



**fuse**

# IGNITING L&D THAT FUELS BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Why learning culture is all  
about active engagement

Empower your people to go deeper and connect with the knowledge and expertise they need to improve their skills and perform beyond what you even thought possible.

# INTRODUCTION

Even before 2020 - and the pandemic - businesses were witnessing an accelerated need to nurture continuous learning mindsets and reskill and upskill workers.

Back in 2017, a report from [McKinsey Global Institute](#) suggested 375 million workers would have to switch occupational categories and learn new skills by 2030.

COVID-19 brought into sharp reality all of the problems that L&D had been trying to deal with up until that point. Businesses found themselves on the front lines of the workplace as it changed:

This will require them [businesses] to both retool their business processes and reevaluate their talent strategies and workforce needs, carefully considering which individuals are needed, which can be redeployed to other jobs, and where new talent may be required. Many companies are finding it is in their self-interest - as well as part of their societal responsibility - to train and prepare workers for a new world of work.

[McKinsey Global Institute, 2017](#)



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When the shit hit the fan, the digital transformation timeline shrunk from [two years to two months](#) and businesses found themselves having to buy and implement new enterprise solutions in a matter of weeks. The pandemic taught the learning tech world that buyers want results and value. They want solutions that improve the business - innovation, engagement, performance, productivity, and retention.

But here's the thing: Brandon Hall Group's 2020 learning strategy research shows that organisations aren't able to see the attributable impact of learning on business outcomes:

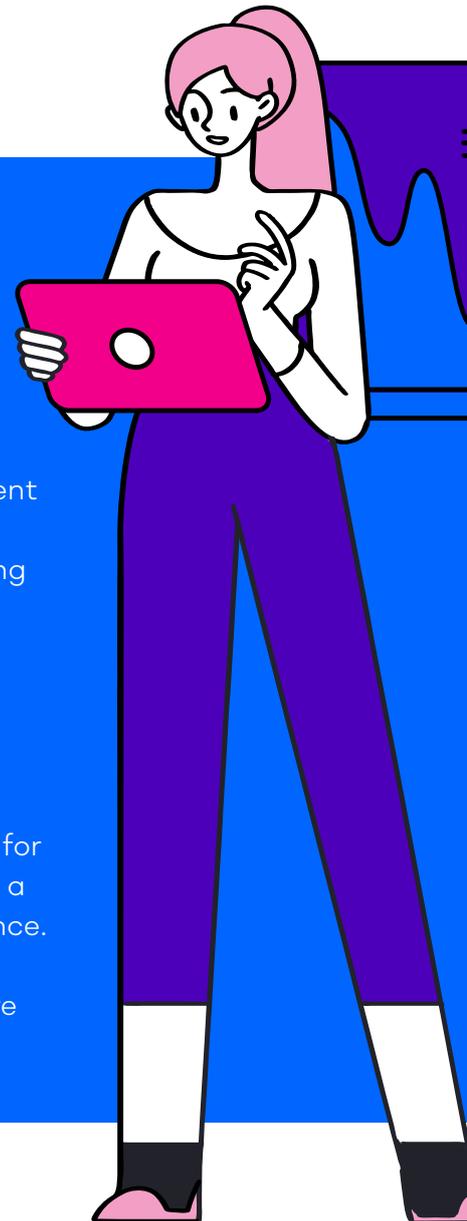
- **69%** say they can't adequately measure learning's impact.
- **54%** cite a lack of alignment between learning and business outcomes.
- **43%** say learners are not sufficiently engaged.

## Where's the disconnect?

The new world of business is fast, agile and distributed. Employers are counting on L&D to upskill and reskill people as they adapt on the fly, and stay ahead of changes. And that's the very definition of future-ready. The [Talent Development Capability Model](#) explains it as the "intellectual curiosity and constant scanning of the environment to stay abreast of forces shaping the business world, employees and their expectations, and the talent development profession. Monitoring emerging trends and technologies is essential to prepare for the demands of future learners."

### It's mission-critical that L&D keep up with the pace of business.

It's time for learning tech to step up. L&D is no longer a matter only for learning professionals, compliance officers and talent managers. It's a business-wide issue that touches every aspect of business performance. If that's important to you then read on. This ebook was written with you in mind - the learning leaders leading the quest for a better, more purposeful learning experience that impacts the bottom line.



