REDEFINING L&D TO CREATE A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE



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PREFACE

With the advent of machine learning, AI, automation, and changing customer demands, organizations are upgrading their offerings to meet the current market demands. Shopping malls are being replaced by e-commerce, and classroom education is getting replaced by MOOCs.

To provide these new offerings, job roles in organizations are changing. Cashiers are expected to be tech-savvy and help customers with mobile banking. Drivers are expected to follow GPS for directions and teachers and expected to take classes on webcam and answer queries over chat. As job roles are getting redefined, so are the skills required to perform them. The need for upskilling the workforce to take care of the changing job role demands is more pressing than ever. The role of L&D has to change to ensure successful upskilling of the workforce to create future-ready organizations.

Current jobs are going to transform into the future. A financial consultant will be required to assist customers on data privacy and not just on how to invest and manage their money. While assessing skills gaps in the workforce, organizations need to consider how every job will transform in the future and how it will impact the competencies required to perform those jobs. As businesses transform to meet changing customer demands and technology enables automation of jobs that are simple and repetitive, a lot of present jobs will go out of existence, and many new jobs will come into existence. Additionally, most of the jobs will transform to accommodate changing customer demands. Changing job responsibilities will require new competencies to perform them. While at the same time, a lot of competencies will become redundant due to the advent of technology and automation of many job-related tasks.



will be of paramount importance and targeted training must be provided based on individual skill gaps, trainability and aspirations to make it possible. By looking at job roles and workforce skillset in a futuristic manner, organizations can visualize how each job will transform in the future, which jobs will become redundant and what new jobs will come into existence.

To become future-ready, organizations will have to map the current competency framework of each job role and assess how the job will transform in the future.

This, followed by how that transformation will impact the current competency framework of the job role to create a future competency framework for each job role, will help organizations understand what new skills the workforce needs to be trained on and what existing skills need to be unlearned as they are no longer going to be useful in the future. Identifying skill gaps in this manner will help organizations provide training that is going to be relevant in the present as well as the future.

The workforce of the future demands training that is relevant to their present and future job roles, based on individual skill gaps, and aligned with their learning capability, preference, and aspiration.



L&D programs
must be molded
to take care of the
changing workforce
and organizational
requirements to
create a futureready workplace.

INTRODUCTION

L&D has always been important to employees, but its importance is now greater than ever. Having a well-structured and updated L&D program is essential for employers looking to attract, engage and retain the best people. For one-

L&D is the biggest driver of employee engagement globally.

The millennial & Gen Z workforce, especially high potentials, want to progress quickly in their careers. They want to be a part of organizations that sincerely invest in their learning and development and has a very clear career path mapped out for them, in line with their individual aspirations. This expectation is likely to become more prevalent in the future as our working lives increase. Furthermore, trends such as increased automation and other technology and workplace advancements continue to have implications for job roles and skills required. Employees and companies need to keep up with such changes to remain competitive.

The way L&D is carried out has changed immensely over the last decade. This change is driven by factors such as – need for higher employee engagement to develop and retain employees, targeted learning based on competencies to achieve higher ROI, and continuous learning to cope up with changing nature of work and short skill shelf life.



In the past, organizations have approached learning conventionally. Learning has mostly been top-down, on-the-job, and delivered in conventional forms such as inside a classroom. However, millennials and Gen Z have a much different relationship, expectation, and approach to learning. Learning now must be micro, mobile-first, innovative, relevant, and on-demand to meet the needs of the future. These changing and expanding expectations are a primary driving force behind the other learning and development shifts.



The workforce of today is naturally more learning agile than the workforce of any other generation. There is no place for employees having an outdated skillset. Those who are unable to keep up with the changing work and business requirements often find themselves to be obsolete in the workplace. As employees are preparing themselves for the future of work, so should organizations. The future of work demands a workforce that can learn on the go and is continuously upskilling. This new, highly learning agile workforce is very self-reliant in terms of learning, with so many avenues to upskill themselves. They are very sure of what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Organizations simply need to comply with their learning needs to ensure that there is a synchronization between the two of them to have a long-lasting and productive relationship.

