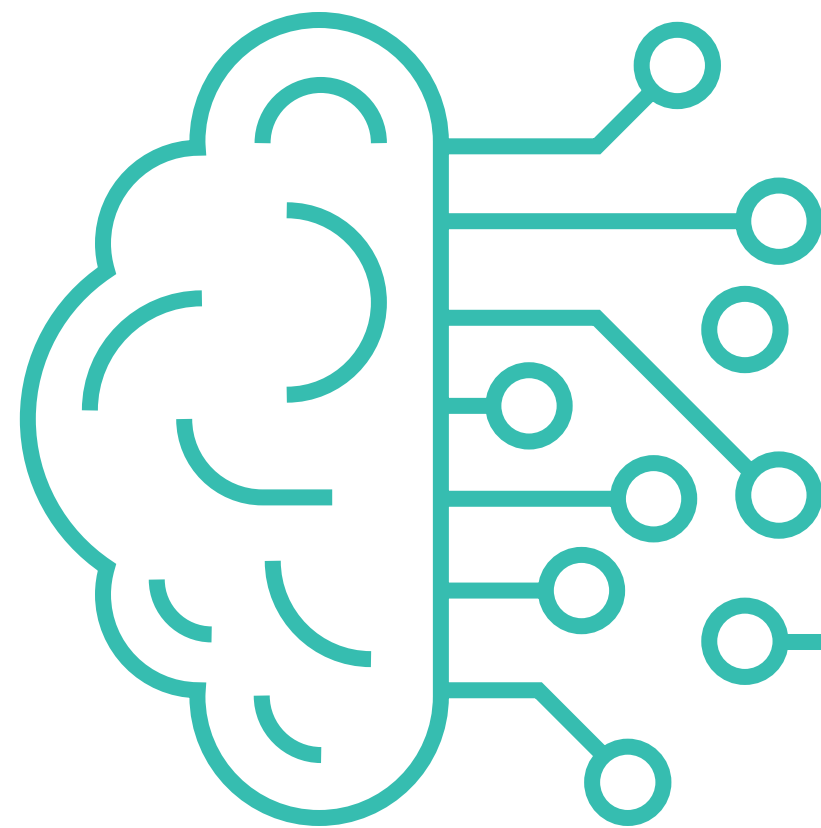
of jobs in the US are "highly exposed" to automation

*Brookings Institute*

**17%**

Just 17% of companies significantly outperforming their sector average manage to maintain that performance advantage over the following five years

*Sloan Review*



AI's potential contribution to the global economy could reach **\$15.7 trillion by 2030**

*PwC*

**14%**

By 2030, around 14% of the global workforce will need to switch occupations as a result of digitization, automation and AI

*McKinsey*



**54%**

of all employees will require reskilling in the next three years

*World Economic Forum*



## "HEAVY LEARNERS"

are 39% more likely than

## "LIGHT LEARNERS"

to feel **productive and successful** at work

*Josh Bersin*

Just **10%** of organizations feel **"very ready" to tackle learning challenges**

*Deloitte*

**62%** of executives believe they will need to **retrain or replace** up to a quarter of their workforce **between now and 2023**