# KILLER METRICS OR METRICS THAT KILL?

Many corporate learning departments still use core metrics that are - quite literally - ancient. Core metrics such as: how many people are being trained, how many courses are being delivered, and how many people have completed those courses.

The metrics and data points that matter to L&D set the team's direction and help drive results. That means if what you're measuring is wrong, **you will do the wrong things to facilitate the measurement.** So if L&D is looking at course delivery and completion rates then it will focus on the delivery of programmes and the provision of content. And that's why L&D has found itself in the situation it's in: platforms and suites of content are bought, and employees aren't engaging with them.

**But that's not the whole story. In recent years, L&D shifted to engagement as a measurement for success.**

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**2019 research** by the Fosway group showed that engagement is one thing L&D wanted to improve. And more recently, Brandon Hall Group's 2020 research shows 43% of learners are not sufficiently engaged. Leaders recognise that engagement factors into learning and performance.

Surely the shift to measuring engagement is a good thing, right? Not necessarily. It is possible to have too much of a good thing.

In measuring engagement, L&D's focus became 'engaging' content and platforms. Learners have since been overwhelmed with massive libraries of generic content, and edutainment all pushed from automated systems.

And learning organisations are still citing a lack of alignment between learning and business outcomes.

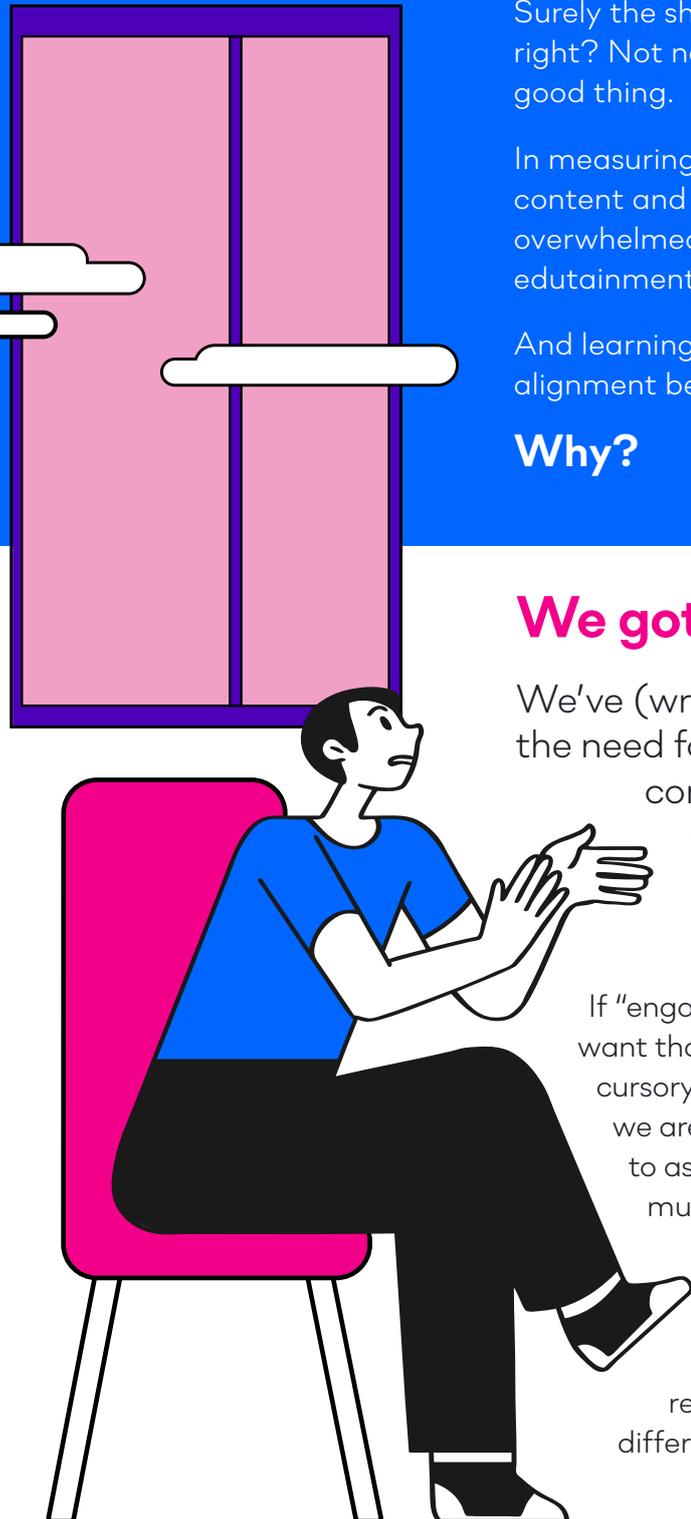
## Why?

