

Mini eBook: PART 1: Snack or Banquet? How Learning is Getting a Makeover

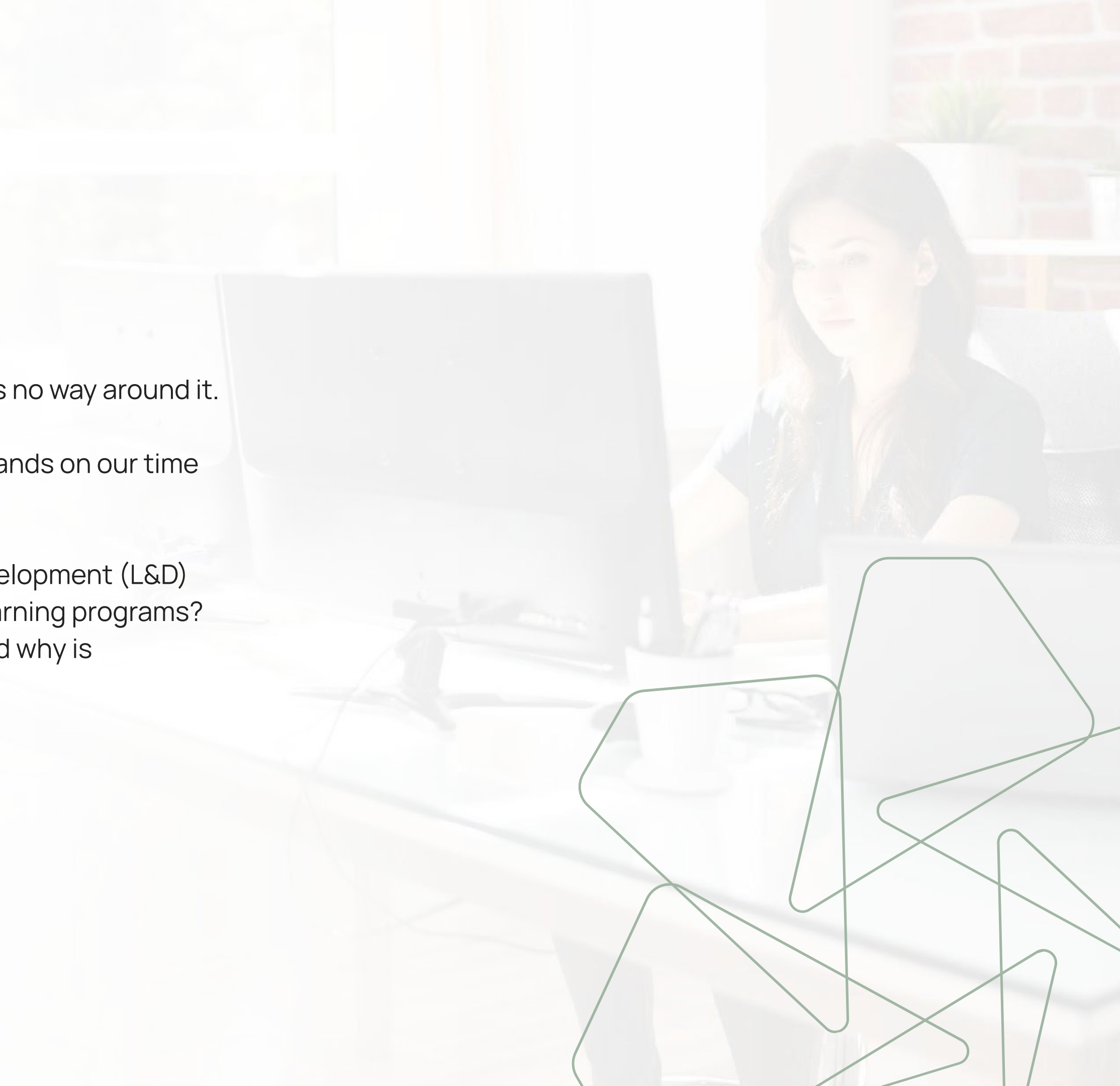
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The way we humans want to learn is changing, and there's no way around it.

Social media, bite-sized content, and the increasing demands on our time have flipped how we consume information.

This shift raises some big questions for Learning and Development (L&D) leaders: Do learners want a snack or a banquet in their learning programs? How should L&D leaders be serving up content today? And why is contextualized learning so important?



Learning Preferences are Changing

Snack vs. Banquet

Traditional learning methods – think extensive courses, workshops, and seminars – can be likened to a banquet. These programs are comprehensive, and detailed, and require a big investment of time and attention. However, times have changed: our attention spans are growing shorter but the need for immediate gratification is growing.

Today's learners often (not always) prefer "snacks" – short, concise, and easily digestible pieces of content. This shift is driven by several factors:

- **Limited Time:** With busy schedules and growing responsibilities, learners have less time for lengthy training sessions.
 - Consider this: the average attention span for an adult is 8 seconds, compared to a goldfish's 9 seconds. And the average mobile user checks their phone 150 times a day, suggesting frequent shifts in attention. Pretty crazy, right?
- **Information Overload:** The internet offers a flood of information, making it easier to find quick answers rather than dive into extensive courses – and let's not forget our handy friend ChatGPT. Can you even remember what life was like without it?
- **Preference for Flexibility:** Learners want to consume content on the go, fitting learning into their daily lives seamlessly.

