



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



LEO LEARNING RESEARCH RESULTS: YEAR 2 [2017/18] – EMERGING TRENDS

MEASURING THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF LEARNING

By Piers Lea

As part of [LEO Learning's](#) wider work in this field, we promised to keep going with our [survey](#) on the appetite for measuring the business impact of learning.

The results are here and the trends look very interesting.

Introduction

LEO Learning – on behalf of [Learning Technologies Group](#) – has made a commitment to deliver on the use of big data approaches to [measuring the business impact of learning](#). The Group, which includes data specialist [Rustici Software](#) and our partners [Watershed](#)¹, has the capability, frameworks and technical products to deliver a sustainable measurement strategy. However, we also know that there is a huge amount of thinking to be done in the process of implementation and this can only be achieved via substantial collaborative effort.

Last year, more than 50 organisations joined LEO Learning at events at the Royal Institution in London and we've published many of the results of that thinking².

In addition, we've run a number of in-house strategy workshops with L&D and operational leadership teams.

To add to this thinking, we now have survey results from nearly 700 organisations including the likes of Disney, Amazon, IBM, Xerox, Bayer, Thomson Reuters, Jaguar Land Rover, Novartis, Roche, DHL, Tetra Pak, Virgin Media, World Health Organization, John Lewis Partnership, Deloitte, Santander, Volvo, Nestlé, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Sainsbury's, and the UK Ministry of Defence.

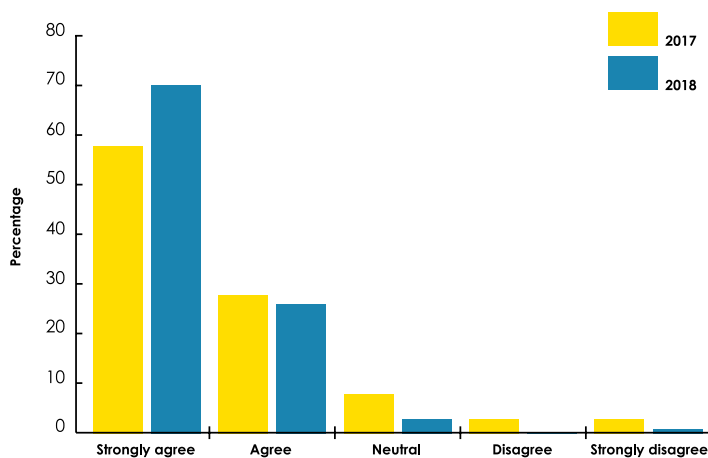
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SURVEY RESULTS

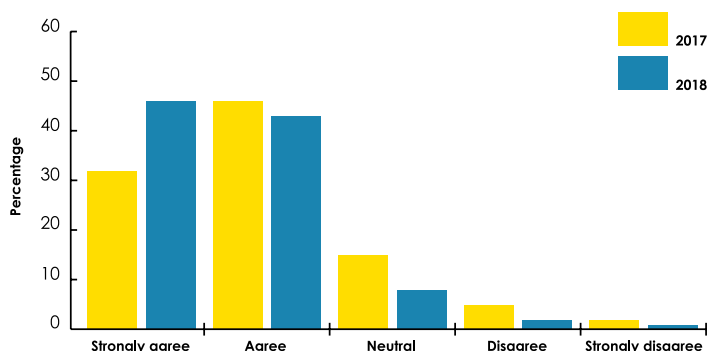
We asked the same questions as last year in order to have a direct comparison.

I want to measure the business impact of learning programmes



There is a significant increase in the desire among L&D executives to measure the impact of learning. 96% strongly agree/agree that this is high on their agenda in 2018.

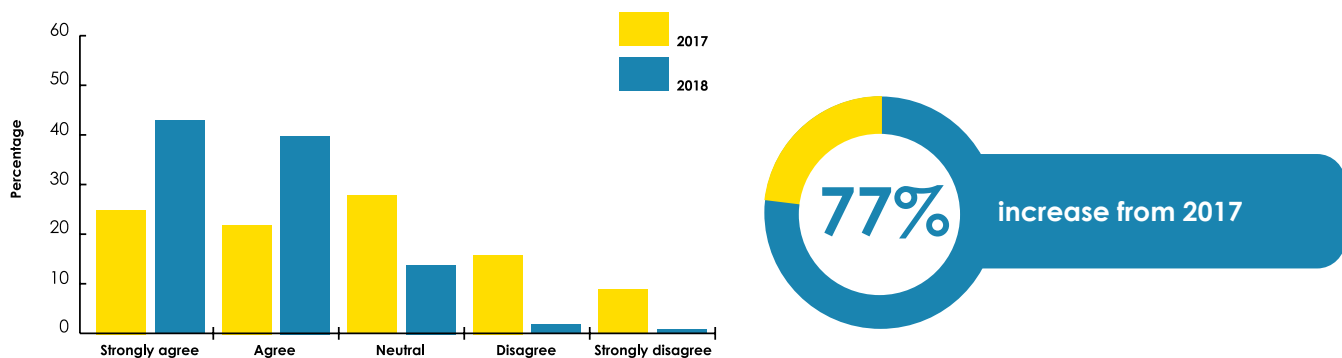
I believe it's possible to demonstrate learning's impact



There is an increased confidence among L&D leaders – in 2017, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that it is possible to demonstrate the impact of learning, while in 2018 it's gone up to 89%. The number of people 'sitting on the fence' (Neutral) drops almost by half.

