



A GUIDE TO HIGH-IMPACT BLENDED LEARNING PRACTICES

Implement future-proof processes to help your people thrive in today's world of work



It's imperative that we adapt employee development programs to be relevant in today's world of work.

Our world of work has been rapidly changing and evolving in recent years, driven largely by advances in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation. The pace and scope of organizational change has been greatly accelerated, challenging leaders and employees to keep their knowledge and skills current.

During uncertain, tumultuous times, employee development initiatives tend to be deprioritized. We turn our attention towards resolving a myriad of business challenges due to socio-economic pressures, shortage of supplies, dispersed workforces, burnout, and attrition.

In this extremely competitive job market, it is as important as ever to reimagine how we develop our employees to **increase retention, enhance productivity and engagement, and improve business outcomes.**



A GUIDE TO

High-Impact Blended Learning Practices

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The way we develop employees **needs to change**

The way that we do business today has changed. Our employee development initiatives must adjust to our new reality. The transition to a virtual or hybrid work environment minimizes the likelihood of bringing learners together for multi-day classroom training. Our adult learners are overcommitted, challenged by muted boundaries between work and life, and may be adjusting to increased levels of stress as we navigate the complexities of balancing daily life and work.

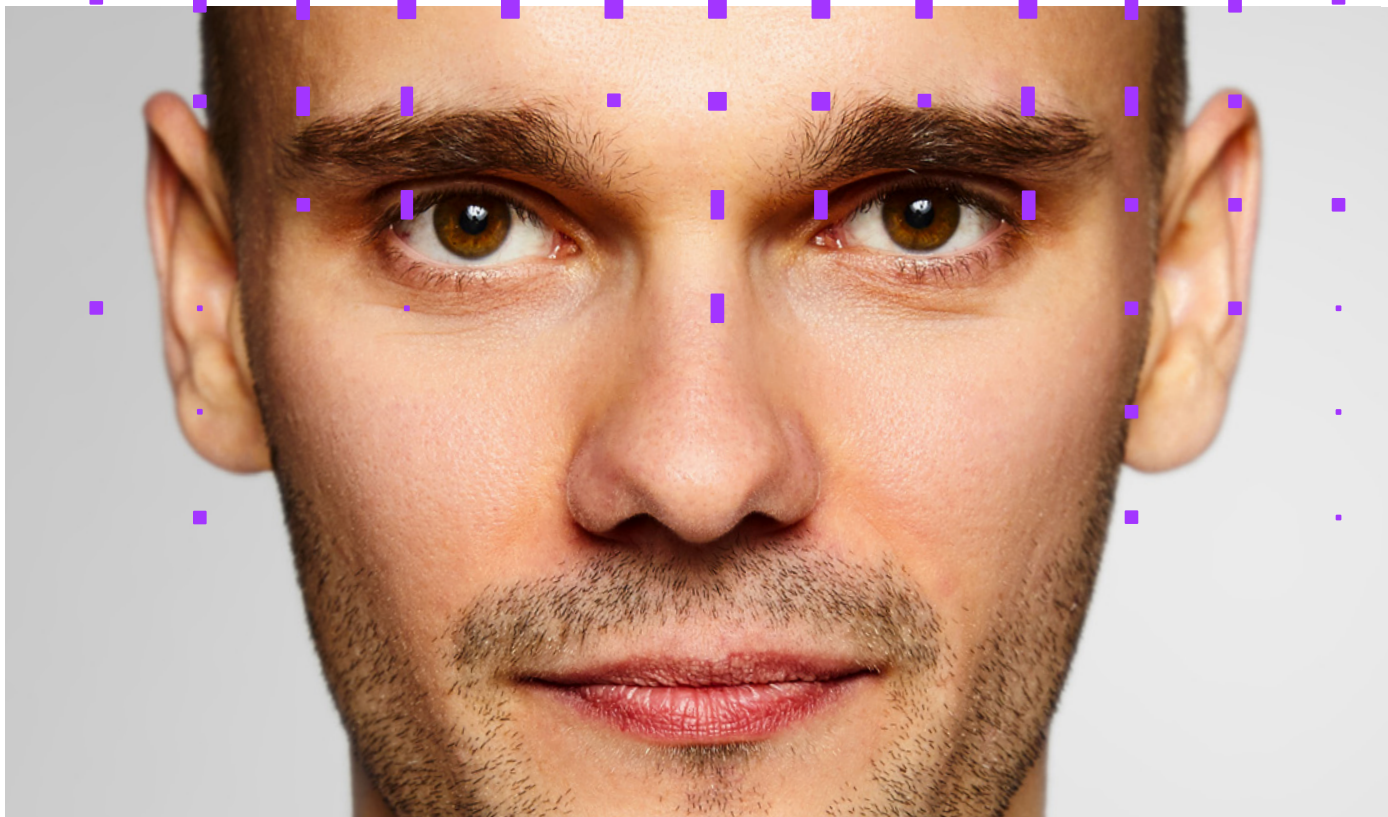
To make learning effective in this new work arena, we need to move to easily digested, **competency-based, relevant learning** that can be configured to learners' needs and delivered in a variety of ways, like microlearning modules and instructor led webinars, in addition to traditional in-person workshops.

