

Learning Strategy Benchmarking Data Report

Insights from 258 L&D Leaders on Learning Strategy Maturity

WELEARN

Based on WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard Data | August 2026

Foreword from Sean Stowers, CEO at WeLearn



I have spent my career in corporate learning, and the question learning leaders ask me most has not changed:

How do we compare?

They often ask because they are making decisions without a reference point.

> *Is a governance body normal at our size?*
>
> *Should we have dashboards by now?*
>
> *Is everyone else further along on AI than we are?*

For much of my career the honest answer has been that nobody really knows. It is all anecdotal.

We built the Learning Strategy Scorecard to give that question a real answer. 258 learning leaders have now completed it, and the picture that comes back is not the one I expected. Learning functions are good at the work itself. What most functions cannot do is show what any of it was worth.

The finding I would ask you to sit with in this latest report is the one about formal strategy. Organizations with a learning strategy in place score 27 points higher on overall maturity than those without. That positive difference comes from the work that produces one: talking to stakeholders, deciding what matters most, agreeing with leadership how success will be judged — and general alignment with the business.

One question I'd like to leave you with is this:

Can we as L&D show, with numbers, what our learning functions have changed?

Sean Stowers
CEO, WELEARN

A note from Ben Sieke, Director of L&D at PDS Health



I've spent a lot of my career thinking about a question that L&D still struggles to answer:

What changed because of our work?

We've been talking about business impact for years. We know how to measure it. We have the tools and approaches to do it. And yet, as this report shows, we still struggle to connect learning outcomes to the results that matter most to the business.

That feels especially important right now, as AI opens up an entirely new set of possibilities for our profession.

If a learning function defines its value by the content and programs it produces, AI may simply help it build more stuff, faster. But if we start with the outcome in mind, the opportunity is much bigger. AI can help us understand problems better, experiment and build more quickly, keep pace with the business, and ultimately get better at understanding what changed.

AI won't make our old challenges disappear. It may make the choices we make about them even more consequential.

That is why the strategy findings in this report matter so much. Before we build anything, we need to ask:

> *What business problem are we solving?*
>
> *What outcome are we trying to change?*
>
> *How will we know if we made a difference?*

The technology may be new. The discipline required to use it well is not. Before you turn the page, make yourself one commitment: don't let this become another report you read, agree with, and move on from. We ask our learners to do something differently because of what they learn. Let's hold ourselves to the same standard.

Ben Sieke
DIRECTOR OF L&D, PDS HEALTH

About this report

This report draws on the WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard, a self-assessment completed by 258 learning and development leaders between September 2025 and July 2026.

Each respondent rated 30 statements across six dimensions on a five-point scale, producing a maturity score between 30 and 150. The statements cover six dimensions, five statements each:

- Alignment to business strategy
- Learning governance
- Technology and ecosystem integration
- Content and experience strategy
- Measurement and analytics
- Culture and change readiness

This is the second edition of this benchmarking report. The first, published in January 2026, drew on 118 responses. Where a finding has changed since then, this report says so.

Sections 1 and 2
Give the overall picture

Sections 3 to 8
Examine each of the six dimensions in turn

Section 9
covers company size

Section 10
Provides percentile benchmarks for comparing your own scores

Section 11
Sets out where to start. Method, respondent profile, and limitations are in About the research



All data is self-reported. Where WeLearn offers an explanation for a pattern rather than a measurement of it, the report says so.

Executive summary

258 learning and development leaders rated their own function against 30 practices, from "not yet in place" to "fully mature." These are learning leaders assessing their own function, and four out of five still came out at one of the two lowest levels of maturity.

The scorecard sorts learning functions into four levels.



A reactive function is an order taker: answering requests as they come in.



An operational one supports business goals in places but still runs as a service to the rest of the organization.



A strategic one uses data to set its priorities and has leadership behind it.



A transformational one is built into how the business runs.

Almost everyone in this study falls under **reactive** or operational.

What that looks like in practice:

The typical organization rates most of its 30 practices as present but applied unevenly, working in some parts of the organization and not in others. The average score is 85.6 out of a possible 150, which sits at the middle of the operational level.



A benchmarking study of learning strategy maturity, drawing on 258 learning and development leaders who completed the WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard between September 2025 and July 2026. Each rated 30 statements across six dimensions.

Learning functions deliver, but they cannot prove worth.

Only six organizations out of 258 reached the top maturity level.

The natural reading of a result like that is that the execution itself is weak:

Stale content

Uncompleted courses

Learning that fails to reach people in the right channels

The real problem runs much deeper than that

Content, for example, is the highest-scoring of the six dimensions measured. Organizations excel at delivering engaging, multi-format learning tailored to specific roles.

In fact, overall only 6.2% of companies scored below a failing threshold on maturity (50 or below out of 150).

Delivery is not where the system breaks down. The breakdown happens after a program goes live. Organizations stumble on the backend: measuring real behavioral change, prioritizing future content, and tying learning outcomes to the KPIs that executives care about.

Overall the content, alignment and culture dimensions — what employees see — score highest. Measurement, governance and technology — what decides which programs get built, and proves whether they worked — score lowest. **In other words, learning functions are better at creating content and courses than at running the operation behind it.**

Even the best of the six is not in good shape. Not one reaches "consistently applied," the level at which a practice works the same way across teams and functions. Content comes closest at an average of 3.2 out of 5 per practice — barely above a 3, the rating for a practice that exists but works unevenly across the organization.

Nothing separates organizations like finishing the strategy work

Organizations with a formal learning strategy average 95.6 out of 150.

Organizations without one average 68.9, a gap of 27 points.

That is the difference between the operational level and the **reactive level.**
In other words, between a function that supports business goals, and one that answers requests as they come in.

Twenty-seven points means 27 of the 30 practices rated one level higher. A gap that size would occur by chance in fewer than one survey in ten thousand, and nothing else measured here comes close to it. Not headcount. Not industry.

Having the strategy on paper is not what produces the 27-point difference. Organizations arrive at a formal strategy by interviewing stakeholders, working out where the function actually stands, setting priorities against business goals, and getting leadership to agree to them. Those decisions are what the 30 statements ask about. Half-finishing the work returns less than half the benefit. Organizations with a strategy still in development average 80.0, only just inside the operational level.

Size and industry — doesn't predict much after 1,000 employees

Above roughly 1,000 employees, headcount stops predicting maturity. A company of 40,000 people runs its learning function at the same level as a company of 1,200. Bigger budgets and bigger teams appear to be offset by what comes with scale: more business units to serve, more stakeholders to align, and more systems already embedded.

Industry explains even less. Across seven sectors, every one averages between 84.7 and 89.1 — a range of under five points, or fewer than five of the 30 practices rated one level apart. Any learning leader benchmarking against their own sector is benchmarking against the same number as everyone else.

Mid-market organizations that complete a learning strategy score level with larger, 5,000-person enterprises

Companies of 201 to 1,000 employees average 79.6 out of 150, roughly 10 points below every larger size group when it comes to maturity. That is ten of the thirty rated practices sitting one level lower.

Roughly half of that shortfall is strategy:

- Four in ten (40.5%) of the mid-market has a formal learning strategy in place
- Six in ten (62.1%) organizations above 1,000 employees have a formal learning strategy in place

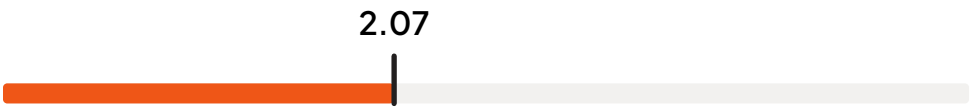
As established, a formal strategy is worth 27 points to the organization that has one, so the mid-market average sits lower.

Look only at the mid-market organizations that have completed the strategy work and the deficit vanishes. They average 89.8, the same score as the typical organization of 5,000 employees or more.

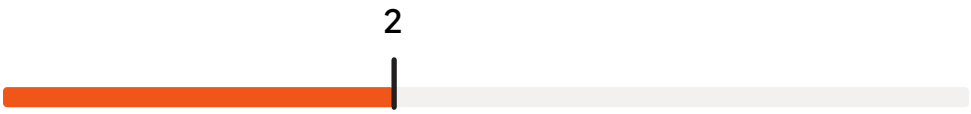
Against larger organizations that have also completed the work, the mid-market is still behind — 89.8 against 97.7. Finishing the strategy does not close every gap, but it does lift a mid-market function to the enterprise average.

More of the mid-market segment is 'part-way there' on strategy than any size group above 200 employees: 38.1% have a strategy in development. That work scores low while it is under way (and ‘in development’), because the scorecard rates practices already established and running. A strategy in development averages 80.0 across the study, against 95.6 for one in place.

