



NovoEd



LIGHTHOUSE
research & advisory



**CRAFTING POWERFUL LEARNING
EXPERIENCES THAT PRODUCE RESULTS:
OVERCOMING L&D SKILL AND TECH GAPS**



Table of Contents

Learning Teams and Tools Must Evolve to Meet Dynamic Demands	3
Learning Technology Gaps: Solving for Virtual Learner Engagement	4
Turning the Skills Gap Conversation Inward: L&D Skill Gaps that Limit Performance and Business Impact	6
Case in Point: 3M Case Study	7
Case in Point: NovoEd Case Study	8
Company-Led and Employee-Fueled Training Don't Have to be Mutually Exclusive	9
Case in Point: Stanley Black & Decker Case Study	11
Key Takeaways	13
About NovoEd	14
About Lighthouse	15

Learning Teams and Tools Must Evolve to Meet Dynamic Demands

3

“History teaches us that [people] behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.”

-ABBA EBAN

In the last year, learning leaders and business executives have had to make decisions that they never before imagined. And in the midst of challenging and dynamic circumstances, new demands shed light on the changing skills of learning teams as well as the technologies that underpin the talent development function.

What's intriguing is that the majority of employers say that training has actually improved as a result of the changing demands put upon the learning function. In our opening quote drawn from the speech of a Middle Eastern diplomat, we find a kernel of truth: getting painted into a proverbial corner can lead to new, innovative solutions that wouldn't have been considered previously, and the learning function is a great example of that phenomenon.

The 2021 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Reskilling, Talent Development, and Employee Mobility Study reached over 2,000 learners and learning leaders, and our research demonstrates that principle clearly... learning teams have worked to evolve themselves and their offerings to meet the shifting demands of the workforce and the business.

Some of our findings were exactly what you'd expect (learners prefer to develop skills through experiences, not just content consumption). But other findings open up conversations that need to be happening in every learning team, such as:

- *What was the biggest gap identified in your learning technology, and have you filled that gap yet?*
- *What internal L&D team skills gaps did you uncover? What's the plan to grow your team?*
- *How do you balance company-initiated (sales training, onboarding, development, DEI, etc.) and employee-selected training in a way that drives the right outcomes?*

Within this guide we'll walk through each of these together, highlighting examples, stories, and data to help ensure that your team is equipped for what lies ahead.

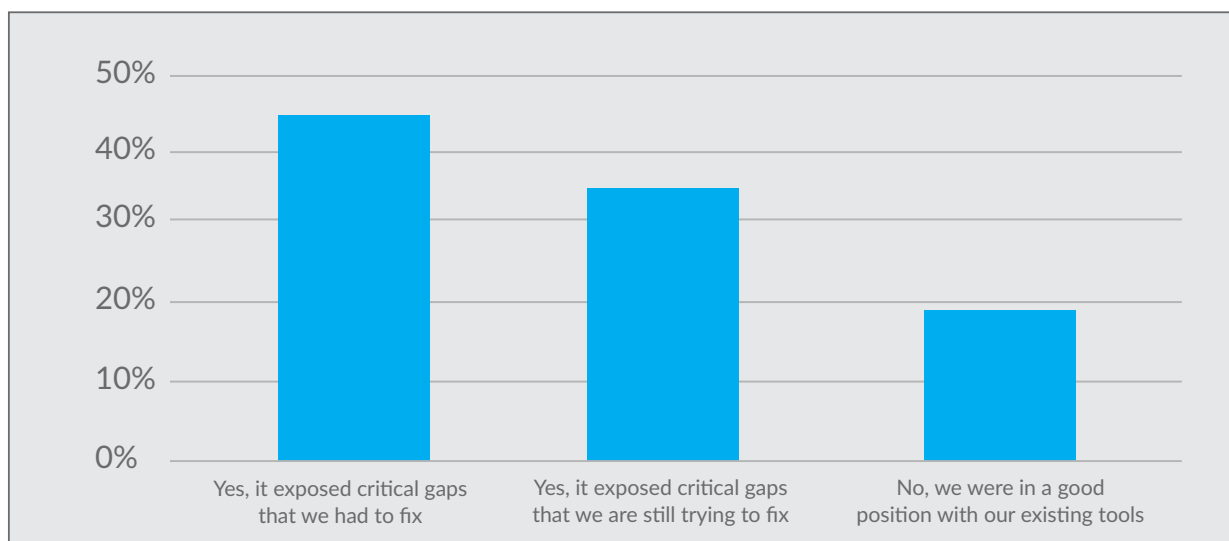
<https://f.hubspotusercontent10.net/hubfs/559363/Online%20Collaborative%20Learning%20for%20the%20Enterprise%20-%20The%20Complete%20Guide.pdf>

