



## 2024 HR/L&D Trends Survey

Navigating the High-Expectation Work Environment

# Welcome to Blanchard's Fifth Annual HR/L&D Trends Survey Report

More than one thousand leadership, learning, and talent development professionals were asked about their top challenges in navigating a post-pandemic world with both a scarcity of available talent and high employee expectations.

This year's survey paints a picture of organizations taking experimental steps during a time of accelerated change. The war for talent, the challenge of employee retention, and raised expectations of today's workforce have all combined to put added pressure on human resources professionals and leaders.

**See what respondents shared.**



# Evolving Perspectives

In today's dynamic business landscape, organizations face a wide range of challenges that demand strategic adaptation and resilience. The overarching theme of this year's survey is the challenge of navigating an environment characterized by constant change and economic uncertainties. As a result, the sought-after profile of ideal leaders has continued to evolve.



# Anticipated Challenges

Thousands of respondent comments described a rich landscape of challenges and realities these HR and L&D professionals are expecting in 2024. Here are the five critical themes they are most concerned about:

## **Attracting and Retaining Talent**

Finding the right people with the necessary skills and experience to be competitive in the market.

## **Strategy, Alignment, and Measurement**

Aligning talent development with business objectives.

## **Skill Development**

Increasing individual capabilities to keep pace with the rapid rate of change.

## **Budget, Time, and Resources**

Dealing with budget constraints and resource limitations.

## **Culture, Engagement, and Experience**

Creating a positive employee experience and maintaining high levels of engagement.

# Top Five HR Objectives for 2024

1. Developing leadership bench strength
2. Retaining high performers
3. Attracting workers with the skills we need
4. Enabling innovation and change
5. Providing a great employee experience

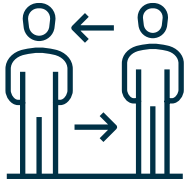
An increasing focus on employee experience, engagement, development, and retention is visible across this year's themes. Issues like employee flexibility, positive culture, and engagement have never been more prevalent in respondents' minds.



# This year's survey took a deeper look into several key issues



Hiring and Retention



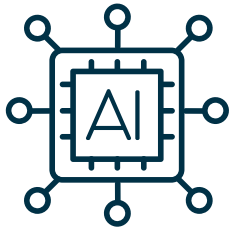
Employee Engagement



Leadership Development



Evolution of Training Modalities



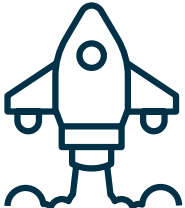
Artificial Intelligence



Training Budgets



Measurement Impact



Future Skills



## Hiring & Retention

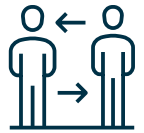
Finding and retaining good employees is critical. Let's take a closer look at some of the issues respondents face with hiring and retention:

Eighty-seven percent of respondents expect that hiring in 2024 will continue to be a challenge, even above the elevated levels of 2023. A shortage of qualified and interested candidates, expectations of workplace flexibility, together with compensation and benefit packages that match those offered by competitors were all mentioned. Respondents also reported the importance of executing against the organization's brand promise. This includes recruitment strategy, messaging, and the hiring process.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents believe that employee retention will continue to be a challenge in 2024. Similar to hiring, the retention challenge begins with competitive wages and benefits. Next is creating an appealing work environment that provides a culture fit for the people the organization is hoping to retain. This means balancing work expectations, providing flexible work schedules, and ensuring a healthy work-life balance. The third element is providing growth opportunities at the individual job level and for their overall career aspirations.

