2022
Trends
for CLOs

CORPORATE
LEARNING NETWORK

Introduction

2021 was a lot like 2020. In fact, some feel 2021 was a continuation of 2020. And they have good reason to feel that way. The pandemic is still going strong with yet another variant of the coronavirus impacting the world. A large number of employees are working from home rather than going into the office. In some instances, organizations are employing a hybrid approach to work. And the Great Resignation has taken root.

It's hard not to surrender to the idea that 2022 will be the same as 2021 and serve as a continuation of what we've seen. But for all the changes, many things still stay the same.

Employees still want development opportunities. They still want those opportunities to be **personalized** and they want to be **valued** by the organization.

That's where chief learning officers come in.

This publication takes a look at what CLOs can expect in 2022. Think of it, at least in part, like a guide book for the year. Not everything will apply to every organization, but no doubt there will be a few items. The team at the Corporate Learning Network hopes you will find it helpful as you start out the new year.

Reality Check

Before getting into the particulars, it's important to take a moment to conduct a reality check of sorts. In discussions with chief learning officers, the Corporate Learning Network's Advisory Board, and learning leaders, a few things became abundantly clear.

1

Zoom Fatigue

For some, Zoom and similar applications are very appealing and a fantastic way to conduct work business daily. For others, it's a tiring exercise where the desire to be in the same room with peers and co-workers truly impacts a person's desire to work. Motivation suffers as does the desire to continue development. It's been described by some as the introverts (those that prefer working remotely and use Zoom or other applications) versus the extroverts (those that don't prefer to use those).

2

Transformation Fatigue

Just as with Zoom fatigue, employees are stressed to the max with transformation. Since 2020, organizations have been pushed to transform quickly. Transformation was necessity for survival. And the amount of transformation that occurred in such a short time normally happens over several years. Transformation in the height of the pandemic was rushed through in just a few weeks to a few months.

3

The Great "Reprioritization"

No doubt learning leaders have seen business leaders constantly change priorities over the last few years. If not changed priorities, suddenly everything is a priority… which means *nothing is a priority*. When there are too many targets, hitting the bullseye will be very difficult. Translation: everything will suffer if everything is equally important at the same time.

4

"Schizophrenic Leadership"

A reason the Great Reprioritization exists (you may or may not call it by that name) is this idea of schizophrenic leadership. Leaders are all over the place. It's not necessarily their fault, however. The pandemic has created a hyper-reactive environment. Everyone is trying to get ahead of the next curveball the virus may throw.

Trends

Understanding the reality check is critical when considering the learning trends for 2022. As stated before, it's important to know not all these trends will be present in each organization. Organizations are as different as the pebbles in a riverbed. That said, here are some of the emerging trends for CLOs in 2022.

> ## "Development" is a way of thinking. Not a place to go.

For many, development is associated with sitting in a meeting/classroom or lecture hall and receiving instruction on how to do a certain job or learn a skill. That instruction can be in-person, virtual or via video. While that may be one way of doing it, it is now considered... by many... to be development of the Stone Age.

Now, development happens anywhere and everywhere. It's the idea of meeting the learner *where they are and when they are* in relation to their work. It's also about meeting their device requirements or limitations.

Consider, if you will, a cable installer. He/She/They are usually out in the field installing cable lines, cable boxes and/or internet modems. Learning isn't always something these individuals can do during work. And these individuals usually don't want to take a day in the office for development.

But what if they could take development with them, on the job, via a smartphone or a tablet? Better still... what if it could be accessed at any time of day? Even better than that... what if the learner has access to content, he/she/they want to access and not simply those development opportunities that relate specifically to their job?

The Age of Prioritization

That trend naturally creates the second trend to review. The business world has entered the Age of Prioritization. This isn't a new thing, but it's taken on more importance now than ever before.

As employees seek more development opportunities, the desire is for that development to happen *on their terms*. Some wish to learn in a lecture hall as mentioned above. Some want to learn via a mobile device. And it's all about the content they want to access and its relevance.

For chief learning officers and their learning teams, figuring out how best to offer content is going to be a significant challenge in 2022. Why? Look no further than the Great Resignation. Employees are taking serious control of their professional lives. They are reprioritizing life and development over jobs. If an employee doesn't feel the organization is in alignment, that's enough for the employee to leave and find another job.

Learning and Development can be the key to battling high retention rates IF it can be made to serve the employee WHILE aligning with the goals of the business.