### We got engagement wrong.

We've (wrongly) interpreted engagement as the need for engaging technology and engaging content and we haven't addressed the drivers for engagement - the things that really lead to deeper learning and positive behaviour change.

If "engagement" isn't driving performance then do we want that from our learners? While we may measure cursory interactivity, we need to understand how what we are measuring relates to performance. We need to ask what kind of engagement we want, and how much of it is optimal for business outcomes.

These are all things that beauty giant Avon considered when, due to Coronavirus, the company found itself having to rapidly reskill five million beauty reps located across 53 different countries.



## The Avon story:

# How engaged learning led to business performance

At the start, Avon identified a number of issues that were hindering business performance:

- 11 different LMSs across 30 countries
- No social or community-led learning
- High dependency on field leaders to drive or deliver training
- Inconsistent measurement of training
- Difficult to evaluate impact on performance

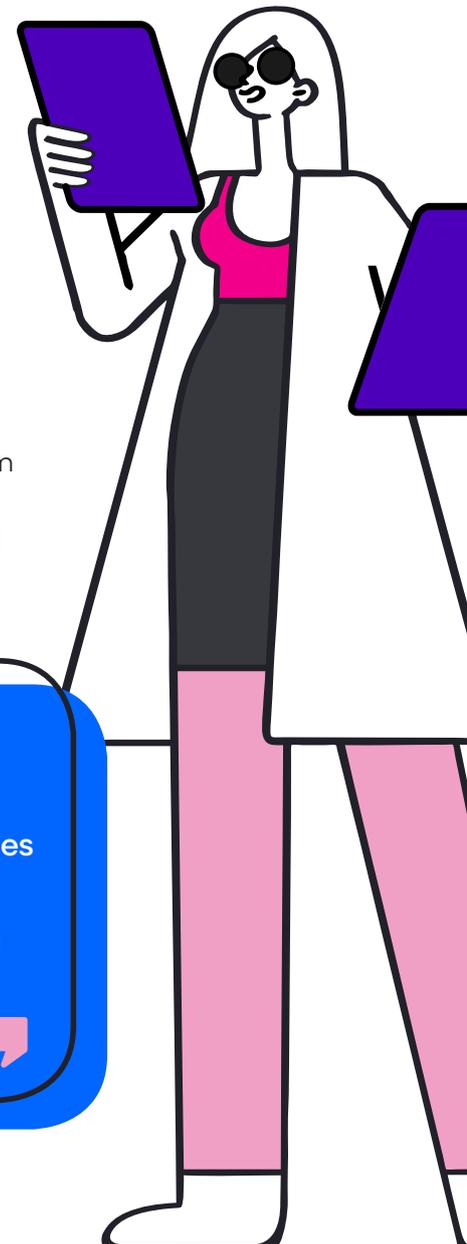
The company's primary business objectives were two-fold and included:

1. Increasing Average Order Value generated by Avon's beauty entrepreneurs
2. Improving the retention rate of beauty entrepreneurs across all 53 markets

The Avon team realised that a social and collaborative learning platform would support a culture of engaged learning and help them achieve their objectives. In particular, Avon's Digital Experience Manager, Andy Stamps, and his team wanted a solution that would spur users to keep coming back to the platform.

We recognised that Fuse is a very rounded, blended product that brings together all of the aspects of informal and formal learning through many different types of content - both business and user generated. The platform also accommodates all manner of learning styles and we knew that would be vital to achieving widespread engagement across our global network.

