

PERSONALIZATION

for Performance



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Introduction

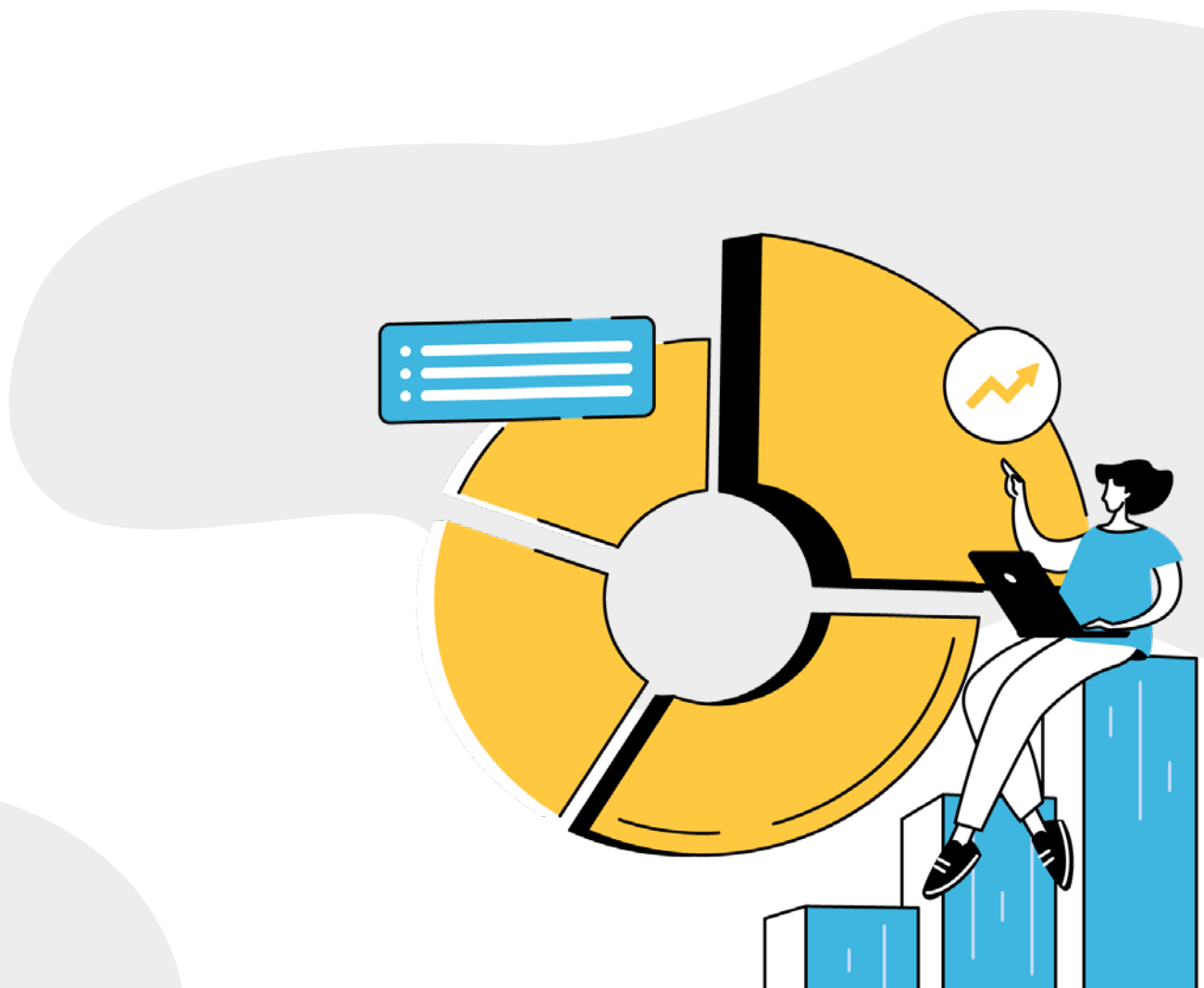
With the future of work on the minds of organizations globally, only half of companies in Brandon Hall Group's 2021 *State of Learning Practices Study* believe their approach to learning positions them well to meet that future. L&D teams understand their goal is to improve performance but are still looking for the strategies that will get them there. COVID-19 has accelerated the need for change as organizations look for ways to onboard remote employees, create a more agile organization that can quickly reskill, and keep employees engaged. In reality, the global pandemic forced

organizations to rethink how they create, deliver and measure learning. Even those that would have otherwise never budged from their traditional class/course-based one-size-fits-all approach to learning have been compelled to reconsider.

Since before the pandemic, personalized learning has been discussed as an effective way to better engage learners while delivering new skills. But the means to achieving truly personalized learning at scale that drives performance has not been within reach, until recently.