Learning Technology Gaps: Solving for Virtual Learner Engagement

4

80% of the employers in our new 2021 Learning, Mobility, and Talent Development study said that the events of the past year exposed “critical gaps in their learning technology.”

Figure 1: Learning Technology Gaps Identified/Corrected in Last Year



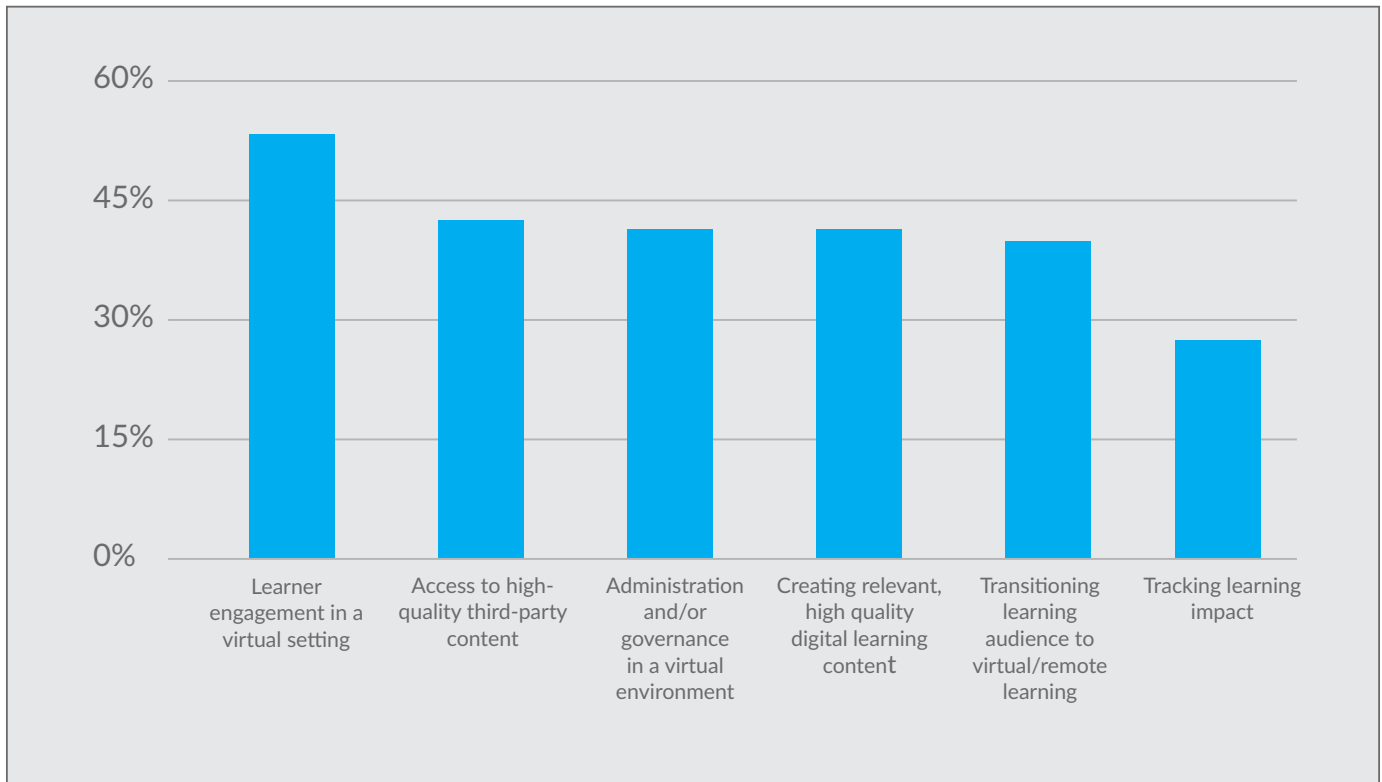
This story may sound familiar: one learning executive we spoke with had hundreds of staff in recurring training cohorts that met face-to-face on a regular basis for updates and refreshers on key skills. Suddenly, the team was unable to meet in person, necessitating a rapid and radical shift in their approach. Simply connecting via a video conferencing tool wasn't enough to create the connections and peer interaction that were critical success factors in the company's previous experiences.