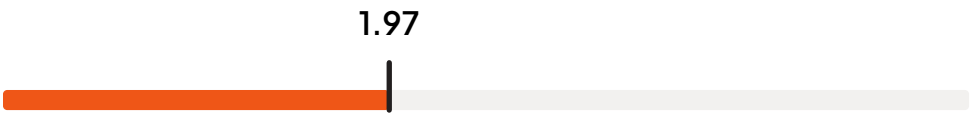
AI readiness — did not evolve for most organizations in the last seven months



A strategy for AI and automation scores 2.07 out of 5, the lowest of all 30 statements.



A 2 on this scale means some initial steps have been taken, whether limited or informal. In practice that usually looks like individuals experimenting, for example using AI for content authoring. None of that amounts to an agreed position on where AI fits in the learning function, or what data it runs on.



What's interesting is that, despite the interest in AI in L&D this year, the exact same statement scored 1.97 seven months ago. **This points to a data gap in L&D, not a tools gap.**

AI applied to learning needs learner data that is integrated, current and trusted. 67.8% of organizations do not use learner data to personalize what employees see, and buying an AI tool will not produce it.

The weakness is spread evenly across the sample. Any learning leader benchmarking peers on AI readiness will find almost everyone in the same position.

Where to start

Measurement predicts overall maturity more strongly than any other dimension, and the single statement most associated with a high total score is "learning outcomes tied to business impact."

That does not prove measurement produces maturity. It does mean a measurement score is the best single indicator of how everything else in a learning function is running.

Measurement is not where to start, though. Measuring impact requires that someone decided in advance what impact should look like, and that decision belongs to the strategy work.

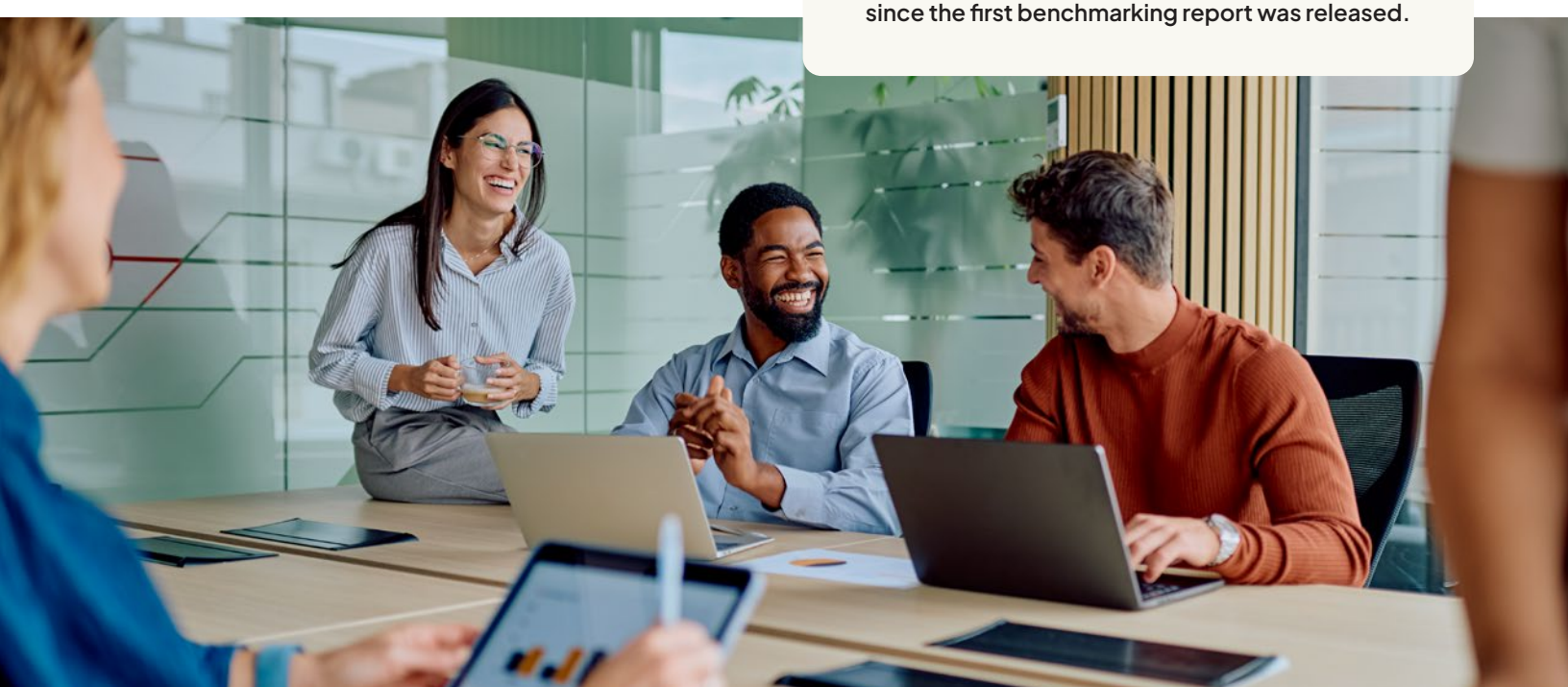
Organizations with no finished strategy at all average 10.6 out of 25 on measurement.

Those that have one average 15.4.

Programs will still get built when strategy is unfinished, but proving those programs had any impact then becomes a challenge. So the place to start is the strategy work. The five priorities, in order:

1. Finish the strategy work.
2. Build measurement that shows business impact.
3. Put governance in place before scaling.
4. Build the data foundation AI needs.
5. Make sure senior leaders are seen learning themselves.

Those five priorities have remained constant since the first benchmarking report was released.



How to read this report

The WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard contains 30 statements grouped into six dimensions, five statements each. Respondents rate every statement from 1 to 5.

Rating	Level	What it describes
1	Not yet in place	No formal efforts or practices currently exist
2	Early development	Some initial steps taken; efforts limited or informal
3	Inconsistent practice	Practices exist but are applied unevenly across the organization
4	Consistently applied	Practices well established and applied consistently across teams and functions
5	Fully mature	Practices embedded, optimized, and continuously improved

Adding all 30 ratings produces a total score between 30 and 150. Each dimension scores between 5 and 25.

Total scores map to four maturity bands.

Band	Score	What it means
Reactive	30–74	Compliance-driven, disconnected from business strategy
Operational	75–104	Some alignment to goals; L&D operates as a support function
Strategic	105–129	Data informs priorities; leadership sponsors the function
Transformational	130–150	Learning is embedded as a business driver

What a point difference means

Point differences appear throughout this report. Because every score is built from the same 30 ratings, they convert directly into changes in practice.

Difference	What it represents
30 points	All 30 practices rated one level higher
10 points	Ten of the 30 practices rated one level higher
3 points	Three practices rated one level higher
Under 1 point	Not a real difference

Each section restates this conversion the first time it cites a gap.

How to use this report

If you have completed the scorecard,

start with Section 10 to place your total and dimension scores against the full sample. Then read the dimension section where you scored lowest.

If you have not,

Sections 1 and 2 give the overall picture. Section 9 covers organizations of your size. The scorecard is available at learningstrategyscorecard.com

If you are building a case for L&D investment,

Section 7 on measurement and Section 9 on company size carry the findings most useful for a business case.

What this report cannot tell you

All data is self-reported. The scorecard measures what learning leaders believe about their own function. The data does not represent an independent audit.

Respondents found this assessment and chose to complete it, which means the sample may skew toward learning leaders already thinking about strategy. Results likely present a more favorable picture than the profession as a whole.

Where WeLearn offers an explanation for a pattern rather than a measurement of it, the report says so directly.

About the research

Data source

258 learning and development leaders completed the WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard between 9 September 2025 and 28 July 2026. Each respondent rated 30 statements across six dimensions and answered three questions about their organization.

Respondent profile

Figure 1:
Respondents by company size

Company size	Respondents	Share	Average Score
1–50 employees	16	6.3%	95.2
51–200 employees	21	8.3%	75.8
201–500 employees	46	18.2%	79.8
501–1,000 employees	38	15.0%	79.4
1,001–5,000 employees	60	23.7%	89.4
5,000+ employees	72	28.5%	89.5

Five respondents did not report company size.

Figure 2:
Respondents by sector

Sector	Respondents	Share	Average Score
Manufacturing and Industrial	64	24.8%	85.4
Financial Services and Insurance	60	23.3%	84.7
Consumer, Retail and Hospitality	27	10.5%	87.1
Professional Services	24	9.3%	84.9
Healthcare and Life Sciences	23	8.9%	89.1
Public Sector and Education	23	8.9%	86.7
Technology	18	7.0%	85.8
Other or unclassified	19	7.4%	82.1

Respondents selected from 29 industry categories plus an "Other" option, grouped into seven sectors for analysis. The grouping map appears in the Appendix.

Figure 3:
Formal learning strategy status

Status	Respondents	Share	Average Score
Formal strategy in place	123	48.6%	95.6
In development	81	32.0%	80.0
No formal strategy	49	19.4%	68.9

Five respondents did not answer this question.