Learning is one of the topmost challenges that organizations face in 2019.

The workforce of today now rates the 'opportunity to learn' as among their top reasons for taking a job. Business leaders are aware that changing work practices, the longevity of career timeline, technology, skill requirements, and business models have created an enormous demand for continuous, lifelong development. Leading organizations are taking steps to deliver learning to their people in a more personal way, integrating work and learning more tightly with each other, and extending the ownership for learning beyond the HR organization.

Keeping the changing workforce and organizational demands in mind, it's pertinent to create L&D programs that are clear on what to train, who to train and how to train to successfully upskill the workforce in a way that enables the creation of future-ready organizations.

In today's employee-driven market, where quality and skilled talent is spoiled for choice, the best way to create a future-ready workplace is by training the existing workforce on the relevant skills. Effective L&D programs are focused on identifying the competencies that are required in each job role presently and in the future. Once the organizations have created a competency framework for each job role considering the present and future competency requirements, they need to assess the existing workforce to see what competencies each of them possesses and what they lack/need to be trained on.

Next, organizations need to assess all their job roles to identify those that have or are likely to become redundant in the future. Recent studies show that

47%

WHAT
TO
TRAIN?

of jobs in the USA are likely to become redundant and non-existent in the coming years as they will be either automated or they will no longer be required as the services that those job roles offer will not be needed.

In 2013, a highly cited study by Oxford University academics called The Future of Employment examined 702 common occupations and found that some jobs – telemarketers, tax preparers, and sports referees – are at more risk than others, including recreational psychologists, dentists, and physicians.

The least safe jobs



99%

Chance of automation



CASHIER

97%

Chance of automation



98%

Chance of automation



PARALEGAL & LEGAL ASSISTANT

94%

Chance of automation



TAXI DRIVER

89%

Chance of automation



FAST FOOD COOK

81%

Chance of automation

STEP 1: METTL REDUNDANCY INDEX

We created a framework based on the most typical workplace skills and competencies and assessing their likelihood to get automated. While it's essential to identify what skills are likely to become redundant, it is also important to identify skills that are likely to become more relevant to stay competitive in the future.

SKILL REDUNDANCY ANALYSIS

KEY SKILLS	LIKELIHOOD OF REDUNDANCY	REASON FOR REDUNDANCY LIKELIHOOD
Collaboration skills	Low	Technological advances are changing the concepts of geographical boundaries, and the future is a globally connected world
Competent Product Knowledge	Medium	The products of today are not likely to be the products of tomorrow. It needs to be updated from time to time with the latest products
Customer Retention/Loyalty	Low	The key skill for maintaining organizational growth and stability, and requires a higher level of social intelligence and creativity to retain
Customer Servicing	Medium	High volume customer servicing used cases can be automated
Process Optimisation Skills	Medium	Standard processes can be analyzed using past data to optimize processes with little to no human intervention
Relationship Management	Low	Key skill for maintaining organizational growth and stability, and requires a higher level of social intelligence and creativity to engage customers
Selling Skills	Low	Selling skills in a B2B space requires creating different strategies for different clients, and hence requires a higher level of creativity
Strategic Thinking	Low	This requires a high level of creativity and dealing with ambiguity, which cannot be replaced using a machine

An analysis of the current job market reveals that job growth is increasing for work that involves complex interactions and problem-solving and declining for transactional work and production work that converts physical materials into finished goods.

Change in the Nature of Work Tasks Over the Years

	1000	Nature of work	Example of work
Routine Manual	1980	Performing tasks involving repetitive motions	Assembly line workersContruction workersCarpenters
Non-Routine Manual		Doing work requiring manual dexterity or spatial orientation	DriversCooksCashiers
Routine Cognitive		Being exact or accurate in speech or writing or calculation	· Accountants · Telephone Operators · Teachers
Non-Routine Cognitive		 Analyzing data/ information Thinking creatively Solving problems and making decisions Coaching others Guiding, directing and motivating others Establishing and maintaining 	 Lawyers Bureaucrats Doctors Managers/CXOs Software developers/Coders Data Scientists Stock Market Traders Consultants
	2020	•	

To assess which job roles in your organization are likely to stay relevant and which are likely to become redundant, organizations must analyze the nature of work tasks that are associated with each job role.