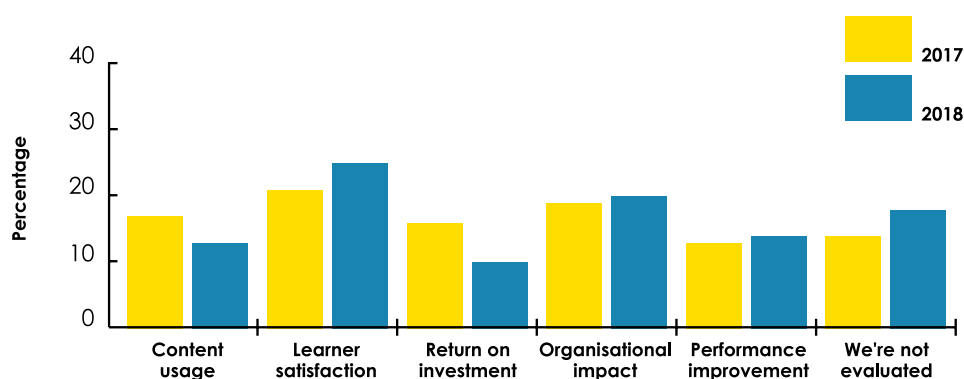
SURVEY RESULTS

Data has a significant impact on my organisation



Significantly, there is also a much greater awareness of the role a big data approach³ plays in supporting decision making inside organisations. The results show that 83% now agree or strongly agree with this sentiment, compared with just 47% in 2017.

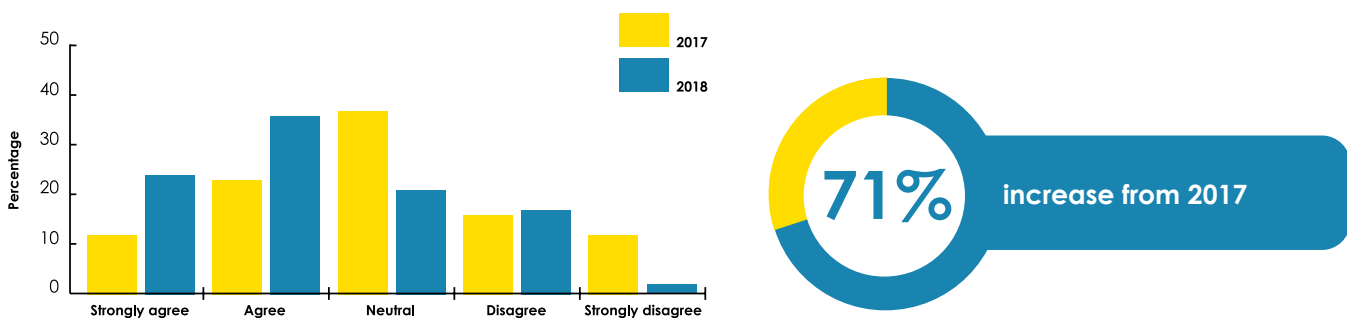
The success of my department is evaluated by...



This is the same varied picture as last year. There's not much to say about this except that it's what we would all expect, as the importance of L&D varies so much from one organisation to the next. It is worth noting that, surprisingly, nearly one fifth of organisations still don't evaluate the success of their L&D efforts.

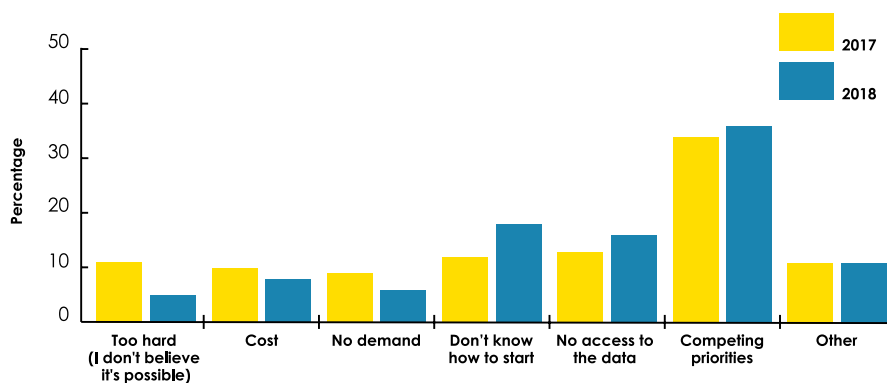
SURVEY RESULTS

I feel executive pressure to measure learning's impact



The most telling change in the survey data is the number of L&D managers who are feeling pressure from the executive team to measure the business impact of learning. Those who agree and strongly agree that they're getting pressure from the business to measure learning jumps from 35% to 60%.