Section 01

Where organizations stand



SECTION 01: WHERE ORGANIZATIONS STAND

Most learning functions have moved past compliance-driven training. Very few have reached the point where learning shapes business decisions. The bulk of the profession sits between those two positions.

Figure 4:
Overall maturity distribution

Maturity level	Score range	Organizations	Share
Reactive	30–74	77	29.8%
Operational	75–104	132	51.2%
Strategic	105–129	43	16.7%
Transformational	130–150	6	2.3%

n=258.

81.0%

Four out of five organizations in this study score in the bottom two maturity bands.

Scores run from 31 to 150, with an average of 85.6 and a median of 88. The average lands in the Operational band, where learning aligns to business goals in places but still functions largely as a support service.

What this means: The problem is not the basics

The problem is not that learning functions are failing at the basics.

Most have working programs, reasonable content, and employees who consume content and programs on offer.

Only 6.2% of organizations score 50 or below.



SECTION 01: WHERE ORGANIZATIONS STAND



The problem is what comes after the basics.

64%

Two thirds of organizations (64.0%) score between 71 and 110, spanning the top of Reactive and the whole of Operational.

Most of the profession sits here:
Functions that deliver competently and cannot demonstrate what that delivery is worth.

Figure 5:
Score distribution by range

Score range	Organizations	Share	Running total
30–50	16	6.2%	6.2%
51–70	46	17.8%	24.0%
71–90	82	31.8%	55.8%
91–110	83	32.2%	88.0%
111–130	25	9.7%	97.7%
131–150	6	2.3%	100.0%

n=258. The third column adds up as it goes down: 24.0% of organizations scored 70 or below, 55.8% scored 90 or below, 88.0% scored 110 or below.

SECTION 01: WHERE ORGANIZATIONS STAND

Six organizations reached the top band

Transformational organizations

Those scoring 130 or above, where learning is embedded as a business driver. They account for 2.3% of the study. Six out of 258.

Strategic organizations

Scoring 105 to 129, account for a further 16.7%. Combined, **fewer than one organization in five has reached a level where learning consistently informs business priorities.**

For learning leaders, this sets a realistic benchmark. Scoring 105 places an organization in the top fifth of the profession. Scoring 130 places it in the top 2%.

The spread

The standard deviation across total scores is 22.2 points, which means organizations are spread widely, not clustered near the average. An organization scoring 63 and an organization scoring 108 are both within one standard deviation of the mean, and they are running learning functions with little in common.

That spread matters for benchmarking. A single average figure tells a learning leader very little. The percentile benchmarks in Section 10 give a more useful comparison, and the dimension-level detail in Sections 3 to 8 shows where the differences between organizations actually sit.



Section 02 | How the six dimensions compare



SECTION 02: HOW THE SIX DIMENSIONS COMPARE

The scorecard measures six dimensions. On every one of them, the average organization rates its practices as existing but working unevenly — present in some parts of the business, patchy or missing in others. Not one dimension reaches the next level up, where a practice is established and consistently applied across teams and functions.

So when this report describes content as the dimension where organizations score highest, it means least uneven, not strong. The highest-scoring dimension in the study still sits below the level at which a practice works the same way across an organization.

Figure 6:
Dimension performance

Dimension	Average	Median	Spread
Content and Experience Strategy	16.2	17	4.4
Alignment to Business Strategy	15.6	16	4.3
Culture and Change Readiness	15.0	15	4.6
Measurement and Analytics	13.5	13	4.8
Learning Governance	12.9	13	5.0
Technology and Ecosystem Integration	12.2	12	4.2

Dimension scores out of 25. n=258.

What this means:

the ranking splits into two groups

The top three
— content, alignment, culture — describe what learning looks like to the people who receive it. Courses, formats, accessibility, the sense that the organization values development.

The bottom three
— measurement, governance, technology — describe the operations behind learning: what gets built, what would prove whether it worked, and what connects the systems that deliver it.

The data tells us that learning functions are better at producing learning than at running the operation behind it.

Where organizations differ most from each other

Organizations differ from each other most on governance. Around one in six scores 18 or above out of 25 with a standing body that oversees learning strategy, named decision rights, and initiatives ranked across the enterprise. More than a quarter scores 9 or below, where none of that exists. No other dimension separates organizations that far.

Technology is the opposite. Organizations sit closer together here than on any other dimension, and the average is the lowest of the six. Platforms are in place and running; the roadmaps, the use of learner data, and the plans for AI are not — and that pattern holds right across the study.

SECTION 02: HOW THE SIX DIMENSIONS COMPARE

Which dimension tells you most about overall maturity

Every dimension correlates with total score, which is expected — each contributes to the total. What differs is how strongly.

Dimension	Correlation with total score
Measurement and Analytics	0.84
Learning Governance	0.82
Content and Experience Strategy	0.81
Alignment to Business Strategy	0.81
Culture and Change Readiness	0.81
Technology and Ecosystem Integration	0.77

Measurement leads.
Organizations that measure well tend to score well everywhere else, more reliably than for any other dimension. Section 7 in this report examines why.

Technology sits last.
Its weaker relationship with total score reflects that technology investment happens somewhat independently of the rest — **organizations buy platforms whether or not the surrounding practices are in place.**

Where a strong score on one dimension predicts a strong score on another

Content and measurement correlate at 0.69, the strongest link between any two dimensions in the study. **Organizations that organize their content well also measure well.** Both require the same underlying discipline:

- Knowing what exists
- Deciding what it is for
- Checking whether it worked

Alignment and measurement follow at 0.66. **Claims about business alignment need evidence to survive scrutiny, and measurement is what supplies it.**

The weakest pairing is alignment and technology, at 0.52. **Buying learning technology does not bring a learning function closer to the business,** and organizations closest to the business are not necessarily the best equipped.

Sections 3 to 8 examine each dimension in turn, in the order they appear in the scorecard.

Section 03 | Alignment to business strategy

Ensuring learning initiatives directly support key organizational goals, priorities, and KPIs.



SECTION 3: ALIGNMENT TO BUSINESS STRATEGY

Learning functions have spent the past decade moving closer to the business. Strides have been made, and this dimension measures how much has really changed.

15.6

Alignment ranks second of the six dimensions, behind content.
The average is 15.6 out of 25, or roughly 3.1 per statement — "inconsistent practice" for the typical learning function. A connection between learning and business strategy exists. It works unevenly across the organization.

To place your own function:

- Above 18 is the top quarter of the study.
- 16 sits at the median.
- Below 13 the bottom quarter.

47.7%

Nearly half of learning leaders meet regularly with executive stakeholders, and call those meetings an established practice, not an occasional one. Far fewer can show those executives what learning delivered.

Figure 7:
Alignment to business strategy — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Regular conversations with executive stakeholders	3.33	1.10
Learning strategy directly supports key business goals	3.31	1.02
Strategy updated in response to changes in business direction	3.31	1.11
Business leaders see L&D as a strategic enabler	2.93	1.11
Learning initiatives tied to performance metrics and KPIs	2.67	1.13

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

SECTION 3: ALIGNMENT TO BUSINESS STRATEGY

Learning leaders have executive access. Few can prove impact.

The highest and lowest scoring statements in this dimension both describe the relationship between learning leaders and their executives. One measures how often they meet.

Regular executive conversations score 3.33. The other measures what they can prove when they do: Learning tied to performance metrics and KPIs scores 2.67.

What this means:

learning leaders are meeting executives without the numbers they need

Learning leaders are discussing business goals with executives without being able to show what learning contributed to those goals.

Only 24.4%

of organizations have learning consistently tied to performance metrics and KPIs, applied across teams and functions.

Four in ten (42.6%)

have no connection between learning and performance metrics, or have only started building one.



Three in ten (32.9%)

report some connection between learning and performance metrics, applied unevenly across the organization.

Fewer than one organization in four can connect learning to the numbers executives care about.

This affects how leaders regard the function.
The statement "business leaders see L&D as a strategic enabler" scores 2.93, which is 0.40 points below executive access.

Data shows us that learning leaders are now present in executive conversations. Being consequential in them and influencing decision making is the clearest next step for the role.

Without numbers linking learning to business and financial performance, a learning leader can only describe what the team has built and delivered.

SECTION 3: ALIGNMENT TO BUSINESS STRATEGY

Business alignment is what a formal strategy changes most

Strategy status	Respondents	Alignment score
Formal strategy in place	123	17.5
In development	81	14.5
None	49	12.4

Alignment scores out of 25.

- Organizations with a formal learning strategy score 17.5 out of 25 on alignment.
- Those without score 12.4. Of the six dimensions, this is the widest strategy-related gap — wider than content at 4.9 and measurement at 4.8.

That is not a surprise. Formalizing a learning strategy means deciding which business goals learning will support, which capabilities matter most, and how success will be measured. Those are the same decisions the alignment statements ask about.

Organizations part-way through also land part-way between: 14.5, almost exactly midway. Data shows us that alignment starts improving even before the strategy work is finished. Talking to executives and connecting learning to business goals lifts the alignment score while the strategy is in development.