In order to develop and deliver experiences that were highly rated by learners, the company's learning team had to take a different approach.

This is one example of many conversations we've had with L&D professionals around this topic, and it is reflected in our data.

The research shows that of the various learning technology gaps that were identified in the last year, item number one was **learner engagement in a virtual setting**.

Figure 2: Specific Learning Technology Gaps Identified



For some teams, it's taken for granted that sharing resources or content virtually will lead to engagement, and history hasn't shown that to be true. In fact, when we asked learners how they preferred to learn, they specifically rated experiences and social interactions at the top of the list.

In addition, learners also said that they prefer to work for a "company that gives me experiences to learn new skills." With all of the talk in the marketplace about career pathing and online training content, learners still choose experiences over those other options.

All that said, how do you adapt? How do you ensure that you're on the right track? Consider the following questions that you should answer about your learning technology stack.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- *If your learners scored your company's ability to engage them virtually, how would you rate?*
- *Does your system wrap in collaborative experiences to create real, sustained learner engagement in a virtual setting?*
- *How are you measuring engagement with your learning initiatives in a virtual environment?*

Turning the Skills Gap Conversation Inward: L&D Skill Gaps that Limit Performance and Business Impact

6

The skills demanded of learning teams today seem to be never-ending. Not only must your team be able to create and deliver great content, but they also need to curate relevant resources, wrap in social learning, and design learning experiences that deliver results. Plus, for maximum impact, the team needs to have strong stakeholder relationships, partner closely with the business, and measure everything to prove it's working.

