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| Centre number | | **534** | | |
| Student name | | Anas Raza Khan | | |
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CIPD Level 7 Advanced Diploma in Strategic People Management - 7OS02 Learning and Development Practice

# Question 1 (AC 1.4)

## *Introduction*

If you want senior stakeholders to approve more funding for learning and development (L&D), ensure that you outline both the obvious and less visible advantages these programs can bring to the company. When properly aligned with a strategy, learning and development can have a significant impact on performance, foster new ideas, and enhance employee engagement (Ghonim et al., 2020). The analysis examines the strengths and likely effects of L&D, using examples to underline why additional funding is necessary.

## *1. Enhanced Organisational Performance*

A significant significant advantage of L&D is that it leads to improved employee performance. Practical training teaches staff what they need to do and how to do it successfully in their work (Kraiger and Ford, 2020). If a company like Tesco trains its staff in customer service, it sees an increase in customer satisfaction and loyal customers, both of which lead to higher sales.

A CIPD study (2024) shows that companies valuing learning achieve higher productivity and more substantial innovation. By tailoring L&D to essential goals, such as equipping staff with digital tools during a digital upgrade, the entire organization can move and compete more effectively. A key part of any business case should be performance improvement.

## *2. Improved Employee Engagement and Retention*

L&D also significantly affects both employee motivation to stay and their level of involvement at work. Anyone who believes their company is interested in helping them succeed is more likely to commit and stay motivated. LinkedIn's 2018 For Learning Report found that 94% of people would stay with an organization if it helped them advance their careers.

Due to programs such as peer training and online classes, combined with Google's emphasis on learning, employees remain engaged, and the employer brand is strong. Mentoring and individual development can benefit smaller and mid-sized companies just as much as they do large ones (Leverant, 2024). When turnover reduces, organizations avoid paying for recruitment and onboarding—this is an appealing message for anyone focusing on finance.

## *3. Talent Pipeline Development and Succession Planning*

Such initiatives help develop employees internally and ensure that the organization is ready for what lies ahead. Utilizing leadership development features, such as assigning high-potential employees to new roles and providing coaching, helps build an effective succession plan (Bano, Omar, and Ismail, 2022). This is particularly significant in areas where workers with specific skills are in demand.

Siemens utilizes its "Leadership Excellence" program to ensure that younger employees are developed for future senior roles and to minimize change (Siemens, 2024). Getting staff trained from within eliminates the need for costly and risky hiring from outside the company. Personnel at the leadership level tend to like business cases that describe how future needs are met by increasing employee skills.

## *4. Support for Organisational Change*

Learning and development support support the process of organizational change, such as transitioning to digital, restructuring, or changing culture (Kumar, 2023). When learning interventions aren't in place, many of these changes often fail due to people not being willing or equipped enough.

For example, HSBC's global digital strategy was accompanied by significant investment in learning and development (L&D) to help employees enhance their digital, agile, and analytical skills (HSBC, 2019). With this training, the project was more straightforward to carry out, and many users adopted it. Linking L&D to strategic initiatives makes stakeholders feel more confident about providing funding.

## *5. Fostering Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

A culture of learning inspires people to be curious, try new things, and innovate. If employees are helped to learn and adopt new practices, the organization becomes more flexible and better able to handle challenges (Zhang et al., 2023). If employees can utilize L&D to think creatively and solve problems, improvement efforts often originate from within an organization. For example, 3M employees dedicate 15% of their time to personal development and creative work, which has resulted in the creation of the Post-it Note (Sekar, 2024). While not all businesses can do extensive innovation training, even limited programs can create valuable improvements in both processes and products.

## *6. Compliance and Risk Management*

L&D, especially in healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, helps ensure staff understand the regulations they need to follow. Ensuring your staff learns about health and safety, data protection, and anti-money laundering minimizes the risk of legal trouble, damage to your reputation, or disruptions (Rutkauskaitė, 2024).

For example, the pharmaceutical company Pfizer ensures that all compliance training is included in its annual courses (Pfizer, 2024). Since failing to follow the rules can have disastrous results in this sector, L&D helps companies avoid risks. In practice, it can be spelled out as cost avoidance, which often encourages people with a risk-averse mindset.

## *7. Positive Impact on Organisational Reputation and Employer Brand*

Investment in learning and development supports the organization's reputation outside. If a company is admired as an employer that invests in its people, it naturally attracts top talent and promotes social responsibility (Whitehead, 2022). When an employer brand is strong, marketing efforts are more effective, and customers are more likely to trust the business.