*McKinsey*



**Learning is the top-rated challenge** among 2019's Global Human Capital Trends

*Deloitte*

## THE IMPACT OF RESKILLING

**77%** of CEOs say that talent gaps are a **"significant impediment"** to company growth and performance

*PwC*

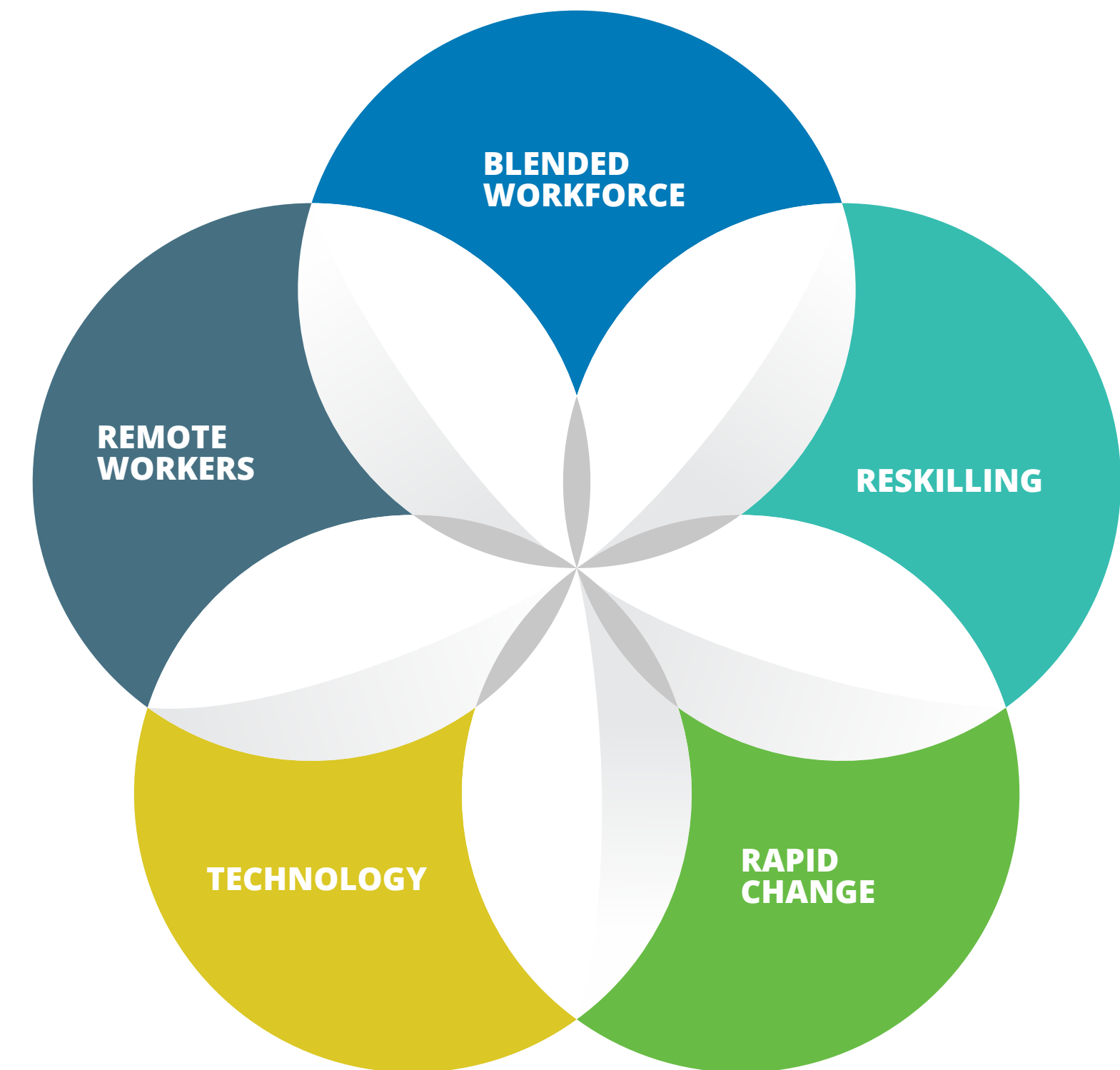
**90%** of organizations are **redesigning jobs**