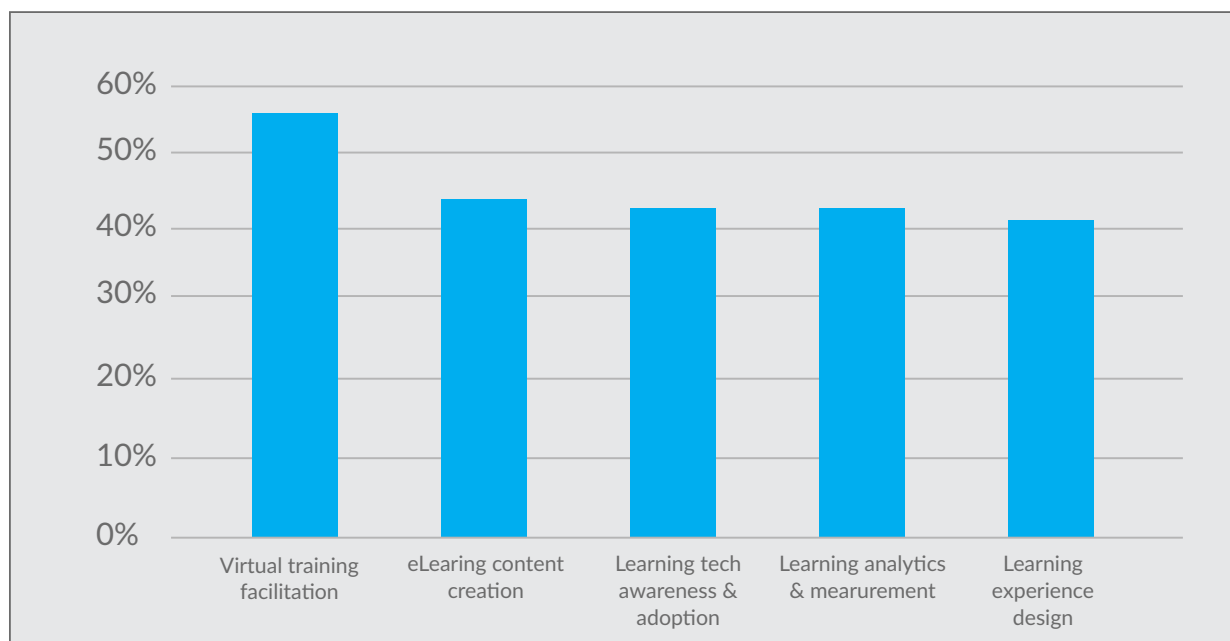
So how do you know what skills really matter?

In our study, we asked learning executives about what skills were changing and evolving within the learning function. **The number one L&D skill gap identified was virtual training facilitation.**

In a physical environment, there are visible cues, body language, uses of space and distance, and other mechanisms to drive engagement.

Most of those don't exist in a virtual environment, which creates challenges for those leaders trying to develop their people remotely. In the last year, one parallel that has become apparent watching external events and conferences move virtual is that people often don't just want to be spectators—they want to be participants. are consistent across time and groups. Also, be sure the assessment mitigates bias and complies with applicable laws or run the risk of being sued for discrimination.

Figure 3: Learning Team Skill Priorities, Ranked



Case in Point

7

A practical example of preparing facilitators comes in what global technology company 3M has done recently. 3M is investing in upskilling its facilitation team to increase learner engagement and scale delivery of virtual social learning experiences. The new approach entails moving from teaching content (“sage on a stage”) to enabling, cultivating, and monitoring the learning community (“guide on the side”).

The company provides training and support to facilitators to better understand their role in the social learning experience—much of which is asynchronous—as well as technical training on learning platform capabilities. This facilitated social learning approach has resulted in higher learner participation and completion rates and enables larger cohort sizes than would be possible in ILT or VILT formats.

Therefore, when thinking about virtual training experiences, we have to look for ways to get learners involved and actively engaged.

But that’s not the only priority when it comes to internal L&D team skills.

Another one of the top priorities stands out for its opportunity to scale the impact of learning professionals across the workforce: **learning technology awareness and adoption.**

Why? Because the modern learning function isn’t just a piece of software or a bunch of learning professionals with varying abilities.

The best-performing learning teams have the right mix of both elements to create and deliver outstanding performance.

What’s powerful to see is that beyond some heavy-hitting priorities like stakeholder relationships, governance, or even learning experience design, learning technology awareness and adoption stands out as a focal point for forward-thinking learning teams.

Learning teams with the right skills don’t just deliver learning content effectively. They have a *strategic role in enabling business performance* and are seen as valuable contributors to organizational objectives.

Case in Point

Since December 2016, close to 20,000 learning leaders and talent development professionals have enrolled in the NovoEd Foundations of Learning Design (LXD) course in attempts to pick up the necessary skills and strategies for designing learning experiences that drive business impact. This learning journey is used not just to open learning professionals up to new concepts around organizational capability and skill building through experience design, but it also actively allows learners to see and feel what a well-developed learning experience is like. This practical course is designed to be applied to existing business challenges for maximum effectiveness.