Mid-market organizations trail furthest on alignment

Of the six dimensions, alignment is where organizations of 201 to 1,000 employees sit furthest below larger organizations. They average 14.2 out of 25, against 16.4 for organizations above 1,000 employees.

Mid-market learning leaders report weaker results on three specific practices:

- **Learning strategy supports key business goals:** 2.96, against 3.52 for organizations above 1,000
- **Learning tied to performance metrics and KPIs:** 2.35, against 2.89
- **Regular conversations with executive stakeholders:** 3.01, against 3.48

Each of those gaps is about half a rating level. Across the whole dimension, the mid-market sits 2.2 points below organizations above 1,000.



The takeaway:

the mid-market is behind on the whole relationship with the business. Mid-market learning leaders meet executives less often, connect their work to business goals less clearly, and demonstrate performance impact less consistently than their counterparts in larger organizations.

Section 9 examines why, and what these organizations can do about it.

Section 04 | Learning governance

Establishing decision-making structures and enterprise-level prioritization for learning investments and initiatives.



SECTION 4: LEARNING GOVERNANCE

Figure 8:
Learning governance — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Learning initiatives prioritized at enterprise level	2.91	1.16
Clear decision rights and accountability structures	2.62	1.20
Governance practices reviewed and updated regularly	2.51	1.26
Stakeholders from across the organization involved	2.45	1.19
Cross-functional governance body overseeing strategy	2.37	1.30

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

The typical organization rates these five practices between "early development" and "inconsistent practice". Most have started building decision-making structures for learning.

12.9

Few have finished them.
That comes out at 12.9 out of 25,
fifth of the six dimensions and second lowest.

To place your own function:

- Above 17 is the top quarter of the study.
- 13 sits at the median, a low bar set by a low average.
- Below 9 the bottom quarter.

Governance matters because it determines whether decisions about learning get made consistently.

SECTION 4: LEARNING GOVERNANCE

Most organizations prioritize learning without a governance body in place

2.91

Prioritizing learning at enterprise level scores highest in this dimension at 2.91.

2.37

Having a cross-functional body to oversee learning strategy scores lowest at 2.37.

What this means:

decisions get made, but no one is accountable for them

Decisions about learning investment are getting made, but in most organizations no standing group is accountable for making them.



The governance body question produces the most divided response of any statement in the scorecard:

- **56.2%**
  of organizations have no cross-functional governance body, or have only started forming one.
- **24.0%**
  have one that meets and functions consistently.

Answers cluster at the two ends of the scale. More than a third of organizations (36.8%) say no such body exists. One organization in five sits in the middle, at a 3.

Where no governance body exists, decisions about learning still get made. Enterprise-level prioritization scores 2.91, the highest statement in the dimension — someone is ranking learning initiatives across the business.

SECTION 4: LEARNING GOVERNANCE

What is missing is everything around those decisions.

- Who holds the right to make them scores 2.62.
- Whether people from across the business are involved scores 2.45.
- Whether anyone reviews how the decisions get made scores 2.51.

So learning gets prioritized, but the prioritizing is done by whoever happens to be doing it, without agreed authority, without the business in the room, and without anyone checking the method afterwards.

Governance separates strong performers from weak ones more sharply than any other dimension

5.0

Governance has the widest spread in the study, at 5.0 points.

4.3

Alignment, by comparison, sits at 4.3.

4.2

Technology at 4.2.

A wide spread means organizations sit far apart from one another, not clustered around the average. The distance shows clearly at the two ends of the study:

Organizations in the bottom quarter on overall maturity average 7.9 out of 25 on governance.

Organizations in the top quarter average 18.2.

That is a gap of more than ten points on a 25–point dimension. On alignment, content, and culture, the strongest and weakest organizations sit far closer together.

For learning leaders, this makes governance a useful diagnostic. A low governance score alongside reasonable scores elsewhere identifies a specific, fixable problem rather than a general shortfall.

SECTION 4: LEARNING GOVERNANCE

Governance is part of the strategy work according to data

Strategy status	Respondents	Governance score
Formal strategy in place	123	14.6
In development	81	11.8
None	49	10.3

Governance scores out of 25.

10.3 – 14.6

Organizations with a formal learning strategy score 4.3 points higher on governance than those without.

Governance is measured through five statements, each rated 1 to 5. A 4.3-point difference means four of the five practices rated one level higher — moving, for example, from "inconsistent practice" to "consistently applied" across teams and functions.

The connection runs in one direction. Formalizing a learning strategy requires agreeing who decides what, who is accountable for delivery, and how competing requests get ranked. Those agreements form the core of governance — and part of the strategy work.

Section 05 | Technology and ecosystem integration

Connecting learning platforms, tools, systems, and data to create a seamless and scalable learning environment.



SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

Figure 9:
Technology and ecosystem integration — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Platforms integrated (LMS, LXP, content library, analytics)	2.89	1.25
Learning technologies user-friendly and widely adopted	2.83	0.98
Roadmap for evolving the learning tech stack	2.33	1.17
Learner data used to drive personalization	2.10	1.08
Strategy for AI and automation in learning	2.07	1.01

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

The typical organization rates these five practices between "early development" and "inconsistent practice" — platforms have been bought and are running, but the data they produce is largely unused.

That comes out at 12.2 out of 25, the lowest of all six dimensions.

The three lowest-scoring statements in the entire scorecard sit in this dimension, and all three concern what organizations do with learner data. That matters beyond technology: personalization, AI, and the outcome measurement Section 7 identifies as the strongest signal of maturity all depend on learner data being usable. Most organizations have the data and cannot use it.

12.2

To place your own function:

- Above 15 is the top quarter of the study.
- 12 sits at the median.
- Below 9 the bottom quarter.

SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

Organizations have the platforms, but they're not using the data

The two highest statements in this dimension both describe technology that exists and works. Platforms are integrated at 2.89 out of 5, technologies are user-friendly and widely adopted at 2.83 — around a 3, meaning the practice is in place in parts of the organization (but patchy in others). Using the data those platforms produce scores lower, at 2.10.

Here is how organizations rated it:

11.6%

of organizations use learner data to personalize what employees see, consistently and across the organization

20.5%

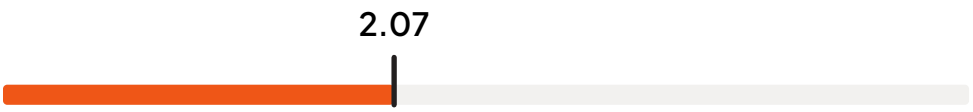
use it unevenly across the organization

67.8%

either do not use it at all, or have only started

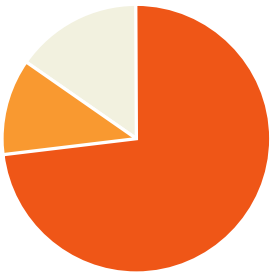
Every learning platform records completions. What 67.8% of organizations do not do is use that record to decide what learning each employee is offered. That unused data matters more than it ever has, since it is the same data AI needs to personalize learning at any scale.

The data surprise: AI readiness has barely moved since Q1 2026



A strategy for AI and automation in learning scores 2.07 out of 5 — the lowest of all 30 statements in the scorecard.

The January 2026 benchmark report recorded 1.97 on the same statement. Seven months later the figure has moved by one-tenth of a point, which is to say it has not meaningfully moved at all.



- **73.3%**
  of organizations have no strategy for AI and automation in learning, or have only begun forming one.
- **11.6%**
  have one that is established and applied.

SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

Organizations sit unusually close together on this statement. The spread of 1.01 is the narrowest in the dimension, which means low AI scores appear across the entire sample, not just among organizations with lower overall maturity. Learning leaders benchmarking against their peers on AI readiness will find almost everyone in the same position.

The challenge is that AI applied to learning requires learner data that is integrated, current, and trusted — and 67.8% of organizations have not built that. Buying AI tools before the data foundation exists produces capability with nothing to apply it to.



Diane Gaa, VP of AI Enablement and Program Management, on AI readiness

The benchmark raises a bigger question than AI readiness: has the way L&D operates evolved to meet what organizations need from us now?

In conversations over the past year I've seen real progress on AI literacy, prompt writing, and tool training. Most AI enablement still sits apart from the work itself — experimental and disconnected.

AI is a technology, and technology exists to enable work. So the opportunity is not helping people get better at a tool. It is understanding how the work could be better, where AI adds value, and what people need to do differently to perform.

That requires L&D to work differently. Instead of asking what someone needs to learn, ask what they need to accomplish — and whether the work is designed to achieve it.

> *Can it be simplified, automated, augmented?*
>
> *Where does human judgment matter?*
>
> *How will roles change?*

Start with your next project. Find the performance problem behind the request before assuming training is the answer.

SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

When it comes to technology, strategy doesn't make much difference

Strategy status	Respondents	Technology score
Formal strategy in place	123	13.3
In development	81	11.9
None	49	10.1

Technology scores out of 25.