Example: Unilever's adoption of a Future Fit approach for learning has garnered the company global attention, attracting younger workers who appreciate opportunities for their development (Unilever PLC, 2023). Mentioning these benefits can lead stakeholders who care about brand and sustainability metrics to give their support.

## *Conclusion*

There are many advantages and possible outcomes from L&D initiatives. Through its ability to boost individual and organizational results, drive innovation, ensure compliance with regulations, and motivate workers, L&D is a wise long-term investment. It is clear from Tesco's approach to customer service and HSBC's modernization efforts that L&D is more than just a support area—it helps organizations grow, change, and remain competitive.

When L&D initiatives are well-designed, sales teams become more productive, employee retention improves, succession planning becomes more effective, and a healthier company culture emerges. As a result, businesses can directly measure factors such as their profits, market share, and level of innovation. Research from CIPD and McKinsey has also proven that ongoing learning is strongly linked to better business results. Therefore, integrating knowledge and development (L&D) into an organization's structure becomes even more valuable.

# Question 2 (AC 2.3)

## *Introduction*

To design successful learning and development initiatives, approach them strategically, using evidence, and keep both company aims and learner needs in mind. Actual L&D incorporates ideas from learning for adults, accesses various ways of learning, and uses substantial methods to check for results (Kraiger and Ford, 2020). The structured application of the ADDIE and Kolb models to leadership development programs and onboarding can be highly valuable.

## *Initiative 1: Leadership Development Programme*

### Design

Its main aim is to develop strategic, emotional, and people-managing skills in the participants. By first using the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), the organization can assess where gaps exist in leadership gap leadership with the help of performance reviews, feedback from all directions, and succession planning data (Boateng, Gilbert, and Duedu, 2024). Retail organizations may discover the requirement to sharpen their middle managers' skills in decision-making and communication.

As the project is being designed and developed, the content should follow the company's values and objectives. It works best when Kolb's cycle of "do, reflect, think, and experience" is used, where people practice (through simulations), observe what happens (in a journal), ponder the results (by thinking), and apply what they learn in real-world projects (Akella, 2024).

### Delivery

National online sessions, in-person meetings, and peer coaching ensure learners engage in multiple ways and retain what they learn. Social learning in groups and through advice from experienced professionals facilitates effective collaboration and the more widespread application of new skills when facing real-world challenges (Healey, 2024).

### Impact Measurement

Kirkpatrick's Model is highly effective in measuring the effectiveness of leadership training programs (Nisa et al., 2022). We can detect Reactions (Level 1) using surveys completed by learners. Both knowledge quizzes and role-play activities are used to measure learning at Level 2. Their line manager observes behavior at a Level 3 stage over a period, and the Results at Level 4 could include higher levels of productivity or team engagement. Instead, Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method closely examines those who have effectively applied their skills and knowledge, identifying the factors in their situation that facilitated or hindered the transfer of their skills (Downes, 2015).

## *Initiative 2: Onboarding Programme*

### Design

A good onboarding program ensures employees start working well from their first day. Applying the 70-20-10 model, 70% of learning during onboarding may be practical (real jobs, live actions), 20% should be social (mentoring), and the remaining 10% should include official e-learning (compliance and policy) (Clardy, 2018).

To determine priority areas, data is gathered from analyses of past hires' input, turnover rates, and surveys of hiring managers. Using this data enables success in both onboarding employees to follow regulations and integrating them into the company culture.

### Delivery

Cognitive overload can be prevented when onboarding is spread out over 90 days or so, allowing for a slow and steady assimilation process. While e-learning modules teach company policies, diversity, and health & safety, in-person sessions can introduce teams and train them for specific job roles (Pathan, 2023). Mobile compatibility in a learning platform enables remote and neurodiverse workers to access education.

It is essential that materials include diverse role models, are accessible to visually and deaf students, and are sensitive to the needs of learners from different cultural backgrounds. Team managers create Slack groups, or Microsoft Teams channels so new hires can connect with peers and get answers.

### Impact Measurement

The starting point for measurement is engagement data, which covers module completions, attendance at mentoring sessions, and feedback surveys (Level 1). Knowledge checks (Level 2) should be followed by measuring employee productivity and turnover rates after 30, 60, and 90 days (Level 3). At the strategic alignment level (Level 4), statistics on staff retention after one year and the number of staff members who transition from one role to another are helpful.

## *Comparative Analysis*

Although these initiatives have different motivations, they both employ the same design and evaluation techniques. Leadership development is designed for the long term, whereas onboarding helps a new employee get started immediately (Dickson and Isaiah, 2024). Onboarding is about seeing results and evidence of return on investment quickly, which the leadership initiative is not.