CHANGING NATURE OF WORK TASKS

A job may require an employee to perform the same task at low/medium/high frequency and volume or perform different tasks at low/medium/high frequency and volume. The task could be easy/moderately difficult/complex, and it could have low/medium/high impact. These factors determine the nature of the job.



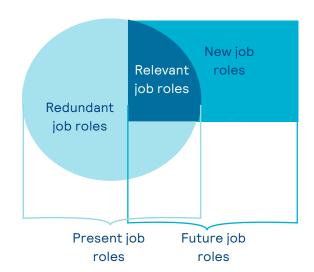
If most of the work tasks associated with a job role lean towards the left (repetitive/easy/low impact), then those jobs can be easily automated. The skills that are required to perform these jobs require comparatively lesser cognitive intelligence and learning agility. Given the simple and repetitive nature of these work tasks, they can be easily automated. Jobs such as telemarketing, assembly line work, data entry, customer service, driving, fast food cooking, etc. fall in this category. In these job roles, the employee is expected to repeat the same task again and again with precision and speed. There is no creative thinking, decision making, or problem-solving involved.

On the other end of the spectrum lie jobs that are not at all repetitive in nature, there is no readymade formula to do these jobs that will guarantee success. And there is a lot of critical thinking, analytical reasoning required to complete any given task. Most of the tasks performed in such job roles are unique and require advanced decision making and problemsolving skills. Such jobs are not likely to get automated as they are very complicated in nature and often require extensive usage of soft skills such as effective communication, negotiation, collaboration, leading people, and business growth.

ANALYZING JOB ROLES

To create an L&D program that helps you accurately identify the training needs of your workforce to make them future-ready, you need to assess and identify what

- job roles are likely to become obsolete
- · new job roles are going to get created
- job roles are going to stay the same
- job roles are going to transform in the future



ANALYZING THE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENT IN EACH JOB ROLE

Once all the job roles have been analyzed and weighed as per their relevance in the future, organizations need to create/update:

- The present competency framework for each job role
- The future competency framework by considering how each job role will transform in the future



After this, organizations need to assess the difference between the present and future competency framework for each job role. It is done to identify the job roles that have/are likely to have the highest skill gaps. These job roles should be given grater focus during L&D.

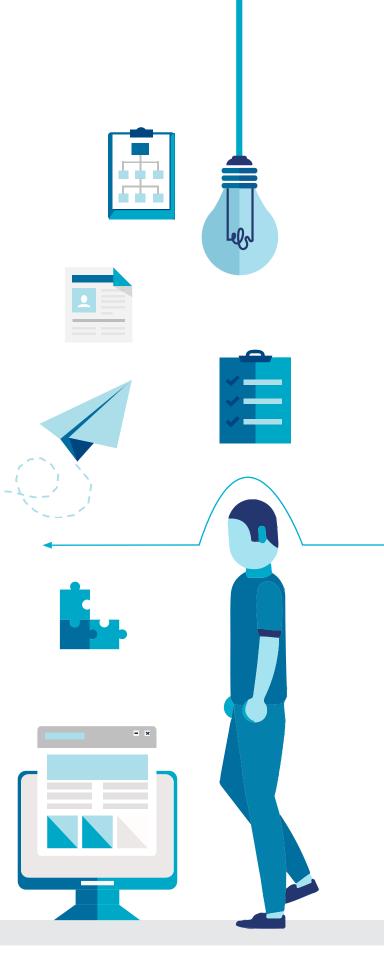
Less urgent need for L&D

Very urgent need for L&D

- Present competency framework of a job role
- Future competency framework of a job role



The first step in creating an effective L&D program that enables your organization and workforce to become future-ready is creating competency frameworks for each job role that are based on how each job role will evolve in the future and what competencies will it entail.