Andy Stamps, Digital Experience Manager, Avon



## The Avon story continued: How engaged learning led to business performance

The platform was rolled out and adopted successfully at scale - with tacit knowledge and skill capital shared through user generated content which made up 75% of what was available on the platform. Content covered product-related learning as well as advanced sales techniques and leadership training.

There's a wide range of content available and around 75% of it is user generated videos or suggestions that gain traction with comments, likes and shares. This resonates in a way our own content doesn't because it's one beauty rep passing information to another beauty rep who needs it. That's a great way to build peer-to-peer trust and it makes for a more engaging learning experience.

Soon after adoption, data pulled showed a 20% retention increase amongst beauty reps who engaged with the platform versus those who did not. The same group also produced around 6% more revenue in terms of AOV.

## The Avon story continued: How engaged learning led to business performance

The Avon team dug deeper into the data, looking at frequency of visits to the platform and interaction with it - across five different markets. It told the same story each time:

**Even an incremental increase in monthly visits to the platform - the difference between low frequency (1 to 2 visits per month) and medium frequency (3 to 4 visits per month) - had created dramatic uplifts of +320% in aggregate sales over a 6 month period.**

“ We analysed different metrics such as completion rates, consumption of content and levels of interaction, but the data very clearly showed that it was the frequency with which our beauty entrepreneurs were coming back to the platform that made the biggest difference - this is where we saw the really **dramatic uplifts in business performance**. It was definitely a jaw-on-the-floor moment. ”

When looking at what factors were driving beauty entrepreneurs to keep coming back to the platform, Andy and his team discovered two things:

**1. A follow-the-leader effect: in markets where sales leaders were**

**using the platform regularly, so were the beauty reps in those markets.**

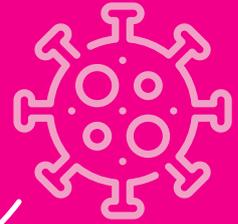
**2. Community management matters:** levels of engagement with the platform varied depending on how well it was managed in local market communities.

“ Good community management is essential. It's what keeps people coming back to learn - and we now know that that is what really moves the needle in business performance terms. ”

### This is what made the difference:

- Custom content strategy informed by robust research
- Purpose-driven content and clearly defined outcomes
- Promotion of the platform and its benefits via internal campaigns
- Regular drumbeat of fresh, relevant and search-friendly content
- Frictionless access and consumer-like experience

## The Avon story continued: How engaged learning led to business performance



And when COVID-19 threw a curveball, Andy and his team turned to the platform to learn and share helpful knowledge and experiences. They had to adapt to remote selling overnight - a task that involved rapidly reskilling five million beauty reps located across 53 different countries and speaking 30 different languages.

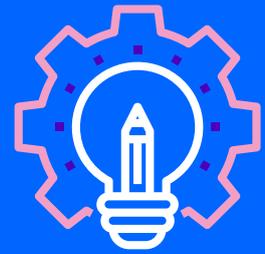
“ The collective focus was on finding new ways to sell in an online setting. [The platform] was critical to that because it provided an engaging environment for our reps to learn, connect and collaborate and that really helped us to keep going as a business during lockdown ”

To learn more about the business benefits that Fuse helped to create for Avon, [view the on-demand webinar with Andy Stamps here.](#)

What's interesting about the Avon story is how the company was able to develop a learner-centric culture that enabled learners to be actively engaged. In doing so, the company was able to effectively reduce barriers to performance.



# ACTIVE LEARNING CULTURE



Culture first, technology second.  
Then we can talk about engagement.



The easy thing you can do is buy an LMS or LXP and off the shelf courses. The difficult thing is build a learning culture that values learning, and provide resources that facilitate work.

We need to get out of the 'go do a course' headspace.



David Westwood, Director of Learning, Fuse

If we go by our known knowns, an active learning culture is one in which learning is engaged with frequently, for the benefit of people and the organisation - driving performance and the business forward.

Let's take a step back, and look at the precedents. To make the choice to actively engage, the culture needs to value learning and be able to support learning and self-development.