8

IF YOUR TEAM WANTS TO IMPROVE ITS AWARENESS OF THE CAPABILITIES OF MODERN LEARNING TOOLS, CONSIDER THESE SUGGESTIONS:

- *Spend time examining the market and educate yourself on what tools exist. There's no pressure to make a quick decision, but it's sometimes surprising to find that a tool exists to solve a current problem in an innovative manner.*
- *Think about learning technology through the lens of virtual training: spend some time with your team exploring how you could make things more engaging for learners with some of the technologies that support cohort-based learning and skill development, including in high-impact areas like leadership development, sales training, or onboarding.*
- *Sometimes learning teams are so focused on the skills that others need within the business, we sometimes forget to "sharpen the saw," as Stephen Covey put it. Remember, a business will never succeed beyond the talent it's able to recruit and develop, and the learning team is a critical enabler for that success.*

<https://www.novoed.com/resources/learning-experience-design-course/>

Company-Led and Employee-Fueled Training Don't Have to be Mutually Exclusive

9

When we think about training through the filter of company-led versus employee-selected, we often wonder which is the “best” option. We know that it’s not as simple as a binary decision, but much of what we need learners to understand can be split into two primary groups, and that audience drives a different delivery mechanism:

- **Routine content that the majority of employees need:** offer self-paced eLearning from a content library that all employees can access. Examples include ethics and compliance training.
- **Specialized company- or culture-driven content for strategic purposes:** deliver via a more robust experience including content, social components, live or virtual instructors, and rich feedback. Examples include leadership development, onboarding, and training.

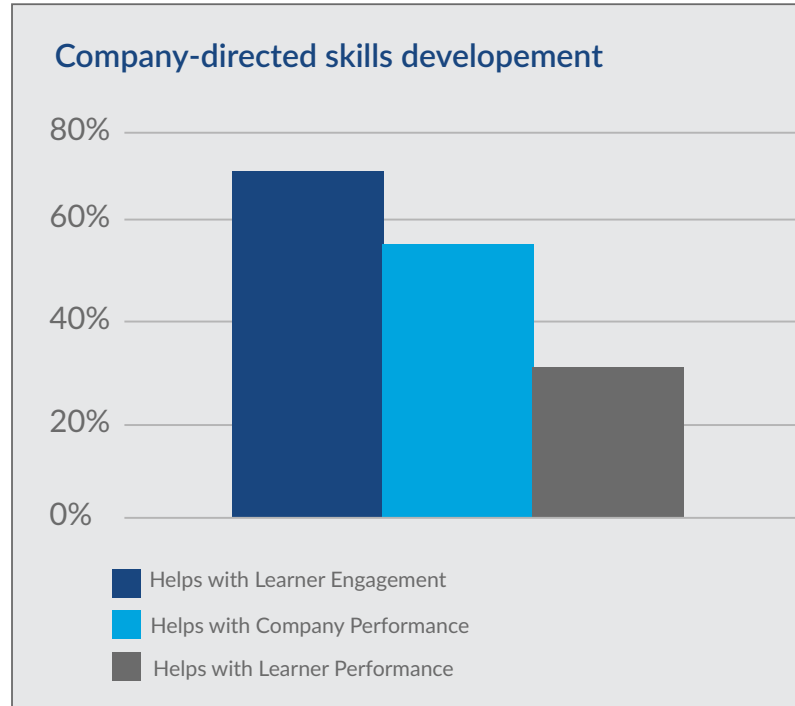
Therefore, if I asked you to tell me what leads to higher engagement for learners, which of these two options would you choose?

- A. Company-led training
- B. Employee-selected training

Virtually everyone we’ve asked this question of says option, “B,” but what if we asked which one leads to better company performance? In the research, nearly 700 learning and talent professionals said option “A.”

But what if that’s a false dichotomy? What if we can create experiences that solve not just option “A” or option “B”, but both of them at the same time?