Support training, simulations, and coaching are most effective for leaders, while structured content and support from other employees are most helpful during onboarding. For instruction to be effective, it requires diversity and inclusion; leaders should see various examples, and training should use language and information that everyone can access (Jeske and Olson, 2021).

Although Kirkpatrick's model fits both, coaching may benefit more from Brinkerhoff's insight due to the challenging behavioral aspects of leadership training. Instead, it is generally more straightforward to measure the effects of onboarding by analyzing work-related metrics.

## *Recommendations for Impact Measurement*

* **Use Multi-Method Evaluation:** Combine Kirkpatrick’s levels with Brinkerhoff’s case studies to measure both breadth and depth.
* **Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback:** Gather input from managers, peers, and HR to triangulate behavioral changes.
* **Track Long-Term Metrics:** For leadership, follow up six to twelve months after the initiative to assess its sustained impact.
* **Embed Data Analytics:** Use LMS and HRIS tools to track participation, progress, and performance automatically.
* **Promote Reflective Practice:** Encourage participants to complete learning journals or digital reflections that capture progress and insights.

## *Conclusion*

Simply delivering learning isn't enough. It's essential to align what's learned with the organization's strategy, the learners' expectations, and inclusive approaches. Initiatives for leadership development programs and onboarding both bring significant benefits when built on solid learning design models, such as ADDIE or Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

In leadership programs, mixing experience, one-on-one coaching, and collaboration among participants helps improve their skills and prepare them for the future. To help employees succeed in their roles, onboarding should utilize explicit, user-friendly materials and provide strong support from colleagues to ensure a smooth and successful experience.

These initiatives can only be adequately evaluated with models such as Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model and Brinkerhoff's Success Case Method. These frameworks enable organizations to see both rapid learning progress and lasting changes in behaviors and results, providing a comprehensive picture of what they have achieved.

By paying attention to feedback, diversity, and accessibility throughout learning and development, you can enhance participation and provide everyone with a fair chance. Using analysis tools such as metrics allows organizations to improve their decisions over time.

# QUESTION 3 (AC 3.4)

## *Introduction to Learning Culture*

A learning culture is created when an organization regularly supports, values, and uses learning in all its activities. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) states that a learning culture exists when learning is valued for achievement, supported at every level, and considered key to an organization's success (CIPD, 2020). The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge defines a learning organization as one that continually grows its ability to plan its future by working together and learning as a group (Olobia, 2021). Creating this kind of culture requires more than the occasional workshop; it's about ensuring curiosity, reviewing actions, experimenting, and learning are shared elements within the company.

Due to digital transformation, various work models and a lack of specific skills are now prevalent in the business world. Consequently, an emphasis on learning can lead to increased innovation, a more engaged team, and a sustained competitive advantage (Schilirò, 2024). It encourages flexibility, builds up future leaders, and guarantees that companies can always respond to changing circumstances in their industry.

## *Characteristics and Importance of a Learning Culture*

Many organizations that focus on learning cultures have common traits. Here, employees are free to bring up ideas, ask questions, and acknowledge when they make mistakes. Leaders ensure that they discuss their learning journey and consistently request feedback (Zamiri and Esmaeili, 2024). Cross-team learning is shared and structured, making peer collaboration more usual.

Several studies have demonstrated that a learning culture is crucial. Experts reported that companies that value professional learning produce higher results, encourage new ideas, and have staff who are motivated and willing to lead transformations (Meher et al., 2023). Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella has led the way for the company. The shift from focusing on ability to embracing growth has fostered harmony, compassion in leading others, and exceptional results for the company (Sekar, 2024). By adopting the slogan "learn-it-alls," Nadella led the way for employees to take responsibility for their learning and for learning to become a key goal.

## *Current State in Microsoft*

People outside the company appreciate the learning culture at Microsoft. Since Satya Nadella became CEO, learning has become a key part of the company's transformation (Kawamoto, 2024). Championing a growth mindset has helped businesses in leadership and also changed the way their staff professionals approach tough challenges, receive feedback, and grow.

The company now hosts regular hackathons to foster both creative thinking and unity among different departments. Microsoft Learn and Viva Learning provide employees with the resources they need, tailored to their location and career aspirations. Additionally, the company offers leadership development to foster understanding, thoughtful consideration, and leadership that aligns with today's business realities (Microsoft, 2025). Because of their efforts, Microsoft has become better known for valuing the future and the people who support it.