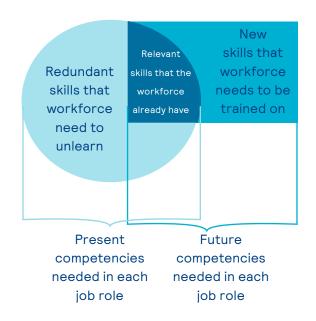


STEP 2: CREATING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS FOR EACH JOB ROLE TO MAKE THE WORKFORCE FUTURE READY

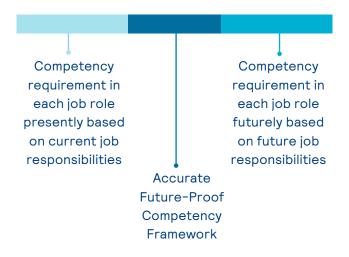
The purpose of creating competency frameworks is to accurately identify skills that employees need to have so that they can succeed in their job roles even as they transform in the future.

To create a future-ready competency framework, organizations need to:

- Map the current competency requirement for each job role taking into account current job responsibilities
- Analyze how each job role will transform in the future and what new job responsibilities will the transformed job role entail
- Identify the competency requirement of the transformed job roles considering the job responsibilities in the future
 - Redundant/obsolete competencies:
 Recognize competencies in each job role
 that are required today but will no longer be
 required in the future. e.g., typing
 - Existing relevant competencies: Identify the competencies in each job role that are required today and will also be required in the future. e.g., problem-solving, critical thinking
 - New competencies: Find out the new competencies that each job role will require in the future that are not required presently. e.g., machine learning, advanced data analytics



Post this, organizations will be able to create accurate, future-proof competency frameworks for all job roles, based on which they can identify what competencies to train the workforce on.



An accurate competency framework is future-proof as it considers not only the competencies required to perform a job presently but also the competencies that will be required to perform that job in the future. By ensuring that the workforce has all the competencies that are part of their job role-based competency framework, organizations can make their workforce and hence their business future-ready.

HOW MERCER | METTL CAN HELP

Assess how the job roles in your organization will transform in the future with Mettl Redundancy Index:

Mettl Redundancy Index can help organizations assess what job roles are likely to become redundant due to the advent of AI, automation and other technologies. The index will; also throw light on which skills are likely to become obsolete in the future. Based on our analysis, organizations can have a clear idea regarding what skills and job roles to focus on while carrying out L&D and which ones to deprioritize as they will no0t be relevant in the future.

Create Accurate future-ready Competency Frameworks for each job role: Mettl can help organizations create competency frameworks for each job role in an organization taking into account the skillset required to perform each job in the present and future. Competency frameworks act as the base for creating L&D programs by enabling accurate training needs identification and creation of effective training programs.

WHO TO TRAIN?

The next big question, after identifying what competencies each employee should have is - who to train.

The traditional L&D process that has been followed across most organizations to date would consider the entire workforce as the target audience. However, this is not an accurate assumption. The process of identifying who to train depends on individual training needs, skill gaps, learning agility, and aspirations.

Employee training cannot be generic, as each employee has individual developmental needs. The first step in identifying who to train is to identifying training needs in each employee.

STEP 1: TRAINING NEED IDENTIFICATION

To identify training needs in each employee, organizations need to identify the current skill set that each employee has, and the skill set that each employee needs to possess. The latter is determined by job role-based competency frameworks that work as benchmarks for assessing if any employee in any job role is underskilled, adequately skilled or over-skilled. In short, to identify skill gaps and training needs accurately in each employee, the workforce needs to be assessed against their job

role's competency framework regularly.

In the past, training needs were identified based on work performance. A customer service representative would be given grievance redressal and communication skill training if the organization received a lot of customer complaints against that employee or if the employee was unable to meet targets. Organizations need to be proactive, and train employees before it starts impacting their and performance and that of the business. By identifying training needs accurately and timely, organizations can prevent getting adversely impacted by employee skill-gaps.

TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING SKILL GAPS

Assessing training needs accurately requires the use of scientific and competency-based assessment tools that are customized for each job role. Some of the assessment techniques that can be used to identify training needs are 360 feedback, training needs identification assessments, and assessment centers.

All these tools assess the employees on the competencies included in their job role's competency framework.