- Organizations with a formal strategy score 13.3 out of 25 on technology.
- Those without score 10.1 — a 3.2-point gap, the narrowest of the six dimensions. Technology is also the lowest-scoring dimension overall.

The WeLearn take.

Learning technology gets bought whatever the state of the strategy. And once it is bought, few organizations have a plan for what comes next — the roadmap statement scores 2.33 out of 5, third lowest of all 30.

Buying without a strategy, then running without a roadmap, is how organizations end up with more tools than purpose.

Section 06 | Content and experience strategy

Designing engaging, inclusive, and strategic learning experiences aligned to learner needs and business outcomes.



SECTION 6: CONTENT AND EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Figure 10:
Content and experience strategy — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Blend of modalities (video, social, interactive)	3.54	1.10
Learning accessible, inclusive, and engaging	3.43	1.00
Content aligned to critical skills and roles	3.26	1.01
Content regularly curated and updated	3.19	1.08
Defined content strategy and taxonomy	2.77	1.18

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

Content is the strongest of the six dimensions at 16.2 out of 25, and it is the only one where more than half of organizations rate a practice as established: 57.8% offer learning consistently across multiple formats.

Even so, the dimension average works out at 3.2 per statement — practices that are in place in parts of the organization, but patchy and not running the same way everywhere.

16.2

To place your own function:

- Above 19 is the top quarter of the study.
- 17 sits at the median.
- Below 14 the bottom quarter.

SECTION 6: CONTENT AND EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Organizations produce good learning without a system for organizing it

Organizations score highest in this dimension on offering learning in a mix of formats (video, social, interactive) at 3.54.

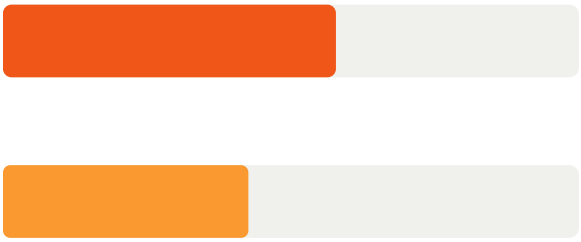
They score lowest on having a defined content strategy and taxonomy, at 2.77.



What this means:

good content with no framework to organize it

Learning teams are building varied, accessible, well-received content without an agreed framework for what exists, how it is labelled, or how it maps to the skills the business needs.



Two data points back this up:

- **57.8%**
  of organizations consistently offer learning across multiple formats: video, social, interactive, and others.
- **42.6%**
  have no defined content strategy and taxonomy, or have only started building one.

A taxonomy is the system that says what each piece of content covers, which role or skill it serves, who owns it, and when it expires. Without one, organizations may produce the same course twice in different business units, cannot answer which critical skills the catalogue actually covers, and have no reliable basis for deciding what to retire.

Content quality is not the problem in most learning functions. Knowing what they already have is.

SECTION 6: CONTENT AND EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Content and measurement

Not knowing what content you have turns out to be linked to not knowing what it achieved.

0.69

Content correlates with Measurement and Analytics at 0.69 — the strongest relationship between any two dimensions in the study.

Correlation of this strength means organizations that score high on one almost always score high on the other. The two dimensions require the same underlying discipline: knowing what exists, deciding what it is for, and measuring whether it worked.

For learning leaders, this indicates that investment in content organization and investment in measurement are not competing priorities.

A formal learning strategy is worth 4.9 points on content

Strategy status	Respondents	Content score
Formal strategy in place	123	18.0
In development	81	15.3
None	49	13.1

Content scores out of 25.

13.1 – 18.0

Organizations with a formal learning strategy score ⌃⌃ 4.9 points higher on content than those without.

Content is measured through five statements, each rated 1 to 5. A 4.9-point difference means all five practices rated one level higher — moving, for example, from "inconsistent practice" to "consistently applied" across teams and functions.

This is the second widest strategy-related gap in the study, behind alignment.

Formalizing a learning strategy requires deciding which capabilities matter most to the business. That decision is what a content taxonomy organizes against.

Section 07 | Measurement and analytics

Capturing learning outcomes and using data to drive decisions, inform strategy, and demonstrate impact.



SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS

Figure 11:
Measurement and analytics — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Learning metrics communicated clearly to leadership	2.90	1.16
Data used to continuously improve programs	2.86	1.13
Tracking beyond completions and satisfaction	2.74	1.18
Learning outcomes tied to business impact	2.71	1.14
Dashboards that inform strategic decisions	2.30	1.18

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

Measurement scores 13.5 out of 25, fourth of the six dimensions — but the ranking matters less here than what the score predicts.

0.84

Measurement tracks overall maturity more closely than any other dimension, at 0.84, and the single statement most strongly associated with a high total score is "learning outcomes tied to business impact."

13.5

An organization's measurement score is the best available indicator of how the rest of its learning function is running.

To place your own function:

- Above 17 is the top quarter of the study.
- 13 sits at the median.
- Below 10 the bottom quarter.

SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS

Organizations report to leadership more than they measure

Organizations score highest in this dimension on communicating metrics to leadership, at 2.90, and lowest on having dashboards that inform strategic decisions, at 2.30.

32.6%

Nearly a third
report to leadership consistently.

60.5%

Six in ten
have no dashboard informing decisions, or have only started building one.

The two are very different activities. A report can be pulled together after the fact from whatever is already available. A dashboard means deciding in advance which numbers matter and sticking to them, a**nd only 25.2% of organizations tie learning outcomes to business impact at all.**

The statement that best predicts overall learning maturity

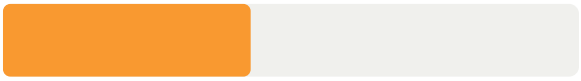
Across all 30 statements in the scorecard,

“learning outcomes tied to business impact”
has the strongest relationship with total maturity score, at 0.75.

A correlation of 0.75 means organizations scoring well on this statement almost always score well overall, and organizations scoring poorly on it rarely score well anywhere. Of the five statements most strongly associated with high total scores, three come from this dimension.



- **Only 25.2%**
  of organizations consistently tie learning outcomes to business impact.



- **43.0%**
  either do not do it at all or have only started.

SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS

This connects directly to a finding in Section 3. Learning leaders report frequent executive access, at 3.33, but weaker standing as a strategic enabler, at 2.93. Measurement is what closes that gap. Executives extend influence to functions that can demonstrate a contribution to results, and demonstrating that contribution is what this dimension measures.



Loren Sanders, VP of Learning Strategy and Consulting, on measurement

Measurement earns its value when the evidence changes a decision. Learning functions decide every day what to build, fund, scale, improve, and stop. Those decisions get stronger when we can answer four questions:

> *Did performance change?*
>
> *Did the original problem improve?*
>
> *Did learning contribute?*
>
> *What should we do next?*

Sometimes the evidence confirms the investment. Sometimes results are mixed. Sometimes people learn and performance stays the same. Sometimes it sends us back to the original diagnosis. Each finding has value when it improves the next decision.

We are at the table. The question this benchmark raises is what we bring with us. Knowing what was delivered, who completed it, and whether participants valued it is useful. Business decisions require us to answer what changed.

Waiting until a program ends leaves teams measuring whatever data happens to be available. That is how completion rates become evidence of success.

Ask yourself:
If your measurement disappeared tomorrow, which decisions would become harder to make?

SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS

A formal learning strategy is worth 4.8 points on measurement

Strategy status	Respondents	Measurement score
Formal strategy in place	123	15.4
In development	81	12.2
None	49	10.6

Measurement scores out of 25.

10.6 – 15.4

Organizations with a formal learning strategy score ⌃⌃ 4.8 points higher on measurement than those without.

Measurement is measured through five statements, each rated 1 to 5. A 4.8–point difference means all five practices rated one level higher — moving, for example, from "inconsistent practice" to "consistently applied" across teams and functions.

The connection is direct. **Formalizing a learning strategy requires stating how success will be measured.** An organization that has answered that question knows exactly what to look at.

Measurement has declined as a dimension score, or has it?

Measurement is the only dimension that has shifted significantly since the last edition of this benchmarking study. The January 2026 report recorded 14.2 out of 25. The 141 organizations that have responded since scored 12.9. The statement that fell furthest asks whether an organization tracks more than completions and satisfaction, down from 2.97 to 2.54.

It's not an apples to apples comparison because fewer of the newer respondents have a formal learning strategy in place,

41.7% versus 57.4%

and more sit in mid market (vs. enterprises). Account for those two things and the difference between the groups disappears entirely.

SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYTICS

The drop represents the survey audience, not a real decline. Organizations that have not finished their strategy work score lower on all six dimensions — but measurement is the only one where the shift in the respondent mix was large enough to show. Alignment, governance, technology, content and culture held steady between the two groups.

How do we interpret this?