*Deloitte*



# THE EXPONENTIAL IMPACT OF ADDRESSING THE FIVE WORKPLACE DISRUPTORS

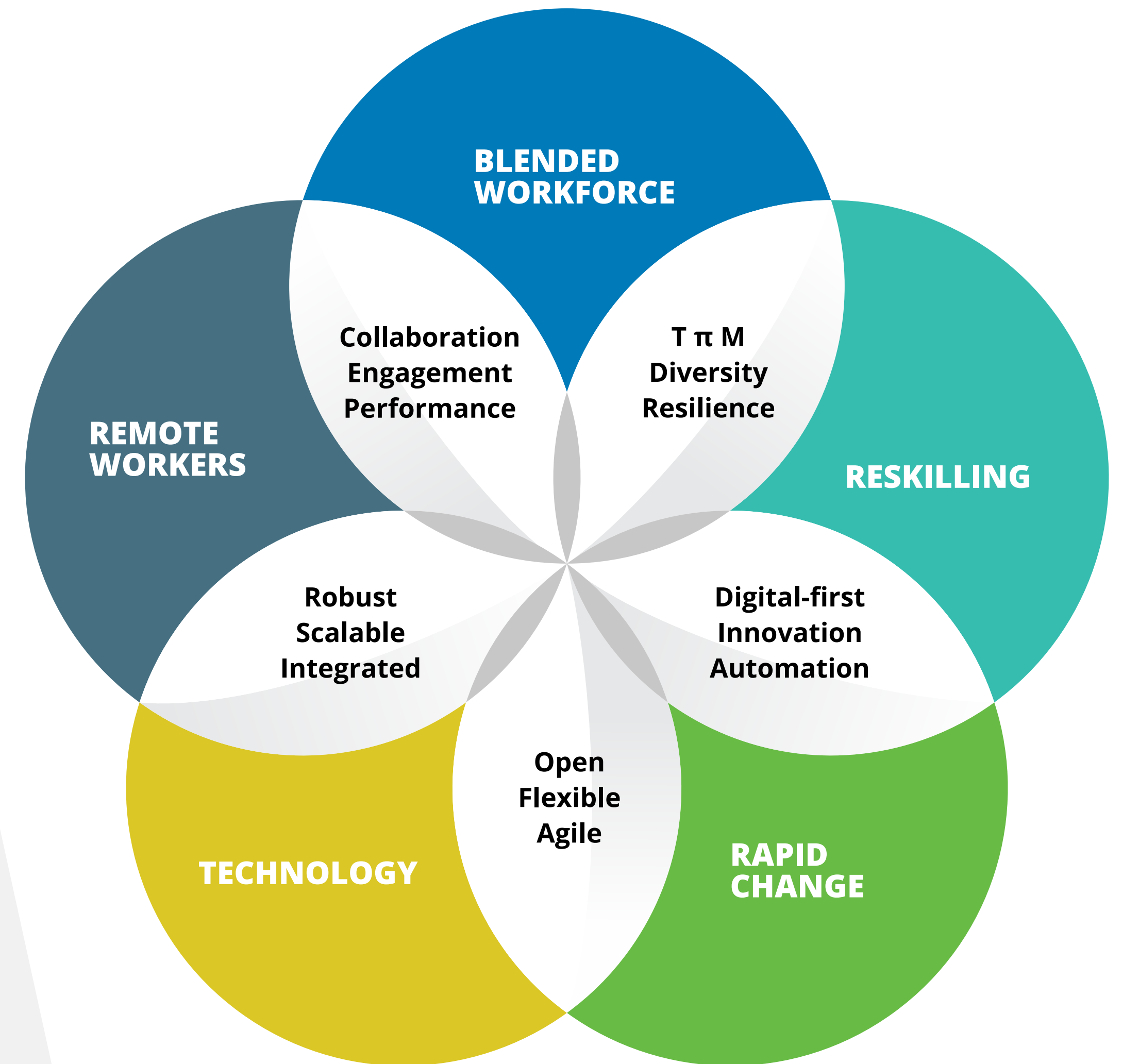
*These five workplace disruptors are inextricably linked. Tackling each in isolation will have value, but the more of these disruptors you can address together, the bigger the impact you will make.*



For instance, improving the remote work experience improves communication with contract workers. Getting more adept at dealing with change improves your ability to detect and fill skills gaps at speed. Upgrading your technology ecosystem facilitates the reskilling process and helps you support your remote workers.

With the right technology underpinning your people strategy, you will have the resilience to stay productive and competitive no matter what happens. Whether it's obtaining a whole new skillset, adapting to unexpected and fast-changing business circumstances, managing remotely or anything else, adaptable, flexible technology, an agile mindset and the ability to support your entire blended workforce, whoever and wherever they are, is what you need to deliver the right talent experience and thrive.

***Totara's Talent Experience Platform*** unites learning, engagement and performance to help organizations like yours stay on top of these workplace disruptors, both now and long into the future. This ensures you can adapt to business challenges virtually as they happen, as well as keeping your workforce upskilled, engaged and equipped with all the knowledge they need to drive success.



Technology is driving rapid change in all aspects of our lives - and the impact of technology in the workplace has never been greater. Remote working has become standard for most organizations, requiring an urgent need to find more flexible ways to carry out your performance management processes.

On top of this, you are increasingly dealing with a blended workforce, comprising employees, contractors and your extended supply chain and sales channels, presenting a whole new engagement challenge. Such unprecedented change demands regular reskilling, helping you ensure that your people can perform productively to constantly meet new challenges.

While this may seem like a mammoth task, the good news is that by combining learning, engagement and performance in a single integrated platform, you have the power to tackle all three challenges at once. With Totara's Talent Experience Platform, focusing on one workplace challenge also has an impact on the others, helping you raise learning, engagement and performance across the board while minimizing additional costs, time and effort.