The biggest challenge of measuring the impact of learning in my organisation is



"Competing priorities" remains the biggest challenge, although it's worth noting that the percentage of L&D professionals reporting that they don't know how to start (please read our [10 key components](#) and [other insights](#)) is now higher – going from 12% to 18%.

The bigger picture

Part of the message that has become very clear from LEO Learning's Royal Institution workshops is that everyone needs to stop being afraid of data and get it working to support learning impact measurement. This means setting a strategy and starting to measure. It will take time for the data to become useful in terms of predictive indicators or potential correlations. But unless we all start laying the foundation, we will be in the same position in years to come.

As my colleague Mike Rustici (Founder and CEO of Watershed – the one who really knows what he is talking about when it comes to using data) says: "I'm

excited to see that the power of data is becoming evident to the respondents of this survey. People increasingly recognise that data has a significant impact on their organisation and, more importantly, they and their managers realise that it is in fact possible to demonstrate the impact of learning."

"There's increased pressure from executive teams on L&D to demonstrate the impact of learning," continues Mike, "but most learning professionals still cite competing priorities as the main obstacle in getting started. That's why it's so important for L&D departments to start building a foundation for learning analytics now, and get those baselines set for when leadership eventually comes asking for results and data."

Conclusion

Last year, I had a few moments of revelation.

On one occasion, I spent time with a leadership team who were debating the pros, cons and challenges of measuring the business impact of learning. One member of the team was expressing concern about the difficulties they faced, especially in extrapolating precise correlations.

The CEO's response to this was: 'That was what we said four years ago. Had we started measuring, we would now have four years' worth of useful data to get going with'.

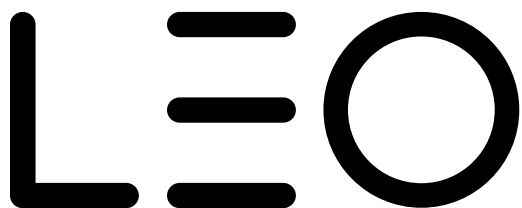
Another moment of clarity came with the head of L&D at a very large organisation who was given just 25 days to demonstrate the value of the L&D spend to their board. Not easy to do from a standing start.

I don't believe this subject is going to go away as L&D remains (described by one CEO) 'the last great unmeasured spend in modern business'. So we remain committed to helping the industry solve the measurement puzzle.

In a section of the survey we asked for examples of business impact measurement and got some great responses. Over the next few months, we will look into these and share some of the most interesting examples on leolearning.com.

We look forward to working with you so that we can mark 2018 as a significant year of progress in this field.

1. LEO Learning and Rustici Software's parent company Learning Technologies Group plc (LTG) owns 27% of Watershed
2. Download the wisdom, for free, from the [Resources section of leolearning.com](https://leolearning.com/resources)
3. For more, go to <https://leolearning.com/resources/define-business-impact-measurement-strategy/>



About LEO

LEO Learning believes that technology-enabled learning innovation has the power to deliver truly transformational results. Our purpose is to help clients deploy learning technology to deliver outcomes precisely aligned to their business goals. Backed by more than 30 years of experience, we design engaging learning architectures that fit seamlessly into businesses and improve performance throughout the entire organisation.

As 2017 Learning Technologies Company of the Year, LEO Learning has the deep understanding of learning design and technology, and pioneering creative approach, necessary to drive the learning revolution.

LEO Learning's expanding global customer base includes organisations such as, the NHS, Civil Service Learning, Jaguar Land Rover, Volvo, Virgin Atlantic, Novartis, Godiva, Volkswagen, Dunhill, KPMG, Roche, Sainsbury's and Mars.

LEO Learning is part of Learning Technologies Group plc's award-winning group of specialist learning technology businesses.

For more, visit leolearning.com.

About Watershed

Watershed is dedicated to changing the world of learning by helping corporate training and learning departments get more from their learning and development initiatives. This includes the creation of a customisable learning analytics platform that measures training effectiveness and helps maximize investments in learning. Made possible by a technology called the Experience API (a.k.a., Tin Can API), Watershed enables users to explore all their learning data in one place and measure how L&D programs are impacting their organizations. Headquartered outside Nashville, Tenn., Watershed has experience working with clients such as VISA, Google, Yum! Brands, and Bridgestone, just to name a few.

To learn more, visit www.watershedlrs.com



Contact us on measuring@leolearning.com to discover how LEO Learning can help you with measuring the business impact of learning.