Learning functions don't stop running programs when strategy is unsettled. What lapses is the work of connecting those programs to business results. Measurement is the one activity that requires someone to have decided in advance what success looks like, and align it to strategy — so it is the first to lapse when nobody has done that work.

Mid-market organizations show this most clearly. More of them have strategy work still under way than any size group above 200 employees, and they record the lowest measurement score in the study:

1.99 / 5.0

on dashboards that inform strategic decisions,
the only segment below 2.0 on any statement.

That leaves them in a loop Section 9 examines in full. Building a formal learning strategy needs an accurate account of where the function stands, which needs measurement data. Investing in measurement requires a strategy. Mid-market organizations are more likely than any other segment to be caught between the two.

Section 08 | Culture and change readiness

Embedding learning into the culture and ensuring people are equipped and motivated to grow and adapt.



SECTION 8: CULTURE AND CHANGE READINESS

Figure 12:
Culture and change readiness — question scores

Statement	Average	Spread
Learning embedded in company culture	3.12	1.15
Employees feel supported and encouraged to learn	3.12	1.03
Learning a component of change and transformation	3.10	1.08
Learning connected to performance and growth conversations	2.83	1.06
Leaders modeling continuous learning	2.80	1.08

Rated 1 to 5, where 1 is not yet in place and 5 is fully mature. n=258.

Culture scores 15.0 out of 25, third of the six dimensions. Its five statements sit closer together than any other dimension's.

2.80 – 3.12

Just 0.32 points between the highest and the lowest, where technology spans 0.82. Organizations perform consistently across all five, whether consistently well or consistently poorly.

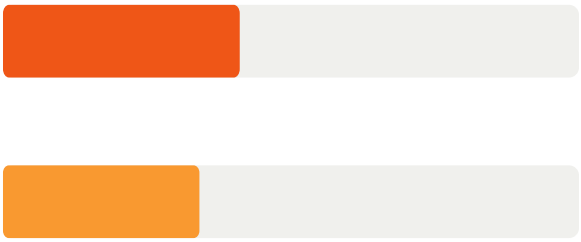
Where learning is embedded, leaders tend to model it and employees tend to feel supported. Where it isn't, none of those tend to hold either.

SECTION 8: CULTURE AND CHANGE READINESS

Learning leaders report a learning culture. They see less of it in senior leaders.

Learning embedded in company culture scores 3.12. Leaders modeling continuous learning scores 2.80. Every respondent rated both statements about their own organization, so the gap sits inside each one:

A culture learning leaders judge reasonably healthy, and senior leaders they do not see taking part in it.



- **41.1%**
  of organizations have learning consistently embedded in company culture.
- **34.1%**
  report that senior leaders rarely or never model continuous learning.

Employees judge what an organization values by what its leaders do, not by what its policies state. Where senior leaders do not visibly participate in learning, culture programs carry a credibility problem no amount of internal communication resolves.

Only a quarter of organizations discuss learning in performance and growth conversations

Learning connected to performance and growth conversations scores 2.83, against 3.12 for employees feeling supported and encouraged to learn.

What this means:

learning and career progression are still separate conversations

Employees are told learning matters and are given access to it. Only 26.7% of organizations connect it to performance and growth conversations, so for most people the learning they do and the discussion of where they are going next are separate.

That limits what learning can do for retention and internal mobility. An employee who completes a development program and hears nothing about it when their progression is discussed learns what the organization actually rewards.

SECTION 8: CULTURE AND CHANGE READINESS

You can't fix culture with culture work

"Learning embedded in company culture" has the second strongest relationship with total maturity score of all 30 statements, at 0.74.

A correlation this strong does not mean culture work raises overall maturity. **Culture scores rise when the practices in the other five dimensions are already working** — when learning connects to business goals, when governance gives the function a clear remit and a way to prioritize, and when measurement demonstrates results.

For learning leaders, this changes where to look when culture scores come back low.
The cause usually sits in alignment, governance, or measurement rather than in culture itself.

A formal learning strategy is worth 4.3 points on culture

Strategy status	Respondents	Culture score
Formal strategy in place	123	16.6
In development	81	13.9
None	49	12.3

Culture scores out of 25.

12.3 – 16.6

Organizations with a formal learning strategy score ⌃⌃ 4.3 points higher on culture than those without.

Culture is measured through five statements, each rated 1 to 5. A 4.3-point difference means four of the five practices rated one level higher — moving, for example, from "inconsistent practice" to "consistently applied" across teams and functions.

Section 09

Company size and learning maturity



SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

Learning leaders are regularly asked how their function compares with others. The comparison almost always begins with company size, on the assumption that a 400-person organization should be measured against other 400-person organizations, and that larger enterprises operate at a level smaller companies cannot reach.

The data supports part of that assumption and contradicts the rest. Company size does separate organizations in this study, but only up to a point, and the separation turns out to be driven by something other than scale.

This section sets out where size matters, where it doesn't matter, and what explains the difference. It closes with what the data shows about industry.

Learning maturity rises with headcount, then levels off

Overall learning maturity — the combined score across all six dimensions — increases with company size up to roughly 1,000 employees. Above that point it holds steady.

Figure 13:
Overall maturity score by company size

Company size	Respondents	Average score	Maturity band
1-50 employees	16	95.2	Operational
51-200 employees	21	75.8	Operational
201-500 employees	46	79.8	Operational
501-1,000 employees	38	79.4	Operational
1,001-5,000 employees	60	89.4	Operational
5,000+ employees	72	89.5	Operational

Scores out of 150. n=253. Five respondents did not report company size. The 1-50 and 51-200 groups are the smallest in the study, at 16 and 21 respondents, and their averages move sharply on a handful of responses. The size comparisons in this section are drawn between groups of 201 employees and above.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

- Organizations of 1,001–5,000 employees average 89.4 out of 150.
- Organizations of 5,000+ employees average 89.5.

The difference between these two groups is one-tenth of a point on a 150-point scale.

That runs against a common assumption. Larger enterprises hold larger L&D budgets, larger teams, and more capable technology. Those advantages are real, and they are offset by what comes with scale: more business units to align, longer approval chains, more legacy systems to connect, and greater distance between the learning function and the executives setting priorities.

The net effect is neutral. Organizations above 1,000 employees sit in the same maturity band whatever their size, and show the same pattern across the six dimensions — highest on content and alignment, lowest on technology and governance. Growing past 1,000 employees does not advance a learning function, and it does not hold one back.

Breaking this down: the mid-market gap is strategy, not size

Organizations between 201 and 1,000 employees average 79.6 out of 150 — around ten points below both larger groups, or ten of the thirty rated practices sitting one level lower.

The obvious explanation is size — smaller budgets, smaller teams, less to work with. That explanation does not survive the data, and what replaces it is a useful finding for anyone running a mid-market learning function.

Where the gap appears

Figure 14:
Dimension scores, 201–1,000 employees compared with organizations above 1,000

Dimension	201–1,000	Above 1,000	Difference
Alignment to Business Strategy	14.2	16.4	2.2
Content and Experience Strategy	15.2	17.0	1.8
Culture and Change Readiness	14.0	15.6	1.6
Measurement and Analytics	12.5	14.1	1.6
Technology and Ecosystem Integration	11.3	12.7	1.4
Learning Governance	12.2	13.3	1.1

Dimension scores out of 25.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

The ten-point gap is not spread evenly. Alignment to Business Strategy shows the widest difference, at 2.2 points out of 25 — the clearest size-related finding in the study, and one that would appear by chance in roughly one survey in five thousand.

The individual statements show what that means in practice.

- Asked whether their learning strategy directly supports key business goals, mid-market respondents average 2.96 against 3.52 for larger organizations.
- Asked whether learning initiatives are tied to performance metrics and KPIs, they average 2.35 against 2.89.
- Asked whether they hold regular conversations with executive stakeholders, 3.01 against 3.48.

The above figures describe a learning function operating at a distance from the business it serves. Mid-market learning leaders meet executives less often, connect their work to business goals less clearly, and demonstrate performance impact less consistently than their counterparts in larger organizations.

Learning Governance is the exception, at 1.1 points — narrow enough that it could be down to which companies happened to answer. On governance, organizations between 201 and 1,000 employees have decision-making structures broadly comparable to those in far larger companies.

On the machinery for making decisions about learning, mid-market functions are no further behind than larger organizations. Where they fall furthest behind is connecting that learning to the business.

A formal learning strategy matters more than company size

What raises an organization's maturity score is finishing a formal learning strategy (versus size).

Between two organizations of the same headcount, the one with a formal learning strategy scores 27 points higher out of 150 — 27 of the 30 rated practices sitting one level up, and the most statistically solid finding in the study. Between two organizations at the same stage on strategy, headcount is worth about 5.5 points, a difference that would be considered normal variation between organizations.