Why Personalize Learning?

In today's environment, business is moving fast, and the workforce is busy, distracted and geographically disparate. These forces run counter to a one-size-fits-all approach to learning and development. Personalized experiences have become expected from the technology we use every day on our mobile devices. However, organizations largely still expect their people to interact with learning resources that don't respect their prior knowledge and waste their time on content that does not directly apply to their role.



At its core, personalized learning is the process of providing learning experiences based on an employee's professional and personal needs and interests; it includes making learning accessible in a venue and time frame that is best for the employee, while aligning with the unique needs of their role, job tenure, or stage of development. In a Brandon Hall Group study, just 46% of companies said they leverage personalization most or all of the time. However, in the *2021 Upskilling and Reskilling Study*, 82% of companies said they are working on improving their approach to personalized learning.

Today's worker will benefit from personalization on a number of levels that all relate to becoming more productive which is a critical driver of employee engagement. Taking an example from daily life, imagine how much longer it would take you to find the closest coffee shop if your mobile phone experience was not personalized. You would have to wade through

multiple brands of store (not just your favorite), and you would have to scroll through locations that were nowhere near you, because the experience did not take into account your personal information. Personalization, such as seeing information you prefer based on your likes and location, enables a positive experience largely stemming from the fact that you are more productive. The same is true for learning. Personalization drives a better learning experience that gives you the tools you need to do your job with less effort.

Unfortunately, the organizational learning experience for most companies has not quite caught up to the consumer experience. Today's LMS and LXP solutions are simply not equipped to deliver the depth of personalization at scale required for learning success. In fact, 60% of companies say they do not have the technology system in place to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale, making a lack of the right technology one of the top-two barriers to personalized learning.

60% of companies

say they do not have the right technology to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.

Source: Brandon Hall Group
Upskilling and Reskilling Study 2021





To what extent do you consider the following to be challenges in delivering personalized learning at scale? (Highly or extremely challenging)

We have managers who are not very good coaches and don't know what their employees are learning.



We do not have the technology ecosystem in place to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.



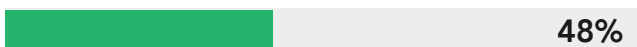
The organization believes a one-size-fits-all approach to learning is sufficient.



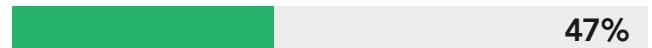
We believe it would be too expensive.



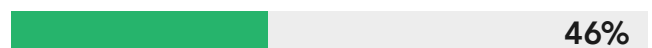
We believe it would be too difficult to administer and maintain.



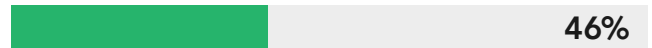
Our learning organization is not trained properly to develop and deliver personalized learning at scale.



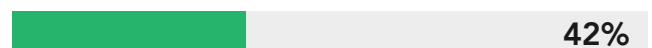
We do not promote peer-to-peer, collaborative learning.



We don't have a good handle on how to reach our learners effectively and efficiently.



We don't have a good handle on what our learners need or drives them.



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Upskilling and Reskilling

Personalization as a Strategy to Drive Performance



In typical corporate learning environments, the ultimate goal of learning is traditionally the learning itself. L&D teams measure success on the number of programs they create, how many learners complete those programs and whether the learners “like” the programs. While these are important pieces of information, they are solely focused on the efficacy of the learning function itself and not whether it is effectively driving improved performance and outcomes for the business. Personalization that can make an impact

on performance must go far beyond simply tailoring the superficial aspects of the user experience.

Putting a user’s name at the top of a dashboard and allowing the layout of the home page to be rearranged is not enough. The idea is to structure and present more targeted content and give more guidance at a granular level. This leads to building the right skills in people at the right time — all in the name of performance. Instead of only providing a high-level list of learning content to explore and then hoping

for the best, personalized learning allows companies to target specific skill gaps and roles, and translate that into a better learning experience. A key reason to personalize learning is to increase learner engagement.

Too often in many learning systems, engagement is sought by presenting suggested content that could be interesting. A learner is encouraged to try a course or module because it is similar to a topic they just completed. But much more can be done beyond a suggested playlist to explore. If learners can be shown how a learning activity is relevant to them, their role, their goals and the overall needs of the business, they will buy in and engage more deeply, leading to improved skills uptake. This improved knowledge leads to enhanced productivity which is directly correlated to employee engagement on the job.

The all-too-common “one-size-fits-all” approach makes learning seem like an activity separate from work, where people need to stop what they are doing to grab some training and get back to the job once the module is complete. In this environment, learning is a disruption and a chore. With personalization, learning becomes less of a jarring disruption and instead becomes a more natural and positive experience to boost performance. In fact, personalized learning is seen as a critical factor in driving a host of key outcomes.