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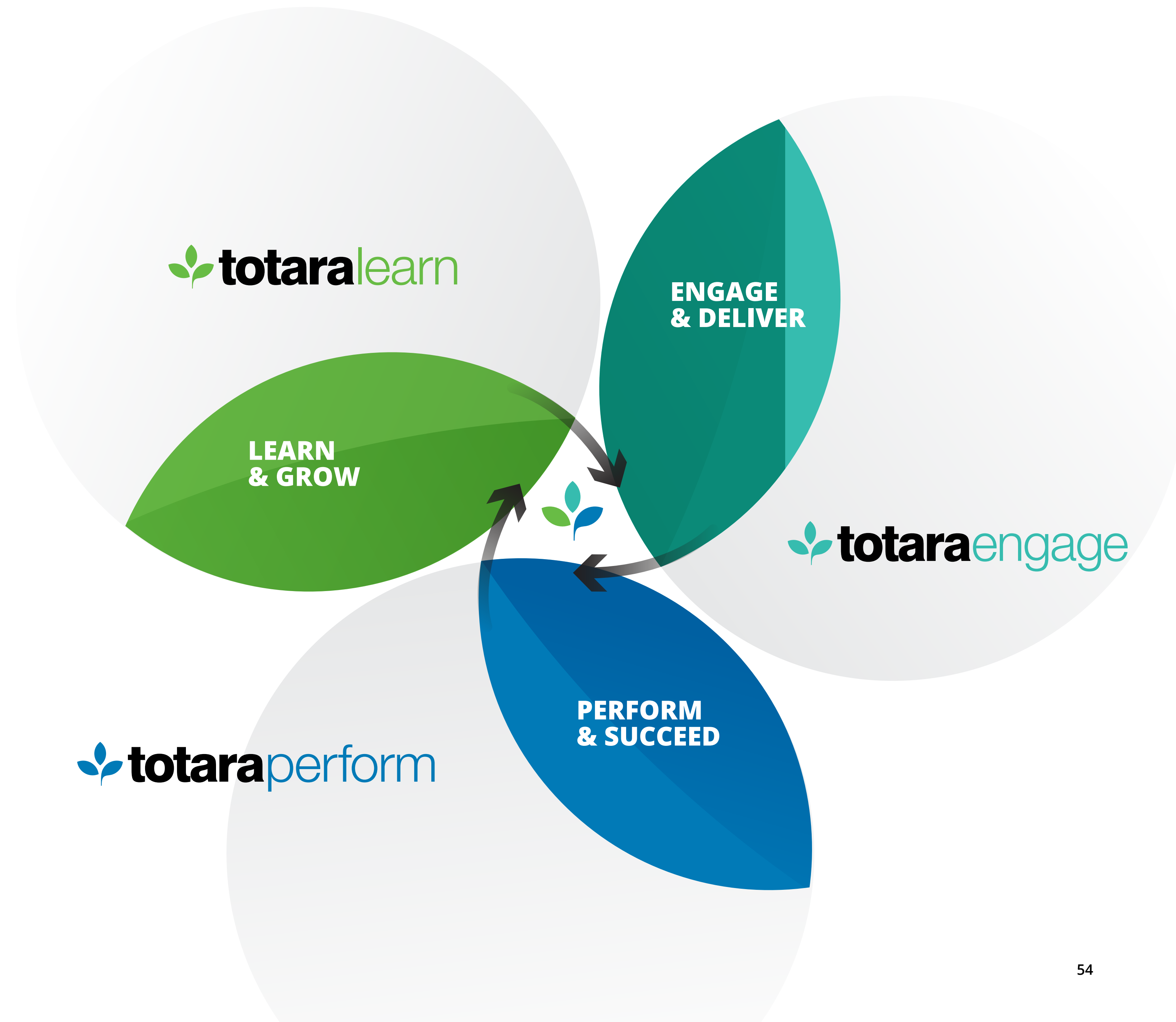
## **ABOUT** **THE AUTHOR**

Lars Hyland is a longstanding thought leader in the fields of HR and learning technology. He leads the drive for adoption of Totara's open technology enterprise products working in collaboration with a worldwide network of expert partners. Lars has over 30 years' experience working with a wide range of organizations to build workplace learning experiences that raise people performance, productivity, and engagement.



# ABOUT TOTARA

Totara builds employee engagement, learning, and performance management technologies that enable large multinational corporations, government entities, and mid-market companies to deliver enterprise-level talent and workforce experiences. Totara's Talent Experience Platform unifies a transformational learning management system (LMS), a user-centric learning experience platform (LXP), and a comprehensive performance management system under a single and highly adaptable architecture. Totara's flexible architecture gives organizations the freedom to innovate, the freedom to choose, and unlocks critical resources for reinvestment into where it really counts.





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