- 360-degree feedback assesses employees on their perceived skill gaps as per their peers, subordinates and supervisors.
- Assessment centers assess employee competencies through activities and taskbased exercises. While setting up AC/DC is one of the effective ways to identify the training needs, yet there exists an alternate blended approach which could suffice the need in a more sophisticated way.



Virtual Assessment/Development Centers- VAC is the automated online version of assessment centers which is provided by companies such as Mercer | Mettl. It is an approach to selection or professional development on the basis of competencies expected for a concerned role. It gives a detailed and holistic report by assessing the individual on various aspects and evaluate an individual's fitment or current proficiency.

The measurement process considers:









VACs are entirely virtual, convenient, and hassle-free. There is no special setup required other than computers and internet connectivity. The content of the assessments can be customized based on the organization's competency framework, target audience, and context. Most important, it is cost-effective and provides completely automated results. There can be cases where VAC's alone does not work. The organization could come up with a blended approach where offline activities via assessors could give us the required results along with online assessment.

- · Customized Assessments: Most of the organizational stakeholders believe that a highly customized test which is completely company-oriented is a viable solution to their needs of assessments. In this digital world, everyone prefers online assessments to a paper and pen test. These are comprehensive and objective assessments that provide insight into the work-oriented personality of an employee. These assessments are designed according to different job roles. It aims to help candidates leverage their strengths and address their area of development. Moreover, these assessments are easy to administer. The results are not observer biased for they are quantitative and objective in nature. Customized assessments assess employee skill proficiency levels via MCQs, case studies, situational and judgment questions, simulations, etc.
- Theory Tests: Some organizations still believe in taking theoretical assessments when it comes to training their employees. As humans, we learn more viable through experiential techniques and are energized by getting up and moving around, associating with each other. We are social, portable beings and not intended to be stuck at work areas taking notes.

The tools then provide details on employee competency levels for each competency included in the competency framework. It helps provide insights into each employee's strengths and development areas.

STEP 2: ASSESSING EMPLOYEE TRAINABILITY

Merely identifying development areas in each employee is not enough to create L&D programs that are truly effective. Organizations need to be aware of the skills that each employee is capable of being trained on, based on their existing skill proficiency levels and learning agility.



Learning Agility

An individual's learning agility helps in determining how trainable they are. An employee may have significant skill gaps, but if that individual is not learning agile, providing them training is not going to yield optimal results. By measuring employee learning agility, organizations can identify individuals who are capable of upskilling.



What is Learning Agility?

Learning agility is the ability to continually and rapidly learn, unlearn, and relearn mental models and practices from a variety of experiences, people, and sources, and to apply that learning in new and changing contexts

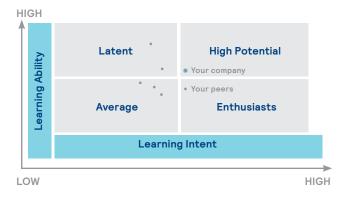
MEASURING INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AGILITY

Mettl has devised a method for measuring a person's Learning Agility based on two factors: ability and orientation.

- Ability to learn: essential cognitive competencies that predisposes a person with the ability to learn quickly by identifying patterns, logical rules and trends in new data.
- Orientation to learn: essential behavioral competencies which will predispose the respondent to learn new things faster than others.

A person's learning agility could be low, medium or high depending on their ability and intent to learn, which depends on certain cognitive and behavioral competencies.

We have created a Learning Agility Matrix that helps in measuring individual and organizational learning agility by categorizing individuals on the basis of the level of learning ability and intent possessed by them.



A person with high learning intent and ability possess high learning agility and vice versa.

PROXIMITY INDEX

It's important to identify skills that employees can learn very easily by building upon their current skill sets. These new skills that an individual can learn with ease and in less time based on their current skill sets can be identified with the help of 'proximity index. For example, an individual proficient in excel can easily learn SPSS and then R, following which they can be proficient in data analytics by further upskilling to learn Python.

To ensure maximum engagement while aligning business goals with the learning and development process, a proximity index analysis becomes necessary.