How important is personalized learning in driving the following outcomes?

(Highly or critically important)

Improve individual performance.



Improve organizational performance.



Improve employee engagement.



Improve attractiveness and elevate engagement level by learner.



Promote a learning-focused organization culture.



Improve depth and length of learning retention.



Invest in the personal and professional development of every employee.



Share knowledge easily across the organization.



Improve organization’s competitive advantages.



Promote from within as often as possible.



Optimize talent mobility.



Support employee brand/employee value proposition.



Ensure learning is culturally correct.



Make learning more measurable.



Compress onboarding time.



Source: Brandon Hall Group, Upskilling and Reskilling

Using Intelligent, Adaptive Technology to Personalize Learning

The key to success in personalized learning at scale is technology. While simple levels of personalization at low volumes can be achieved manually, personalized learning at scale requires adaptive learning technology as an enabler. The technology will typically use artificial intelligence and machine learning to drive an adaptive engine that can keep up with the needs of the business and learners automatically in real time.

In a true adaptive system, all aspects of the learning process should adapt, starting with the learning journey or map. A learning system should function in much the same way as the GPS in a car. A GPS used while driving leverages AI and takes what is known about roads, traffic, available gas stations, etc., and delivers a precisely tailored path to the destination that updates in real-time based

on changes in conditions. Learners need their own GPS that is constantly interpreting input to ensure the learner is taking the best route. A broad array of inputs should be included for personalizing and adapting

learning across four main categories:

- The learner’s profile
- The learning context
- The learner’s proficiency
- The learner’s engagement level at the time



Source: Realizeit

These inputs are what shape the journey and allow the GPS to guide when to speed up or when a stop for additional practice. If the available technology is unable to capture and leverage these kinds of inputs, it will never be able to deliver a truly personalized experience. Beyond just adjusting the learning map, all aspects of the learning experience should adapt. This means learning resources, content, assessments, as well as the blending of learning techniques including self-led, instructor-led, and one-to-one coaching.

According to Brandon Hall Group's *Upskilling and Reskilling Study*, some of the key practices to making personalized learning work include the following: considering the digital prowess of the learner, reflecting a mastery approach, and customizing the cadence and frequency of learning opportunities, all of which require adaptive AI/ML-based technology to make happen at any level of scale.

Personalized learning touches every learning stakeholder when done right, not just the learner. As noted above, one of the biggest challenges facing personalized learning

is missed opportunities with managers who are not in the loop on what their employees are learning. Managers play a critical role in personalization because they are the ones who most closely understand the daily needs of their teams. They also should be getting the most salient feedback from employees about learning and performance. With a personalized adaptive learning system, clear details of an employee's learning experience will be at the manager's fingertips, bringing to their attention what is most important to focus on, in one-on-one sessions as well as in broader team conversations.

Personalize the Learning Experience for all Stakeholders



*When done right, **Personalized learning** touches every learning stakeholder, not just the learner.*

Source: Realizeit

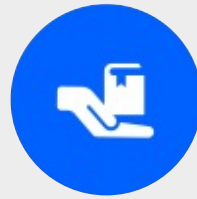
Each role in the L&D team also benefits from personalization by leveraging the inputs an adaptive system provides to prioritize programs and topics. Learning leaders can see what is working and where learners are struggling to reach new skills. Instructors and coaches will receive valuable input to know where to focus their efforts as the system gathers and presents profiles of each learner's performance.

Personalizing for all Learning Roles



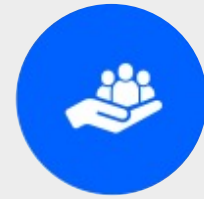
Learning Designer

- Transform from focusing on “likes” to delivering critical knowledge and assessments.
- Understand the knowledge needed to succeed in each role being trained.
- Map knowledge models and journeys.
- Focus on what should be personalized.
- Tools to transform content to adaptive, personalized.



Trainer

- Help to become a better trainer/coach.
- Augment the intelligence to know exactly what help learners need.
- Provide insights about each learner and the team as a whole.
- Enable to stay connected with learners to solidify their success.
- Give targeted feedback and data-driven insights to improve.



Leader

- Get my pressing questions answered (finally).
- Link business performance to training.
- Understanding the status of skill-building for my division and enable me to make decisions to guide learning.
- Provide just-in-time coaching insights for the team and individuals.

Source: Realizeit

Unlocking the Value of Personalized Learning

Personalized learning delivers value across the entire organization, even though many companies really only leverage it for things such as leadership development. There are specific outcomes that can be directly impacted by personalization across the entire spectrum of learning.