Although significant progress has been made, supporting a learning culture requires consistent and innovative investing. As hybrid work has become the standard and digital upskilling is necessary, it opens up opportunities for targeted strategies to address learning challenges within organizations.

## *Recommendation 1: Establish a Peer and Reverse Mentoring Programme*

Peer mentoring and reverse mentoring are effective ways to foster Microsoft's learning culture. This approach leverages the company's existing experience and encourages collaboration among team members as they share knowledge and learn from one another across various groups and age ranges (Zamiri and Esmaeili, 2024).

With peer mentoring, workers in the same phase of their careers can discuss their experiences, offer each other support, and consider the difficulties they share in common (Dahlberg and Byars-Winston, 2019). Unlike traditional mentoring, reverse mentoring provides junior staff with a platform to teach senior leaders about new technologies, current digital communication, and inclusion topics. The exchange of knowledge helps both individuals acquire essential soft skills that are fundamental to learning and flourishing.

Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2011) find that reverse mentoring has raised awareness about generations and encouraged greater diversity in their leadership teams. By adopting Microsoft's design, we can match mentors and mentees based on what they hope to learn and maintain consistent communication through routine feedback sessions.

## *Recommendation 2: Develop an Integrated Knowledge-Sharing Platform*

We recommend forming or strengthening a digital knowledge-sharing site where workers can both access and contribute helpful information, tutorials, and the best practices for working effectively. Microsoft has existing systems, such as SharePoint, Teams, and Viva Learning; however, creating a knowledge environment that is simpler, more social, and centrally available would help improve the results of learning initiatives (Microsoft, 2025).

An effective platform should enable users to learn from workshops, curated courses, Q&A forums, group discussions, and blogs by internal experts. Specific groups, known as Communities of Practice, can be formed for AI, cybersecurity, and UX design, allowing people to collaborate on solving problems (Stige et al., 2023).

A platform's user experience is significant. When video conferencing is available directly in Microsoft Teams, it becomes easier to use and less stressful. Tagging offers, search filters, and ratings all support users in quickly exploring content that suits them (Libertad, 2024). Adding leaderboards and badges in a game can boost people’s involvement and make them proud to share their knowledge.

## *Potential Challenges and Mitigation Strategies*

Implementing the suggested actions may encounter some obstacles. Working quickly is a challenge that many face. Mentoring and knowledge-sharing can be put off when employees' jobs call for competing clients or other work (Thanmoli and Nur, 2008). This matter can be solved by integrating learning into regular work and by having managers support setting aside some unaffected time for your growth.

Many senior leaders may have psychological resistance to the idea of reverse mentoring or sharing pieces of their knowledge that are still in progress. To move beyond this issue, encouraging leaders to promote openness and share their own stories about it is helpful.

## *Conclusion*

Fostering a culture of learning enables organizations to adapt innovate and through challenging times. Microsoft has taken steps towards fostering this way of thinking by adopting a growth mindset, promoting inclusivity, and integrating the latest learning tools. Nevertheless, we still need and can achieve further improvements.

Setting up a structured peer and reverse mentoring system enables the company to build closer ties, fill knowledge gaps, and develop leaders as they face challenges and learn new things. Likewise, a central knowledge platform enables employees to look back on and contribute information that supports learning at the very moment they need it, giving them a sense of ownership over the information.

# QUESTION 4 (AC 4.1)

## *Introduction*

Thanks to technology, organizations now have innovative options for fulfilling their employees' learning needs. Due to globalization, remote work, and the emergence of new skills, digital learning solutions are now necessary, not just nice to have. Learning management systems (LMSs), learning apps, virtual reality (VR)/augmented reality (AR), and AI-based personalized platforms are the primary components of modern learning strategy plans (Khanduri and Teotia, 2023).

Through Learning Management Systems, organizations can handle, oversee, and evaluate training with less effort. These applications can be used easily wherever you are, supporting personal progress at your speed. Additionally, VR and AR are being utilized for hands-on learning in subjects such as equipment training and safe practices (Iyer, Maralapalle, and Mahesh, 2024). Learners on AI-supported platforms, such as Coursera for Business and Microsoft Viva Learning, receive content tailored to their roles, interests, and achievements.

## *Strategic Benefits of Technology in Learning*

Technology-enhanced learning has a wide range of strategic advantages. Having accessibility is one of the most significant advantages of using artificial intelligence. With digital learning, employees anywhere in the world can still receive first-class education (Owoc, Sawicka, and Weichbroth, 2021). Now that hybrid and remote working are standard, tools that enable both synchronous and asynchronous learning, such as video conferencing, collaborative documents, and cloud-based training, play a more significant role.