The culture and, by proxy, the entire organisation, realise the immense power of learning and the value this brings. This 'active learning' culture allows individuals to understand that their role is to self-develop and continually learn in order to perform. The learning is therefore of value in itself and drives the more performance focused value of the 'organisation'



Once the culture is there, it impacts the way learning is designed (e.g. resources not courses) and the delivery method (e.g. learning in the flow).

The platform acts as a catalyst - you need the culture to define someone has a choice and that it's valid, and then you need the technology to support and enable that choice. Culture comes first, the technology steps in, and then it's self-perpetuating. Just as Avon saw with 75% of content being user-generated (UGC) and peer-to-peer, once people make that choice to engage, the culture grows because more and more people are participating.

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## The culture and technology then become a facilitator of work:

- Frequency goes up: people keep going back to the platform as a resource
- Quality goes up: more tacit knowledge and skill capital is shared
- Engagement goes up: people participate, collaborate and support each other
- Learning is relevant and goes deeper: 'content in context' and learning from subject matter experts (SMEs) in the context of the organisation gives people the tools to actively collaborate, watch, apply, and practice in a safe environment.
- Personal and collective performance goes up: habits/ behaviour change as a result of learning, people are more innovative, effective and efficient.



People see technology as a silver bullet and it's not, it starts with 'human'. That's the whole problem with RFPs, they look to replace box A with box B, but replacing the box isn't a panacea for your problems, it's a culture problem. What we are trying to build with active learning and engagement is connections between humans and learning. The technology we've built at Fuse is a facilitator for human connection - and that can be at scale.



David Westwood, Director of Learning, Fuse

David's comment highlights the problem with generic courses - the lack of context widens the gap between humans and learning, while learning from SMEs and the people you identify with in your organisation closes that gap.

Context is everything because skills don't just happen in isolation - they happen in the context of the organisation, your job, your role, and your community.



# REDUCING BARRIERS TO PERFORMANCE

**Tacit knowledge and skill capital need to be shared.**

When you're confronted with a skills gap at work, one that's in the context of your job or role, what do you do? You will certainly reach out to a peer or SME in your organisation. You might choose to speak to a mentor or more senior person - someone who has performed the same or similar role - rather than tap into the knowledge of SMEs around the world in a (generic) course aggregating platform.

## WHY?

Because you know which option will get you up to speed and performing quicker. By accessing tacit knowledge through a conversation with a SME from within your organisation the distance between you and application is shorter. You will get immediate actionable insight that can be applied to drive forward the organisation.

In other words, shared tacit knowledge closes the gap on interpretation and application.

**And it gets even more interesting when we look at the multiple layers of context:**

It's not just the context of the people, role-based learning, or communities of practice with others in the same role. It's also the context of the knowledge which is being delivered, and how that's been applied in what we're doing in the organisation that closes the gap on interpretation and application.

## HOLD UP, JUST TAKE THAT IN AGAIN:

Context is within the content. And it's also in the delivery of that content to [me].

## Whoa, right?

This is the stark difference between technologies that enable tacit knowledge and skills capital sharing, like the Fuse platform, and technologies that either enforce content consumption, or those that catalogue skills and entrust an algorithm to fill "skills gaps" with outside knowledge from generic, contextually lacking courses.



# New world, new techniques **TO TRAIN, DEVELOP AND UPSKILL PEOPLE**

The new world of business is fast, agile and distributed. We know that courses simply don't give the skills and capability that high performing organisations need in the post COVID-19 world. We've talked about the lack of context in courses - people aren't engaged, they don't go back to courses on learning platforms. And there's a huge gap in interpreting the knowledge and application when context is missing.

Plus it goes against decades of psychological and neuroscientific research which tells us that if information isn't applied (in context) it will soon be forgotten.

We might argue that courses are based on a hope that learners have memory superpowers and that knowledge will be magically transferred!

Courses also take time to build and distribute. If companies double the amount of corporate knowledge every 12 months, how can traditional learning design, content creation and publication methods keep up with the pace of business? It can't.