What 27 points means

An organization scoring 69 out of 150 falls in the Reactive band, where learning responds to requests as they come in and operates largely disconnected from business priorities. Add 27 points and the same organization scores 96, placing it in the Operational band, where learning aligns to business goals and functions as a recognized part of how the organization runs.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

What produces the 27 points

The 27-point difference reflects the strategy work itself. Organizations arrive at a formal learning strategy by interviewing stakeholders, assessing where the learning function currently stands, setting priorities against business goals, and agreeing those priorities with leadership. Formalizing that into a documented strategy captures the outcome of that work. An organization that produces a strategy on paper without completing the work behind it gains nothing this study can detect.



Heather Curtin, Director of Strategic Engagement, on getting to one page

One of the best starting points isn't a complicated framework. It's a single page.

I've sat with L&D leaders as they worked their strategy down until it fit on one page, and watched what that made possible: priorities got clearer, competing ideas had to be reconciled, and leaders had something concrete they could use to explain the strategy.

The process mattered as much as the page. Each iteration surfaced what was actually on their minds and created space to work through the tensions — between what leadership wanted, what the brand needed to reflect, and what learners could realistically absorb. By the end they had a strategy they could stand behind in front of any stakeholder, because they had built it.

Getting there took more than a template. It took understanding the organization and its culture, asking questions, testing assumptions, and staying with the details until the pieces aligned.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

Figure 15:
Strategy status by company size

Company size	Formal strategy in place	In development	None
1–200 employees	18.9%	45.9%	35.1%
201–1,000 employees	40.5%	38.1%	21.4%
1,001–5,000 employees	63.3%	21.7%	15.0%
5,000+ employees	61.1%	26.4%	12.5%

Organizations between 201 and 1,000 employees do not trail large organizations because they are mid-sized. They trail because 40.5% of them have a formal learning strategy in place, against 63.3% of organizations with 1,001–5,000 employees.

Company size is a signal of strategy maturity rather than a driver of it.

Knowing that an organization employs 20,000 people is useful mainly because it predicts that the organization has a formal learning strategy. Where a mid-market organization has completed that work, its scores rise accordingly.

Why fewer mid-market organizations have a formal learning strategy in place

The gap is not explained by lack of intent. Organizations between 201 and 1,000 employees report the highest rate of active strategy work of any band above 200 employees: 38.1% have a learning strategy in development, against 21.7% of organizations with 1,001–5,000 employees.

So, mid-market L&D teams are definitely engaged with this work, but a smaller proportion have carried it through to a formal strategy.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

Figure 16:
Overall maturity score by strategy status, organizations of 201–1,000 employees

Strategy status	Respondents	Average score	Maturity band
Formal strategy in place	34	89.8	Operational
In development	32	79.5	Operational
None	18	60.6	Reactive

A mid-market organization with no learning strategy averages 60.6, placing it in the Reactive band.
In these organizations:

Learning responds to requests as they come in.	Compliance and mandatory training drive most activity.	The function has little visibility into business priorities and little standing to influence them.

A mid-market organization with a formal strategy in place averages 89.8, placing it in the Operational band.

Here, learning initiatives connect to stated business goals, the function has a defined remit, and leadership recognizes L&D as part of how the organization delivers on its plans.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

The WeLearn take.

WeLearn sees four factors behind the mid-market gap.

1. **Direct contact substitutes for a formal strategy until it cannot.**

   Under 200 employees, the L&D lead and the executives setting business priorities tend to spend time together. They are often in the same meetings and the same conversations, and that contact does the work a formal strategy would otherwise have to do.

   The data supports this. Organizations under 200 employees average 9.5 points above the 201–1,000 band even after accounting for strategy status. They manage this with only 18.9% having a formal strategy in place, the lowest rate in the study.

   Above 200 employees, a formal strategy becomes necessary. L&D and executives spend less time together, business priorities reach the learning function later, and informal coordination degrades. But only 40.5% of mid-market organizations have one in place.

2. **Nothing external requires a formal strategy.**

   Large organizations produce learning strategies partly because something outside the function demands one. Audit cycles require evidence of training governance. Board reporting requires a stated approach to workforce capability. Regulatory review in financial services, healthcare, and manufacturing requires defined process.

   Mid-market L&D functions face no equivalent. As we have seen, governance is the one dimension where organizations of 201–1,000 employees nearly match larger ones. These teams can and do make decisions. Nothing obliges them to set out the strategy the decisions should be following.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

3. **Capacity.**

Formalizing a learning strategy requires stakeholder interviews, an assessment of current state, prioritization against business goals, and review cycles with leadership.

Mid-market L&D functions run lean, often with two or three people covering design, delivery, administration, and vendor management. Strategy work can be seen to compete directly with delivery.

4. **No evidence base to build from.**

A credible learning strategy starts with a defensible account of where the organization stands. That account requires data.

Mid-market organizations have the least of it. On dashboards that inform strategic decisions, organizations of 201–1,000 employees average 1.99 out of 5 — the lowest score recorded by any segment in the study, and the only one below 2.0. On tracking beyond completions and satisfaction they average 2.51, against 2.90 for organizations of 5,000+. On tying learning outcomes to business impact, 2.51 against 3.00.

These teams cannot describe their current state because they are not measuring it.

The measurement gap and the strategy gap reinforce one another: without data the strategy is harder to build, and without a strategy there is no agreed reason to invest in measurement.

SECTION 9: COMPANY SIZE AND LEARNING MATURITY

Industry does not predict learning maturity

The 29 industry categories in the scorecard, plus an "Other" option, were grouped into seven sectors for analysis. Every sector averages between 84.7 and 89.1 out of 150.

Figure 17:
Overall maturity score by sector

Sector	Respondents	Average score
Healthcare and Life Sciences	23	89.1
Consumer, Retail and Hospitality	27	87.1
Public Sector and Education	23	86.7
Technology	18	85.8
Manufacturing and Industrial	64	85.4
Professional Services	24	84.9
Financial Services and Insurance	60	84.7

The full range across every sector is 4.4 points out of 150 — fewer than five of the 30 rated practices separating the highest-scoring sector from the lowest. Set against the 27 points a formal learning strategy is worth, sector barely registers.

Learning leaders should benchmark against the overall distribution in Section 10, and against organizations of similar size using Figure 13.

This August 2026 benchmark report draws on 258 responses, with each sector holding between 18 and 60 organizations, enough that no single company skews a sector's average.

Seven sectors covering regulated and unregulated industries, capital-intensive and service businesses, public and private organizations, all landing within five points of one another. Learning maturity is determined by how a learning function is run, not by the industry it operates in.

Section 10 | Compare your scores



SECTION 10: COMPARE YOUR SCORES

The tables below place any score against the full sample of 258 organizations.

Find your total score in the first row and your six dimension scores in the rows beneath.

Figure 18:
Percentile benchmarks

Score	Bottom 25%	Middle 50%	Top 25%
Total score	Below 71	71–100	Above 100
Alignment to Business Strategy	Below 13	13–18	Above 18
Learning Governance	Below 9	9–17	Above 17
Technology and Ecosystem Integration	Below 9	9–15	Above 15
Content and Experience Strategy	Below 14	14–19	Above 19
Measurement and Analytics	Below 10	10–17	Above 17
Culture and Change Readiness	Below 12	12–18	Above 18

Dimension scores out of 25. Total score out of 150. n=258.

What this means:

dimension scores tell you more than a total

The useful comparison is between your dimensions. An organization in the middle 50% overall with one dimension in the bottom quarter has a specific problem to address.

The most common version of this pattern in the study is a strong content score alongside a weak measurement score — organizations producing good learning they cannot evidence.

SECTION 10: COMPARE YOUR SCORES

A top-quarter technology score is lower than it sounds

Technology has the lowest top-quarter threshold of any dimension at 15 out of 25. An organization can reach the top 25% of the profession on technology while still sitting below "consistently applied". That reflects how weak technology scores are across the study than how strong the organization is.

Where a score sits against the maturity bands

Total score	Band	Share of study
Below 75	Reactive	29.8%
75–104	Operational	51.2%
105–129	Strategic	16.7%
130 or above	Transformational	2.3%

Scoring 105 places an organization in the top fifth of the profession. Scoring 130 places it in the top 2%.

Taken the scorecard?

learningstrategyscorecard.com

Section 11 | What to do next



SECTION 11: WHAT TO DO NEXT

The January 2026 benchmark report set out five priorities: complete the strategy work, build measurement that demonstrates business impact, establish governance before scaling, build the data foundation AI requires, and make sure senior leaders are seen learning themselves.

The larger sample size in this benchmark study has confirmed these priorities.

Priority 1: Complete the strategy work

Organizations with a formal learning strategy in place score ⩓ 27 points higher than those without.

Partial completion delivers partial benefit. Organizations with a strategy in development average 80.0, against 95.6 for those that finished — a difference of 15.6 points, or roughly 15 of the 30 practices sitting one level lower.

Ask your team: Do we have an agreed learning strategy that names the business goals we support, the capabilities we prioritize, and how success will be judged?



Bill Ryan, Learning Strategist, on why strategy work is never done

Strategy work is never truly finished.