Figure 4: Company-Directed Skill Development Outcomes



Legacy tools, methods, and technologies might have forced a choice in the past, but modern learning tools can grapple with both of those sets of needs. As you'll see in the Stanley Black & Decker case study that wraps up this guide, enterprise companies are transitioning to learning experiences that lead to both sets of outcomes that benefit both the learners and the organization.

10

THESE QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU THINK ABOUT HOW TO BALANCE THESE OUTCOMES TO ACHIEVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS:

- *What kinds of training in your organization are strategic to the degree that they deserve more than just a piece of content to do them justice?*
- *What is the opportunity cost of continuing to deliver required training as it's always been done? What does this cost in terms of engagement, performance, and impact?*
- *How do you currently deliver learning experiences for required content? Are there ways to weave in social, collaborative, or other aspects that create a more dynamic and engaging experience?*
- *How would your learners respond to the question above about company-required training? Which of the three outcomes (company performance, individual performance, or engagement) would they say is most likely?*

Case in Point

In the Fall of 2020, the Stanley Black & Decker (SBD) New Hire Sales (SMDP101) was transformed from a 5-day in-person training program into a higher impact 5-week cohort-based virtual learning experience. The team leveraged new technology that connected their digital resources, enabled interactions and peer discussions among the participants, embedded role-play, observation and feedback, and facilitated Q & A. As a result of the pilot's success in which they saw record high levels of engagement, performance, and satisfaction, SBD now has ambitious plans for expansion across the sales organization.

When COVID hit in the Spring of 2020, with new recruits scheduled to start their sales careers with Stanley Black & Decker, the training team moved quickly to develop and launch their virtual sales onboarding program. The training team wanted to keep the same feel and success of the in-person program with their new virtual learning experience.

Expanding Community & Supportive Network

StanleyBlack&Decker

SALES & MARKETING
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Challenges

- Formerly in-person model
- Knowledge retention of 40 hours classroom-based content
- Technical product & application-based training
- Limited class sizes, Dispersed field reps require travel

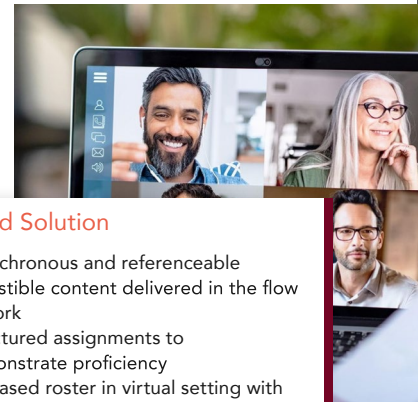
NovoEd Solution

- Asynchronous and referenceable
- Digestible content delivered in the flow of work
- Structured assignments to demonstrate proficiency
- Increased roster in virtual setting with added mentor support

Fortune 100

Manufacturing

60K+ Employees



Virtual Onboarding with a Human Touch —
Creating Connection, Culture and Community

Existing Technology Gaps

Their existing digital learning ecosystem didn't have the technology to connect their digital resources, enable interactions and peer discussions, role-play, observation and feedback, and to facilitate Q & A. They explored and experimented with different solutions including Zoom, but nothing felt quite right. They knew they had to pivot to a new training approach, but most alternative approaches weren't viable because they were 'low tech' versions of digital learning – until they discovered NovoEd. NovoEd enabled the social, collaborative, and supported learning that is now integral to the SMDP training programs.

With NovoEd’s platform, the training team was able to blend live ILT with e-learning (synchronous and asynchronous) along a collaborative learning path. The NovoEd platform enabled the training team to aggregate, curate, and deliver content in the flow of work and to structure assignments to demonstrate proficiency. They were also able to establish facilitator-guided, mentor-supported team learning and cohort-based pathways. Participants were able to engage in discussions, get feedback from peers, mentors, and facilitators, and practice and apply their learning on-the-job.