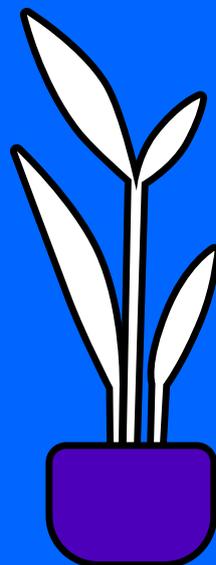
## **If courses don't fit into the world today - what does?**

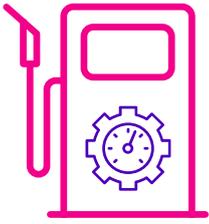
# PREPARING FOR THE DEMANDS OF FUTURE LEARNERS

In a world where L&D is keeping up with the pace of business - and able to reskill /upskill people at scale, on the fly - the ideal learning solution would bring active learning to life. That solution would connect people with the knowledge and expertise they need to improve their skills and perform. In-context and in-flow.

In-flow, learners would be supported back on the job by extending their platform's services into the workflow. They would search and find answers to questions or blockers to doing their job. The ideal solution would be available in learner's collaboration tools and in applications at the point of need.

**It's time for that future-ready L&D.**





# FUSE.

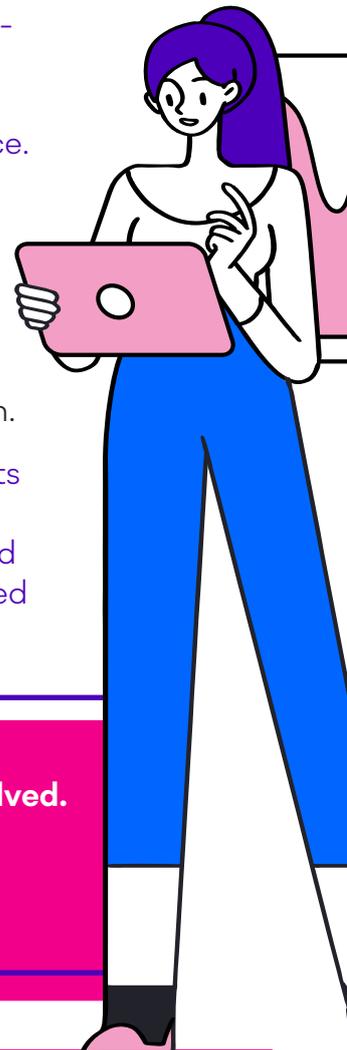
**Deep learning that fuels performance.**

With Fuse, learning teams are able to move from low performance (course-centric) strategies to driving measurable organisational performance. The platform allows teams to facilitate the whole process of learning.

Unlike LXPs and LMSs - where learning happens within the boundaries of courses - in Fuse, tacit knowledge and skill capital are shared.

**Here's how the platform drives active engagement and performance:**

- Fuse brings together different knowledge sources to create an evolving corporate brain. Automated augmented and manual tools curate, analyse, enrich and translate content for a deep understanding. This makes core knowledge better and more accessible: learners experience an accurate, personalised search with easy filtering and dynamic facets.
- Knowledge is delivered and consumed within a context (through peer-supported practice and performance support when on the job) which makes learning truly relevant to the learner. Knowledge delivered in context closes the gap on interpretation, application, and performance.
- Practice and feedback drive a cycle of application that builds competence and, in time, expertise.
- Fuse provides safe spaces (experiences/ communities, events, comprehension assessments etc.) to practice.
- Observations and 121 tools allow feedback to be gained and worked on.
- Once learners are experts they then contribute through social contexts (answering questions, contributing to conversations) and create new knowledge (thought leadership, innovation etc.) to fuel the engine and help solve more business problems. An active learning culture is created through this creation of experts.



**Fuse is the place where questions are answered and problems are solved.  
Where deeper learning experiences ignite people performance.  
And where learners go to be future-ready.**

# ABOUT FUSE

On the Fuse learning platform, people connect with the knowledge and expertise they need to improve their skills and perform.

Used by over 150 progressive organisations worldwide - including Hilti, Vodafone, Panasonic, Scandic, and Avon - Fuse sparks active engagement for deeper learning experiences that ignite your people's performance.

Learn more at  
[www.fuseuniversal.com](http://www.fuseuniversal.com)  
or **contact us** to see  
Fuse in action.