New Hire Onboarding

The onboarding of new hires can be accelerated by taking the pre-existing knowledge of a new hire into account. Rather than pushing the same training to everyone, new hires can get exactly what they need to fill gaps to get up and running quicker. The onboarding process also starts the personalized path for the learner's current and future roles and begins building the core information to shape the ongoing learning experience.



Compliance

Personalization can turn compliance training into competence training. It helps eliminate redundant or unnecessary training by taking previous experience and knowledge into consideration. Focusing on the unique compliance needs of each role can speed up the process for getting employees into compliance by eliminating unnecessary details. Additionally, assessments associated with mandatory training help identify skill gaps that can be addressed. In Brandon Hall Group's *Reimagining Compliance Training Study*, companies where compliance training is used to help further the development of their talent are nearly twice as likely to say they leverage personalization than companies where compliance training is used solely for regulatory and certification needs.



Upskilling and Reskilling

Companies need to adapt quicker than ever to meet changing demands and shifts in how work gets done as products and processes are constantly changing. As change has become a constant force, it is critical to reskill and upskill employees rapidly. Adaptive learning can identify skills gaps and bring the right content to the right people when necessary. While only half of companies say learning prepares them for the future of work, that same 50% is much more likely to be pursuing personalization as a key strategy for the future.



Learning in the Flow of Work

Getting people the information they need when they need it is critical for performance. But learning in the flow of work is more than just bite-sized elements that can be quickly consumed. It requires an intelligent, adaptive ecosystem that can factor in that not only is a person in need but also the context of the need, when and where it is needed, what medium/modality makes the most sense, and more. Adaptive technology should support seamlessly moving between macro and micro learning to ensure learning in the flow of work is based on results and needs identified during more in-depth learning efforts. This level of personalization will ensure learners see the value and benefit from their micro learning assignments.





Demonstrating Impact

The benefits of personalized learning go far beyond the learners and their performance. The process of accumulating and leveraging inputs and monitoring activity generates a large amount of data which can provide invaluable insights. A personalized adaptive learning system will provide much more accurate assessments of knowledge uptake and retention aligned with job responsibilities and performance requirements. This complete picture of what each person knows and does not know provides coaches and managers a more granular view into what should be done to improve and grow. Performance assessments can be more aligned with skills and drive ongoing learning plans that produce greater strategic outcomes.

**Nearly all
(98%)**

of the companies in Brandon Hall Group's *Upskilling and Reskilling Study* said that personalization is 'somewhat' to 'extremely important' to making learning more measurable, with more than two-thirds saying it is either 'very' or 'critically important'.

Conclusion

L&D is under greater pressure than ever to show how learning is making a difference to the business. Personalized learning is seen by 93% of Brandon Hall survey respondents as either “very” or “critically” important to driving individual and organizational performance. Significantly, achieving a personalized learning strategy to drive performance is now possible using adaptive learning technology. Adaptive technology based in AI and machine learning can personalize learning at a depth and scale that can bring the effectiveness of learner-specific, contextual learning experiences to any size organization. Creating real synchronicity across learners, content, trainers, designers, skills, and outcomes can only happen at scale by leveraging

intelligent, adaptive tools to gather, process, and leverage all information generated in the learning process.

Personalized learning is the key to engaging learners at all moments of learning. When learning is connected uniquely to the individual and their role, the result is improved knowledge uptake. Whether onboarding or reskilling, personalization leads to improved job productivity at all stages. Ultimately, personal productivity is a top factor in employees feeling engaged in their job, and employee engagement is highly correlated to customer satisfaction. When learning is linked to performance in this way, L&D will be answering the call from business leaders to drive positive, meaningful change.

To learn more about how to personalize learning at scale that drives performance, visit the [Realizeit Resource Center](#) for additional eBooks, webinars and assessment tools.



Authors and Contributors



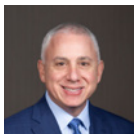
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About Brandon Hall Group

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

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are comprehensive educational programs that center around a multiphase knowledge test.

About Realizeit

Realizeit is on a mission to transform workforce training and learning through deep personalization in service to better performance.

Intelligent Adaptivity is the game-changing technology required to drive personalization at scale and is at the core of Realizeit’s platform. Large organizations are turning to Realizeit when they recognize that their conventional learning technologies (i.e., LMS, LCMS and LXP) fall short of their aspirations for digital transformation in L&D to improve individual and organizational performance.

The Realizeit system is built for integration and interoperability with each customer’s ecosystems and be the catalyst for elevating their L&D strategy.

To learn more about Realizeit, please visit our site:



www.realizeitlearning.com

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