The CLO-Senior Leader Relationship

For years, it has become glaringly clear chief learning officers or learning leaders must be a *strategic business partner*. Sadly, some senior leaders in the organization see learning as a benefit and not a necessity.

In 2022, CLOs and learning leaders must work to strengthen these relationships. They must be a part of the planning of strategy and the execution of that strategy. CLOs and learning leaders can provide to senior leaders ways to pivot and in which direction to pivot. This is key to alignment in a fast-paced environment many organizations find themselves in today.

Provide senior leaders with "strategic doing" in an agile way. This means being more out there and looking around the corner to prepare for what's coming… thus making sure learning and development teams have a plan in place to deal with the challenges that may lay ahead.

Creating an Environment to Fail Safely

The best way to sum up this trend is in two words: psychological safety. Creating this type of environment takes real effort on the part of management. Doing so leads to the ability of employees to thrive and to learn safely and successfully. This means employees are allowed to experiment and fail without fear of retribution. It also coincides with the idea that there is much to learn from failure.

A psychologically safe environment is not only for the employees' benefit, but for the benefit of the organization as well. According to McKinsey & Company research:

"Leaders can build psychological safety by creating the right climate, mindsets, and behaviors within their teams. In our experience, those who do this best act as catalysts, empowering and enabling other leaders on the team—even those with no formal authority—to help cultivate psychological safety by role modeling and reinforcing the behaviors they expect from the rest of the team."

Additionally, the 2019 People Management Report found "managers who create psychological safe work environments are less likely to experience employee turnover on their teams. If you want to retain top performers, ensure psychological safety across the whole company.

Furthermore, McKinsey reports:

"As considerable prior research shows, psychological safety is a precursor to adaptive, innovative performance—which is needed in today's rapidly changing environment—at the individual, team, and organization levels. For example, successfully creating a "network of teams"—an agile organizational structure that empowers teams to tackle problems quickly by operating outside of bureaucratic or siloed structures—requires a strong degree of psychological safety."

CONCLUSION

There are many other trends which could be expressed in this publication and for good reason. These were specifically chosen because they show the most real-world impact and each seems to exist, at least at some level, in every organization.

The way in which an organization responds to these trends will be directly related to the unique variables held and valued by its leaders. That said, it is important to have strategic partnerships within the organization and outside the organization. These internal and external partnerships are key to meeting the challenge of 2022 head-on and making it to 2023 better and stronger than before.

Acknowledgements

About the author

Mason Stevenson is the Editorial Manager for the Corporate Learning Network. No stranger to the IQPC family, Stevenson was previously the editor of CLN's sister portal -- the HR Exchange Network. During his time at HREN, Stevenson hosted a weekly podcast, emceed quarterly online events and webinars and wrote extensively on topics within the human resources space authoring articles, news stories, infographics, whitepapers and reports.

Previously, Stevenson was a television news producer working in the news industry for nearly 12 years. During his tenure as a journalist, Stevenson worked at radio and television stations in Kentucky, Tennessee and Florida most notably WBKO in Bowling Green, Kentucky, NewsChannel 5 in Nashville, and News 13 in Orlando. He has worked with elected officials at all levels of government, produced political debates, traveled to Cuba, and produced half hour specials and town hall meetings on a variety of topics.

Stevenson graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2006 where he earned a Bachelors Degree, double majoring in Political Science and Broadcasting.

✉ Email Mason Stevenson

Corporate Learning Team Members

Christine Sokolowski is the Senior Editorial Director at Corporate Learning Network, overseeing content and engagement across all digital platforms. Prior to joining CLN, she was the Communications & Brand Manager at Bisk, an online program management firm who partners with leading universities and corporations to deliver exceptional online education to students. There she was responsible for the launch and editorial content management of their intranet and CEO's newsletter including corporate communication, change management and events. She has also worked for The Vitamin Shoppe and IMA (Institute of Management Accountants), where she started her career. Christine graduated from Monmouth University in 2009 where she earned a Bachelors Degree, with a Concentration in Communications and Public Relations, and minors in Information Technology and Spanish.

✉ Email Christine Sokolowski

Vanessa De La Rosa is the Digital Marketing Manger at the Corporate Learning Network. Vanessa is a Dominican-born and raised accomplished marketing leader and strategic growth expert driving the development and implementation of key marketing processes, tools, and initiatives to achieve corporate revenue objectives. In addition, Vanessa's customer life cycle expertise offers confident leadership developing solid partnerships across clients, internal stakeholders, and teams.

✉ Email Vanessa De La Rosa