Benefit number two is that they work out cheaper in the long run. While it may be expensive to get started with digital tools, over time, they require less travel, fewer printed items, and less need for on-site trainers (Attaran, Attaran, and Kirkland, 2018). The use of automated systems frees L&D professionals from small tasks, enabling them to focus on larger goals.

With the help of digital platforms, HR and L&D teams can utilize data analytics to examine participation rates, employee engagement, and what is being retained in training (Singh et al., 2022). Additionally, adaptive learning technologies, driven by AI, have the potential to personalize each student's learning experience. They utilize learner achievements, opinions, and accomplishments to encourage greater participation and success (Yaseen et al., 2025). They are essential for continuous education by highlighting areas where improvements can be made, considering the rapid changes occurring in many industries.

## *Organizational Factors Influencing Adoption*

Still, how much technology supports learning in a school comes down to a range of organizational aspects. Learning digital literacy should come first. For learning to occur quickly, all employees should be capable and confident in their use of technology (Bashar and Naaz, 2024). If this area is not substantial, then even the most effective designs could not achieve success. Before investing in advanced learning and development (L&D) technology, organizations should ensure their employees possess basic digital literacy.

Deciding how to use the budget is also very important. Although some corporations can finance their own VR labs or custom LMS solutions, many SMEs struggle to do so due to their limited budgets (Wardiman et al., 2024). This means that new technologies and innovative ideas for learning may not be utilized.

How organizations operate and think is also very important. Businesses always seeking technological developments are better equipped to accept change. Organizations with tight hierarchy structures or leaders who are reluctant to take risks may avoid these changes (Adewumi et al., 2024). When line managers and senior leaders serve as change champions, the chances of successful tech-driven learning are significantly higher.

According to the TAM, people’s opinions about technology depend on how useful and easy to use it seems to them. People engaged in learning become more interested in the platform if they trust it will make learning easier (Al-Adwan et al., 2023). Similarly, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) suggests that beliefs about ease of use influence the use of technological tools, the amount of effort required, the influence of others, and applied conditions.

## *Barriers and Risks*

Despite the many helpful features, using technology in L&D can create several problems and risks. It is becoming increasingly clear that many students are missing out on reliable devices, fast internet, or quiet places to study (Parveen and Ramzan, 2024). This can become a problem in hybrid jobs where different employees have varying abilities to engage with remote learning.

Failing to accept changes is yet another challenge. People who are accustomed to traditional classes may consider online platforms to be cold and brutal to use (Tabassum, Akram, and Moazzam, 2021). Trainers can find it hard to create or present interesting digital materials, given that technology use is often limited in such organizations.

Data privacy and cybersecurity threats deserve due attention. Online learning platforms often collect customers' preferences and behavior. If privacy is not ethically and adequately managed, it could lead to problems or suspicions (Sadiqzade and Alisoy, 2025). GDPR and similar regulations require learning platforms to implement robust data protection measures and communicate effectively with users.

## *Recommendations for Effective Implementation*

Organizations need to approach technology in learning and development (L&D) systematically and involve everyone in the process. First, ensure that users receive proper training and support. Both employees and managers should be aware of both the function and the value of using platforms for growth. Adding digital learning to how performance management works can highlight its value.

Secondly, the use of models such as ADDIE helps learning and development professionals produce content that matters to learners and is constantly being improved. They help connect what learners need to know with what the company needs, so technology is always put to work. Online resources and in-person support, such as virtual coaching, can help learners meet the challenge of learning together while receiving the attention they need. By using Microsoft Viva or Yammer, people can learn from one another and stay more engaged.

Before launching a new technology widely, organizations should test it with a few employees first, using the results to refine it for everyone. If the new talent development solution can integrate with other systems, it becomes more likely to be widely accepted.

## *Conclusion*

Thanks to technology, learning and development training areas are now flexible, accessible, and can be customized in ways that organizations were previously unprepared for. Even with valuable tools like Learning Management Systems (LMSs), mobile apps, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), an organization's success depends on how well-prepared its members are, how engaged the learners are, and how well their culture aligns.

People's ability to use technology, having leaders support them, and having money to invest encourage adoption. However, facing opposition, not everyone has access to technology, and concerns over data privacy might hinder success. Organizations can gain a clearer view of users' actions by using TAM and UTAUT, which lets them create optimal strategies.

Organizations should incorporate learning technology into their general people strategies, support inclusive learning, and regularly measure its results. If used properly, the technology addresses learning requirements and also encourages better performance, new innovation, and the continued growth of a business.

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