Taking learning virtual without minimizing impact can be a delicate balance. According to the Harvard Business

Review¹, while productivity increased slightly as more workers transitioned to work from home, we are missing the interactions that bind us one to another. The benefit of learning socially results in stronger connections and collaboration that can positively raise levels of **curiosity, continuous learning, and time to reflect**.

To attract and retain high performing employees, it is imperative for employers to demonstrate a commitment to their professional development. We can do so by refocusing our attention on employee development and reimagining the content that is most critical for success, while concurrently creating a culture where learning can take place...and stick. The over-arching goal of employee development is to **positively impact performance and productivity** through meaningful, memorable, behavior changing developmental experiences.

How do we do this?



1. Knowledge Workers are More Productive from Home, Harvard Business Review, August 2020

Designing evidence-based learning programs through assessment

The most successful organizations motivate, coach, and develop employees in a way that targets their specific development needs, considers their preferred style, and supports their career aspirations. To gain the greatest value from your investment in employee development, we recommend taking an evidence-based approach through assessments.

1

What are employees expected to do?

The first step of designing an effective employee development program is defining what success will look like. By understanding organizational needs, we can then define desired employee behaviors to achieve goals and objectives. An effective way of doing so is to create a behavioral competency framework that can be employed for a variety of purposes: employee selection, accelerated onboarding, performance management, succession planning, and employee development initiatives. Whether your learning program is intended to accelerate performance in a new role, reinforce performance in a current position, or prepare employees for a future role, you must start by understanding what they are expected to do.

2

What is the learner’s baseline of knowledge?

Once organizational needs have been defined, we can focus on establishing a baseline of the learners’ current knowledge and skill around the defined competencies. Evaluation of performance data and/or 360 feedback can provide valuable measurement of current skill levels, observable behaviors, and results. By having each learner complete an assessment, we can evaluate learning needs and assess knowledge gains.

3

What are the learner’s intrinsic strengths, motivators, and styles?

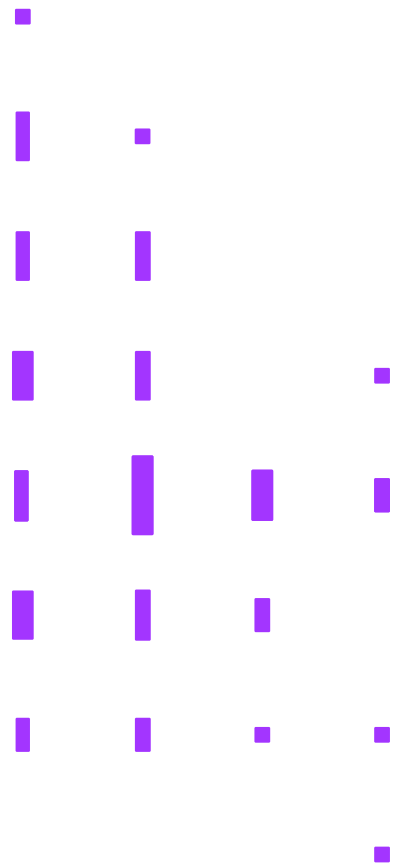
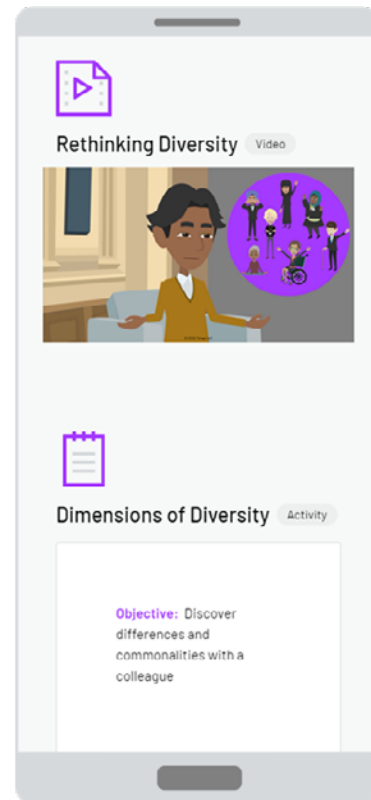
Learning can be tailored to each employee’s individual needs and preferences by considering their job-related strengths, motivators, and developmental opportunities. Scientifically designed and validated assessments can take a snapshot of the employee’s natural inclination and shed light on strengths that can be leveraged to develop untapped potential. This is important because not every member of the team will have the same developmental needs. Identifying the competencies that are most critical for each employee’s success and tailoring the learning activities to their unique needs can optimize the impact of employee development activities.