Learning Experience and Impact

Over the course of the 5-week program, 40 participants were guided through an asynchronous experience with reference materials to cement learnings. They were organized into teams of 4 learners and a team mentor. Each learner also had access to additional mentors and course administrator who fielded technical and programmatic questions. This layered social support system, including the course administrators, instructors/facilitators, mentors, managers, teams, and cross-functional networking, opened up entirely new avenues that learners didn’t have in an in-person setting.

In the end, the team saw close to 90% of the class engaged in course discussion throughout the new virtual cohort program – 3x the ILT program. Furthermore, 97.5% of the 40 new

Teaching Teams	Participant Groups	Peer to Peer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitators, mentors, and teaching assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cross-regional teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New hire sales trainees
These combined support networks facilitate an organic experience that might not have been as effective in person, such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">24/7 access to facilitators and mentorsIndividualized feedback & evaluations on all assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Diversity of learning content modalityImmediately apply learning concepts within 24 hours

hires surpassed the minimum requirements for the activity. 51.2% completed 90% or more of the total course content. As a result of the success of this sales onboarding program, the team has laid out a transformation path for 2021 and beyond.

Key Takeaways

As we have established through the data and these stories, the learning function is a powerful, strategic lever for delivering business value. These key takeaways for this report offer direction for how to leverage these insights for the best results.

13

1

Learner engagement in a virtual setting is like a relationship—it requires intention and effort to get it right. But when that spark happens, it drives a powerful set of outcomes that benefit everyone involved. Connect people. Go beyond content. And reap the rewards of a more engaged learner population at the same time.

2

Think about your current learning team and its aggregated skills. Now that you have explored some of the missing skills that are holding back your function, make plans to shore up those gaps to deliver the development capabilities that your business needs.

3

Evaluate your approach to company-led training efforts and seek to incorporate more dynamic elements for your learners. It really is possible to deliver the training that supports critical organizational priorities and strategies in a virtual setting. And it's not just possible, but necessary, to make that experience both enjoyable and results-oriented as well.



About NovoEd

NovoEd's collaborative learning platform empowers organizations to design and deliver experiential learning that accelerates business performance on a global scale.

Since the company's founding at Stanford's social algorithm laboratory in 2012, global corporations, executive education providers, and training firms have relied on NovoEd to develop high-value capabilities through purposeful practice and application, coaching and mentorship, and group collaboration. NovoEd's proven approach to learning connects diverse groups of learners, mentors, and leaders in a high-impact online environment which unlocks an organization's collective knowledge and drives measurable outcomes.

About the Research

The 2021 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Reskilling, Talent Development, and Employee Mobility study was conducted in Q2 2021. This study reached over 1,000 employers of all sizes and industries. It also tapped into insights from 1,000 learners to understand priorities, preferences, and decision-making elements for each group. NovoEd was one of the key supporters of this independent research study.





About Us

Lighthouse Research & Advisory is a modern analyst firm dedicated to setting the standard for excellence in talent, learning, and HR. By providing compelling research and actionable insights for business leaders, our team's mission is to navigate the rapidly changing field of human capital management to support today's talent and learning functions. From establishing frameworks and defining competitive practices to illuminating the ROI of the employee experience, our goal is to chart a new course for talent. Ben Eubanks is the Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse, providing insights for today's talent leaders and vendor partners.

Prior to joining Lighthouse, Ben worked as a research analyst for Brandon Hall Group, focusing on learning, talent acquisition, and talent management. During his tenure, he published more than 100 pieces of research and provided advisory services to executives from some of the largest and most respected organizations in the world. He also has hands-on experience working as an HR executive, leading both strategic and tactical talent practices. Ben is the host of We're Only Human, a podcast focused on the intersection of people, technology, and the workplace. In addition, he runs upstartHR.com, a website serving HR leaders that has reached more than 1,000,000 readers since its inception.