

Whose Job Is Corporate L&D?

It's a collective responsibility

By Gauri Ryes

Creating, promoting and sustaining an organizational culture of learning is one hallmark of organizational success. A [culture of learning can result in](#) an organization which cultivates the values that individuals seek — such as tolerance, open discussion, and the ability to think holistically and systematically. These same values can also give an organization a competitive advantage in today's marketplace.

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But whose job is it, exactly, to create a culture of learning within the organization?

The short answer is: “Everyone's”. And, “everyone” includes these five parties who are responsible for corporate learning and development in different ways. (To see my personal answer to who's ultimately responsible for creating a culture of learning within an organization, skip to the “Responsible Party #5” section.)

Responsible Party #1: The L&D Group

The Learning & Development (L&D), or Training, group consists of people have been hired specifically to support organizational learning. The people in such a department — the CLO (Chief Learning Officer), Project Managers, Instructional Designers, Visual Designers, Trainers, etc. — are often directly measured on their ability to implement learning initiatives that support strategic objectives and deliver a high [ROI](#).

Some organizations may not specifically have a separate L&D group. But the responsibility for L&D-type tasks still exists, albeit dispersed throughout other groups.

Responsible Party #2: Human Resources Group

The HR Department also has a vested interest in supporting organizational training and learning — through salary and incentives, for example. HR often manages tools and processes that affect workplace learning and performance, such as promotions, transfers, hiring/firing, performance reviews, mentoring, and [onboarding](#) programs.

By providing incentives to encourage learning behaviors and creating and communicating a concrete link between learning, performance and compensation, the HR team can do much to support the learning environment.

Responsible Party #3: Senior Leadership

The Senior Leadership Team has the ultimate responsibility for setting an organizational tone that spearheads the creation of a [culture of learning](#). Senior leaders also have the vantage point that enables integration of learning objectives into organizational objectives, and

hold ultimate accountability for bottom-line results.

If senior leaders demand a high-level of performance from the rest of the organization, it's imperative that each senior leader is accountable for personal performance. Successful leaders cultivate [self-awareness](#) — or a clear understanding of the impact of their own behaviors on others. If senior leaders are honest with their employees about the areas where they need to develop their own skills, organizational communication barriers will crumble. Employees will feel supported in their efforts to be more open and honest about their own personal development needs — a critical step towards creating a culture of learning.

Responsible Party #4: Managers

Job candidates often cite the ability to work with a manager they respect and from whom they can learn as a top factor in making an employment decision. So, from an employee's viewpoint, his direct manager can be [the single most important individual](#) in the organization.

Managers who are [actively engaged in employee training](#) are in ideal positions to help their employees make the connection between training initiatives and the day-to-day job responsibilities. Managers can directly [support on-the-job performance](#) after the training has been completed, and intervene quickly if performance adjustments are required.

Responsible Party #5: Individuals

Whether you're a member of the L&D or HR Departments, whether you're a senior leader, manager or individual contributor, you contribute to the organization in some way. Every individual is responsible for his or her own [personal learning journey](#), as well as helping others in their learning journeys through leading, managing, supporting, mentoring, serving as a subject matter expert, facilitating or [creating a training course](#), or any number of techniques that contribute to workplace learning and performance.

So, Really, Whose Job Is It?

The [definition](#) of culture is “a way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place or organization (such as a business)”. Or, the “manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.” But, collectives are made up of individuals. In the end, regardless of how many departments, teams, processes or tools are created or set up to support the creation of an organizational culture of learning, it's up to the individuals in the organization to foster a pursuit of knowledge that leads to concrete business results. **TEL**

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