Learn anywhere, anytime, with blended learning

The hybrid workplace has made it important for learners to be able to access learning anywhere and at any time. A blended learning approach, deploying the best of synchronous and asynchronous learning, is adaptable to the realities of today's world of work. Whether employees are working from home, from the office, or some combination of both.

Well-designed microlearning content is well suited for mobile deployment. The fact that most people have a mobile device close at hand most of the time means that they can consume lessons anytime and from almost any location. Many employees have noticed that the lines between life and work have become blurred as more are working from home. Instead of taking a coffee break with a colleague mid-morning, one might step away from their desk to put in a load of laundry or take a quick walk around the block. Similarly, they may watch a work-related micro-video or article on their phone while waiting for a doctor's appointment or for a child to come out of school.

By combining technologically driven learning with facilitator led sessions, today's learning programs can also support social engagement and connections that many crave in the work-from-home environment. Some may feel a sense of isolation or disengagement, missing the informal interactions that occur between colleagues in the office. Augmenting asynchronous learning with skillful facilitation of virtual classroom events can not only engage learners with the content, but also with each other. Frequently, participants in such events comment that the interactions with other participants reinforced their understanding of the content and generated ideas of how they might apply it to their work, while simultaneously increasing their enjoyment of the development journey.



Building sustainable change

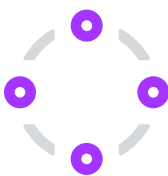
A successful employee development program does not end with knowledge gain. The true value comes when learners do something differently, more effectively, from the learning. Regardless of the way that the content is disseminated – digital learning, virtual classroom, or in person – we must assist learners in identifying behavioral goals and real life situations in which they can practice and apply the lessons learned, develop their skills, and sustain lasting behavioral change.

Consider one or more of several ways of reinforcing learning content to optimize the impact of your employee development solutions.



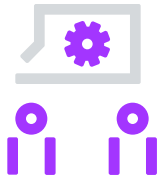
Supplemental content

Periodically distribute content that reinforces the theories, methodology, and concepts introduced during the initial training event. This might include related articles, case studies, tools, tips, or other resources. To increase the impact of the reinforcement, personalize the development journey by tailoring the reinforcing content to each learner’s assessment results, or developmental goals.



Learning circles

Form small groups of learners to meet periodically in a discussion group format. During each session, they can discuss an article or book related to a shared learning topic, share progress they’ve made when applying lessons learned, and discuss ways of dealing with challenges they’ve encountered along the way.



Professional coaching

Offer professional coaching to high potential employees as a way of supporting their ongoing professional development over longer periods of time. This solution is particularly impactful to expand leadership capacity and effectiveness on more complex, sophisticated, strategic competencies.



Optimize your learning solutions with these **seven tips**

1. **Improve organizational effectiveness** by applying a common framework and language across the talent lifecycle - from selection to onboarding, succession planning, and leadership development.
2. **Thoroughly explore and understand the needs of the business** to clearly define the purpose of the employee development initiative.
3. **Contextualize your approach** to fit in with the current work environment, culture, and climate.
4. **Define the competencies and measurable behaviors** that are critical to drive on-the-job success.
5. **Apply sound, scientifically validated tools** to assess learner's styles, and identify untapped potential and knowledge gaps.
6. **Link theory** with real-world scenarios, relevant applications, and a call to action.
7. **Build a learning experience** that combines the benefits of technology-based methods with interactive, facilitated sessions, and personalized development journeys.



Introducing AIM Learning System

The purpose of employee development is to increase employee skills and reinforce behaviors that drive business results, improve productivity and employee engagement, and prepare your organization for future success by retaining high performing, high potential employees. By taking an evidence-based approach and adapting your training and development programs to today's world of work, you can maximize the impact and develop invaluable competitive advantage.

Built on a future-focused, scientifically designed competency framework, the AIM Learning System enables you to drive employee development across any stage of the talent lifecycle. With configurable components including assessments, digital learning modules, virtual classroom training, and team challenges, AIM will allow you to elevate learning in a truly tailored, perfectly personal way.

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[Talogy AIM Learning System](#)