What the highest-scoring organizations have is not a document but a living system of performance — one they revisit as business metrics and operational realities shift.

The 27-point gap is about persistence as much as planning: staying in conversation with the business, and translating performance data into capability goals that broaden and build the workforce.

In practice that means treating learning as a strategic business tool embedded in the rhythm of operations and the flow of work — connected to sales targets, customer satisfaction, productivity measures. When learning strategy becomes part of how the organization measures success, it stops being a project and starts being a discipline.

Finishing the strategy isn't the end. It's the beginning of continuous alignment and renewal.

SECTION 11: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Priority 2: Build measurement that demonstrates business impact

Measurement predicts overall maturity more strongly than any other dimension. "Learning outcomes tied to business impact" is the single statement most associated with high total scores across all 30.

Only 25.2%

of organizations consistently tie outcomes to impact. Most report activity to leadership rather than outcomes.

Ask your team: Can we show how learning connected to business results using data?

Priority 3: Establish governance before scaling

Governance carries the widest spread of any dimension. Organizations either have decision-making structures or operate without them, with little middle ground.

36.8%

More than a third of organizations have no cross-functional governance body at all.

Ask your team: Is there a standing group accountable for prioritizing learning investment, with clear decision rights?

SECTION 11: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Priority 4: Build the data foundation AI requires

A strategy for AI and automation scores 2.07 out of 5, the lowest of all 30 statements, and that has barely moved in the L&D space in 2026.

The constraint is data.

67.8%

of organizations do not use learner data to personalize what employees see.

Ask your team: Do we have learner data integrated and current enough that an AI tool could act on it?

Priority 5: Make senior leaders visible learners

3.12

Learning embedded in culture scores 3.12

2.80

Leaders modeling continuous learning scores 2.80.

Ask your team: Do our senior leaders visibly participate in learning, and is learning part of performance and growth conversations?

SECTION 11: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Where to start, by company size



Organizations of 201 to 1,000 employees.

Complete the strategy work first. This group scores lowest in the study on AI strategy at 1.86 out of 5 and on dashboards at 1.99 — the only segment below 2.0 on either. Both are downstream of strategy. Investing in AI tools or analytics platforms before the strategy exists means buying capability with no defined purpose.



Organizations of 1,001 employees and above.

Roughly 62% already have a formal strategy in place, so governance is the next constraint. A cross-functional governance body scores 2.37 among organizations of 1,001–5,000 and 2.46 among those with 5,000+, well below their scores on every other governance statement.



Organizations under 200 employees.

This group scores highest in the study on AI strategy at 2.38 and holds strong alignment scores at 15.6, despite only 18.9% having a formal strategy in place. Direct contact between learning leaders and business leaders does the work a formal strategy would otherwise do. That advantage disappears above 200 employees, so organizations approaching that size should consider formalizing.

SECTION 11: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Where to start, by maturity band



Reactive, below 75.

Complete a strategy, even a simple one-pager for example, Strategy-on-a-page or SOAP. Choose one business metric to connect learning to. Create a governance forum, however informal.



Operational, 75 to 104.

Strengthen the link between learning and business KPIs. Formalize governance with clear decision rights. Build dashboards that inform decisions rather than report activity.



Strategic, 105 to 129.

Pursue outcome measurement tied to business impact. Consider FRAME™ to report for business and financial reporting. Invest in data capability for personalization. Widen governance to include more of the organization.



Transformational, 130 and above.

Six organizations in this study reached this band. Share practice externally, and push on adaptive learning and AI where the data foundation now supports it.

Authors



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About

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Curious how you'd score?

The Learning Strategy Scorecard shows you where your learning operation is solid and where the gaps are. Take it at learningstrategyscorecard.com.

If you have your results in hand and want a second set of eyes, a working session with a WeLearn strategist gives you space to talk it through.



Book time here

Appendix

All 30 statements by dimension

Correlation shows how strongly each statement relates to an organization's total maturity score.

Alignment to Business Strategy

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Regular conversations with executive stakeholders	3.33	1.10	0.55
Learning strategy directly supports key business goals	3.31	1.02	0.65
Strategy updated in response to changes in business direction	3.31	1.11	0.67
Business leaders see L&D as a strategic enabler	2.93	1.11	0.65
Learning initiatives tied to performance metrics and KPIs	2.67	1.13	0.64

Learning Governance

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Learning initiatives prioritized at enterprise level	2.91	1.16	0.71
Clear decision rights and accountability structures	2.62	1.20	0.71
Governance practices reviewed and updated regularly	2.51	1.26	0.65
Stakeholders from across the organization involved in governance	2.45	1.19	0.65
Cross-functional governance body overseeing learning strategy	2.37	1.30	0.64

Technology and Ecosystem Integration

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Platforms integrated (LMS, LXP, content library, analytics)	2.89	1.25	0.53
Learning technologies user-friendly and widely adopted	2.83	0.98	0.64
Roadmap for evolving the learning tech stack	2.33	1.17	0.63
Learner data used to drive personalization	2.10	1.08	0.59
Strategy for AI and automation in learning	2.07	1.01	0.58

Content and Experience Strategy

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Blend of modalities (video, social, interactive)	3.54	1.10	0.66
Learning accessible, inclusive, and engaging	3.43	1.00	0.66
Content aligned to critical skills and roles	3.26	1.01	0.68
Content regularly curated and updated	3.19	1.08	0.67
Defined content strategy and taxonomy	2.77	1.18	0.62

Measurement and Analytics

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Learning metrics communicated clearly to leadership	2.90	1.16	0.70
Data used to continuously improve programs	2.86	1.13	0.66
Tracking beyond completions and satisfaction	2.74	1.18	0.70
Learning outcomes tied to business impact	2.71	1.14	0.75
Dashboards that inform strategic decisions	2.30	1.18	0.64

Culture and Change Readiness

Statement	Average	Spread	Correlation
Learning embedded in company culture	3.12	1.15	0.74
Employees feel supported and encouraged to learn	3.12	1.03	0.69
Learning a component of change and transformation	3.10	1.08	0.68
Learning connected to performance and growth conversations	2.83	1.06	0.66
Leaders modeling continuous learning	2.80	1.08	0.69

The ten statements most associated with high maturity

Rank	Correlation	Statement
1	0.75	Learning outcomes tied to business impact
2	0.74	Learning embedded in company culture
3	0.71	Clear decision rights and accountability structures
4	0.71	Learning initiatives prioritized at enterprise level
5	0.70	Learning metrics communicated clearly to leadership
6	0.70	Tracking beyond completions and satisfaction
7	0.69	Employees feel supported and encouraged to learn
8	0.69	Leaders modeling continuous learning
9	0.68	Content aligned to critical skills and roles
10	0.68	Learning a component of change and transformation

Industry grouping map

The scorecard offers 29 industry categories plus an "Other" option. These were grouped into seven sectors so that each holds enough organizations to report reliably.

Sector	Categories included
Manufacturing and Industrial	Manufacturing, Automotive, Engineering, Energy and Utilities, Logistics and Transportation, Agriculture, Construction, Aerospace and Defense
Financial Services and Insurance	Financial Services, Insurance, Accounting, Banking
Healthcare and Life Sciences	Healthcare and Medical, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech
Technology	Information Technology, Software and Internet, Telecommunications
Public Sector and Education	Government, Education, Nonprofit
Professional Services	Professional Services, Consulting, Legal Services, Real Estate, Human Resources
Consumer, Retail and Hospitality	Retail and E-Commerce, Consumer Goods, Food and Beverage, Hospitality, Travel and Tourism, Arts and Entertainment, Media and Publishing

Nineteen respondents are reported as unclassified: twelve selected "Other", one selected "Advertising and Marketing", which sits in no sector group, and six did not answer.

Scoring methodology

The scorecard contains 30 statements across six dimensions, five statements per dimension, each rated 1 to 5. Total scores run from 30 to 150 and dimension scores from 5 to 25.

Maturity bands:
Reactive 30–74, Operational 75–104, Strategic 105–129, Transformational 130–150.

Data collection

Data was collected between 9 September 2025 and 28 July 2026 through the WeLearn Learning Strategy Scorecard, a self-assessment available at learningstrategyscorecard.com. Respondents completed the assessment voluntarily. All analysis is based on self-reported data.

Statistical notes

All correlation coefficients are Pearson's r. Correlations of the magnitudes reported here are significant at $p<0.001$.

The regression in Section 9 uses ordinary least squares with company size band and formal strategy status entered simultaneously. Formal strategy status returns a coefficient of 27.0 ($p<0.0001$). Size band coefficients, measured against the 201–1,000 band, range from 5.5 to 9.5. Only the under-200 band reaches significance ($p=0.015$); the two bands above 1,000 employees do not ($p=0.10$ and $p=0.08$). The model explains 25% of variance in total score.

Confidence intervals are reported at 95%. The interval around the overall mean of 85.6 is ±2.7 points.

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