What Deems Bitesize Content

Microlearning modules, short videos, infographics, and quick quizzes are becoming increasingly popular. These formats cater to the need for quick, accessible, and relevant information.

Microlearning breaks down complex information into smaller, manageable chunks, making it easier for learners to grasp and retain. According to a study by the Journal of Applied Psychology, learning in bite-sized pieces makes the transfer of learning 17% more efficient.

To add to this, a report by Deloitte found that the average employee only has 1% of their workweek to dedicate to professional development. That's just 24 minutes a week!





How Learners Want to Learn Today

Personalized Learning

One-size-fits-all approaches to learning are becoming out of date. Learners today expect personalized experiences that cater to their unique needs, preferences, and learning styles. Personalization in learning can take many forms, including:

- Adaptive Learning Technologies: Platforms that adjust the difficulty and type of content based on the learner's progress.
- Custom Learning Paths: Tailored programs that align with an individual's career goals and current skill level.
- Just-in-Time Learning: Providing learners with the information they need, exactly when they need it.

Learning in the Flow of Work

The way we approach workplace learning is changing, thanks to Josh Bersin's concept of "learning in the flow of work." This idea is about integrating learning into the daily workflow, making it a seamless part of an employee's routine. Imagine you're in the middle of a task and need a quick refresher – wouldn't it be great if a helpful tip or a short tutorial appeared right then and there? That's the essence of learning in the flow of work.

Chatbots: The New Work BFFs

Tools like AI-powered chatbots and on-demand assistance are making learning 'in the flow of work' possible. These tools can answer questions, offer learning tips, and provide immediate support without pulling you away from your work. You learn and improve as you go, without switching contexts or disrupting your workflow.

Benefits of Learning in the Flow of Work

- **Relevance:** Learning is directly tied to the tasks at hand, making it immediately useful.
- **Engagement:** Short, targeted learning snippets keep employees up-to-date without overwhelming them.
- **Convenience:** Learning fits into the daily routine, reducing the need to set aside large blocks of time.

Here's a practical example of how this could work:

Imagine this: a sales team getting short, targeted snippets just when they need them, delivered directly to their work chat channels like Slack or Teams. These could be quick tips on product features or reminders on pricing strategies, keeping the team up-to-date without those dreaded lengthy training sessions.

Delivering Content for Modern Learning

Contextualized Learning

Contextualized learning is about making learning relevant and applicable to the learner's specific context. This approach recognizes that learning is most effective when it is directly related to the tasks and challenges that learners face in their daily work.

Contextualized learning is crucial for several reasons:

- **Relevance:** Learners are more engaged when they can see the direct relevance of the learning to their work.
- **Retention:** Contextualized learning enhances retention by linking new information to existing knowledge and real-world applications.
- **Performance Improvement:** By addressing specific needs and challenges, contextualized learning can lead to immediate improvements in performance.

To deliver contextualized learning, L&D leaders should:

- **Understand Learner Needs:** Conduct needs assessments to identify the specific skills and knowledge gaps.
- **Use Real-World Scenarios:** Design learning programs that mimic real-world situations and challenges.
- **Leverage Technology:** Use AI and data analytics to personalize content and provide real-time feedback.

Predictive Learning

Moving away from blanket training programs, predictive learning focuses on anticipating and addressing learning needs before they become critical. This proactive approach can significantly improve learning effectiveness and engagement.

Predictive learning involves:

- **Data Analysis:** Using data to identify patterns and predict future learning needs.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Providing learning that addresses potential skill gaps before they impact performance.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** Regularly assessing learner progress and adapting learning programs accordingly.

Balancing Platforms and Content

With an overwhelming number of platforms and an abundance of content, learners can easily become disengaged. To combat this, L&D leaders should focus on:

- **Streamlining Platforms:** Reducing the number of platforms to a manageable few that can deliver diverse and high-quality content.
- **Curating Content:** Carefully selecting and organizing content to ensure it is relevant, engaging, and accessible.
- **Facilitating Ease of Access:** Ensuring that learners can easily find and access the content they need, when they need it.



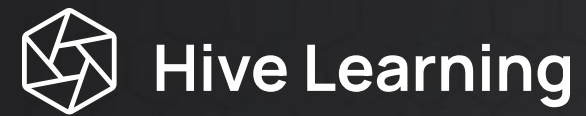
Conclusion

The way we learn and consume content is shifting, and our approach to delivering learning programs has to keep up. Today's learners want a mix of bite-sized and immersive content that fits right into their daily routine.

Using predictive learning, not being afraid to experiment with AI tools, and focusing on practical applications are key strategies for meeting the needs of modern learners. And let's not forget contextualized learning – it's crucial for making learning relevant and impactful.

By rolling with these strategies, L&D leaders can handle the twists and turns of today's learning landscape and deliver programs that really connect with their learners.

Whether it's a quick snack or a full-on banquet, the goal is to serve up the right mix of content to satisfy the different appetites of today's learners.



Ready to Personalize Your Learning?

Curious about how to tailor your learning programs or introduce an AI-powered coach that meets your learners right where they are?

[Give one of our tools a try!](#)