Proximity index analysis can be used to;

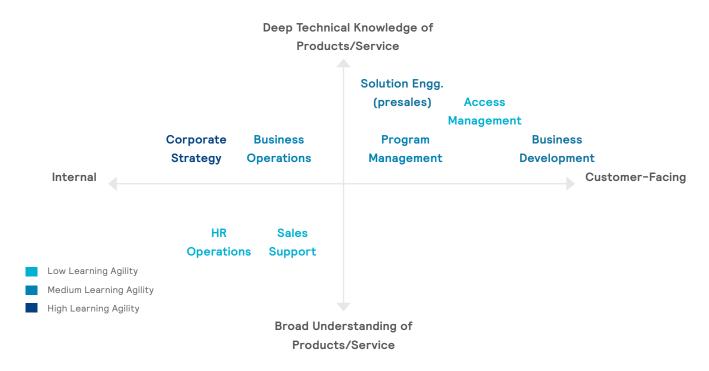
- · Compare skills required for one job family, vis-à-vis skills needed for other job families
- · Understand the commonality between skills in different job families
- Develop the Proximity Index Chart for all the job families

This data will help you understand the best course of training for every employee as it takes into consideration existing domain knowledge while matching it with the skillset required in the organization.

Proximity Index

Based On Skills And Learning Agility

Based on the data provided by the proximity index (which tells you about the trainable skills for every employee), you can also *determine new job roles for the employee*, thus eliminating redundancy and achieving maximum efficiency within the workforce.



STEP 3: CREATING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

By assessing employee skill gaps, learning agility, and taking into consideration skill proximity index, organizations can create individual development plans that are relevant and achievable.

An individual development plan lays out in detail:

- Employee's present skill set and skill proficiency level
- · Employee skill gaps
- Most easily trainable skills based on proximity index
- Employee learning agility and learning aspirations

Based on all these parameters, the individual development plan is made, which lays out in detail:

- · Skills the employee needs to learn,
- · Skills that the employee is capable of learning
- · Skills that the employee wants to learn

The skills that fill all these three criteria are the skills that the employee should be trained most rigorously on. Training of other skills should be prioritized based on how relevant they are to the employee's present job, career aspirations and how easily trainable they are based on the employee's current skill set and learning agility.

Sample Individual Development Plan

Manager Service
Management

Manager Corporate
Strategy

KEY SKILLS	INTENSITY OF TRAINING REQ.	DESCRIPTION OF THE SKILL
Market Research	High	Ability to analyze and work on the latest market developments; perform industry analysis and scenario development
Data Analysis	High	Ability to work on the data available, anlayze it to provide strategic insights
Problem Solving	Medium	Ability to identify ways and means to solve various problems that come up as a challenge in any job/task
Project Management	Medium	Ability to identify ways and means to solve various problems that come up as a challenge in any job/task
Business Orientation	Medium	Ability to identify possibilities and new opportunities for the organization by gaining a strong and quick understanding of the business, competition and industry.

HOW MERCER | METTL CAN HELP

Training Needs Identification: Mettl's pre-training assessments help in the identification of the present skill levels of each employee. By comparing the results of the pre-training assessment with each job role's competency framework, organizations can accurately identify skill gaps in each employee to make them future-ready.

Mettl's Training Need Identification Tests assess candidate skill gaps accurately by testing employee's cognitive, behavioral, personality, domain, and technical skill proficiency levels in accordance with each job's competency framework. The assessments are benchmarked as per industry and organizational standards.

Mettl can help in identifying training needs in employees via various tools such as Training Needs Identification assessments, Assessment & Development Centers and 360 Feedback

TOOL NAME

DESCRIPTION



Assessment

The key first step in your Training programs is identifying the right training needs. Identify your employee's skill gaps using advanced psychometrics and data analytics. Curate the right training program for your organization by getting accurate answers to the three pertinent questions:

Why to Train?

Identify & develop key competencies in employees to achieve business goals.

Who to train?

Identify the skills gap for each employee based on their competency levels.

Train for What?

Design a customized training plan based on individual skill gaps & training needs

Future proof your organization by augmenting learning agility within the organization by identifying upcoming skills to develop in the workforce.



360View

Identify the gaps in behavioral, cognitive, domain, and technical skillset of an employee as perceived by other stakeholders such as peers, subordinates, HRs, and supervisors.

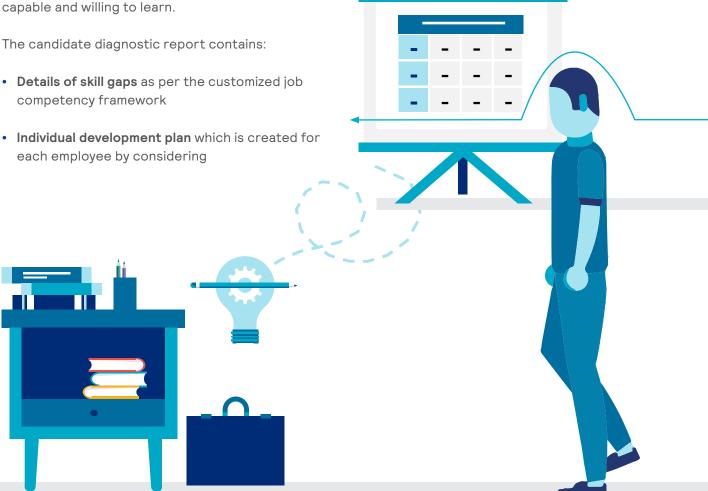


Assessment and Development Centers Provide employees and the organization with concrete data on the improvement areas which can be used for training by assessing the present skill set of employees in a more hands-on manner. Assessment centers are great for assessing how each employee uses their skills on-the-job.

Detailed Candidate Diagnostic Reports: provides details on each employee's individual training needs and developmental areas, which are identified with the help of scientifically validated employee assessment. The report then provides a detailed individual development plan for each employee basis their skill gaps and their trainability. An individual's trainability depends on their capacity and capability to learn, which is calculated by measuring their learning agility. The Individual Development Plan considers the skill gaps of an individual and their learning agility to suggest what to train the employee on. The Individual Development Plan also considers skill proximity index of the skills that they possess and skill redundancy index of the skills that they need to develop to suggest training of skills that are most relevant, easiest and fastest to learn. The effectiveness of L&D programs depends on training employees on skills that are relevant for their present and future jobs and that they are capable and willing to learn.

- competency framework
- each employee by considering

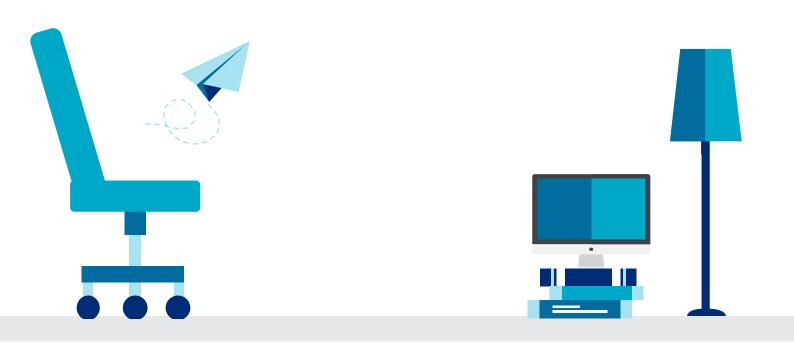
- Skill gaps by comparing their present skill-set against the desired skill set for each job role
- The redundancy index of the skills that they need to develop to determine if these skills will remain relevant in that job role in the future
- The proximity index of the skills that they possess to determine what missing relevant skills are closest to their present skillset.
- · Learning agility of the individual: by measuring their ability and orientation to learn to assess their trainability.
- Career aspirations to suggest training of skills that will be useful for each employee in the long run



CONCLUSION

The arena of learning and development has undergone massive changes in the past few years, with the onset of new technology, a Mobile-first mentality, and the influx of millennials in the workforce.

To keep your employees up to date, you need to know the answers to What to Train and Who to train so that you are able to continually improve your training programs, and get a consistent return on expectations.





ABOUT US

At Mercer I Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions by making credible people decisions across two key areas: Acquisition and Development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with 2900+ corporates, 31 sector skill councils/ government departments, and 15+ educational institutions across 90+ countries.

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