**87%**  
of respondents  
believe that hiring  
will continue to be a  
challenge in 2024

**88%**  
believe that  
employee retention  
will continue to be a  
challenge in 2024



# Employee Engagement

When asked about some of the ways they are addressing engagement, respondents shared several strategies:

- **Open and effective communication at all levels, both individually and organizationally.** Respondents emphasized the importance of actively listening to employees, addressing their concerns, and involving them in decision-making processes.
- **Action-oriented surveys and feedback.** Action planning based on feedback and adapting strategies to address evolving needs. Conducting stay interviews and on-the-job feedback sessions to address root causes.
- **Competitive salaries and a transparent approach.** Providing work flexibility and offering remote or hybrid work options to maintain well-being and a positive employee experience.
- **Ongoing learning opportunities.** This includes training programs, coaching, workshops, and opportunities for professional growth as well as career coaching and mentoring.
- **Organizational culture: Recognition, rewards, well-being, and inclusion.** Defining and showcasing organizational culture through actions, values, and events. Recognition programs, rewards for good performance, and acknowledgment of employees' contributions play a key role. **Two-thirds said DEI is becoming more important in their organization.**

Compensation, benefits, and workplace flexibility provide a foundation for an engaging work environment, but maintaining a high level of engagement requires open communication, involvement, and a focus on culture and growth initiatives.



of respondents rate their engagement as above average



of respondents perceive their engagement levels to be average



of respondents perceive their engagement levels to be below average

Note: The "below average" ratings are below the normal distribution curve. This might indicate a bias toward believing one's own organization is more positive than it is in actuality.



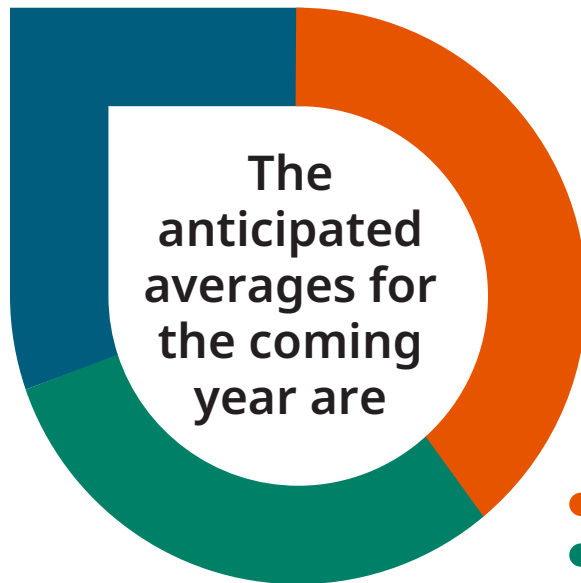
# Evolution of Training Modalities

The way training is delivered has undergone a profound transformation since the start of the pandemic. We asked participants about the demand for in-person learning:

50% said demand has increased

25% indicated demand is staying the same

25% said demand is shrinking



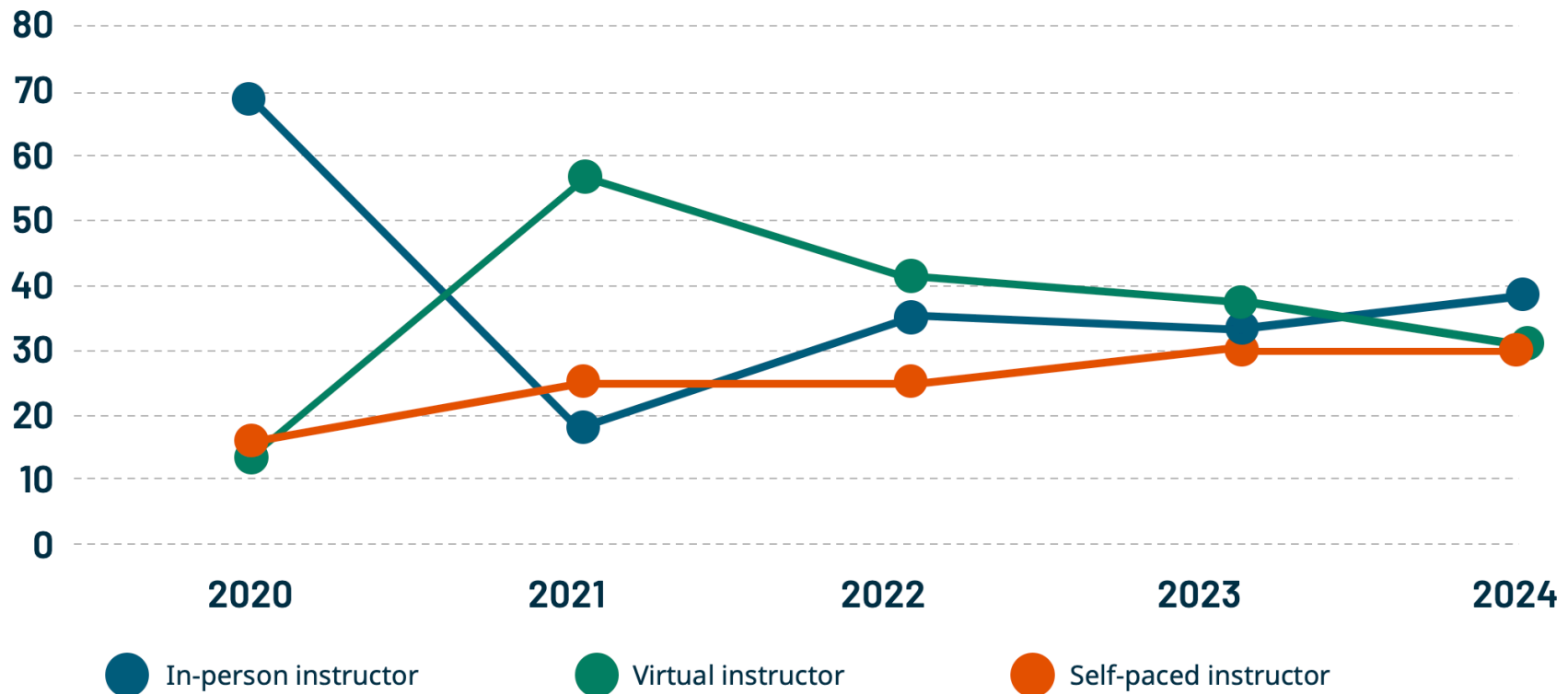
- In-person: 39%
- Virtual instructor-led: 31%
- Self/elearning: 30%







# Training Modalities Expected



Blanchard researchers have been tracking this data since March 2020. Before the COVID pandemic, almost 70% of training happened through in-person delivery. That fell below 20% during 2021 and has been slowly recovering. This data shows that in-person classroom training continues to see some rebound but is nowhere near its 70% dominance in pre-pandemic data.



# Executive Development

In today's fast-paced business landscape, it is essential to prioritize executive development to remain competitive. Respondents shared their plans and practices for leadership development:

**70%** said that executive development will be an important goal for their organization in 2024

**57%** said the focus on it has already increased in their organization in the current year

Leadership workshops, coaching services, and attendance at conferences and seminars were all identified as the top methods currently being used for executive development.





# Design Considerations

When it comes to training designs and learning journeys, those surveyed overwhelmingly agree that the following play a crucial role in providing effective guidance and opportunities for leaders at every level of their organizations.

**89%**

Ongoing learning is needed to support our leaders' journeys over the years

**87%**

Learning must be integrated into our leaders' workflow for skills to take hold

**79%**

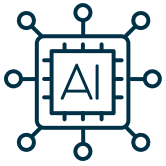
Personalized leadership development will help meet their unique needs

**79%**

Leaders need peer support/accountability to help them change

**77%**

Just-in-time support needed to help leaders in their moments of need



# Artificial Intelligence

The release of artificial intelligence (AI) engines has caught the attention of HR/L&D professionals. But are they planning to use it?

**27%** of respondents indicated that AI will impact their HR/L&D work to a large/very large extent in 2024

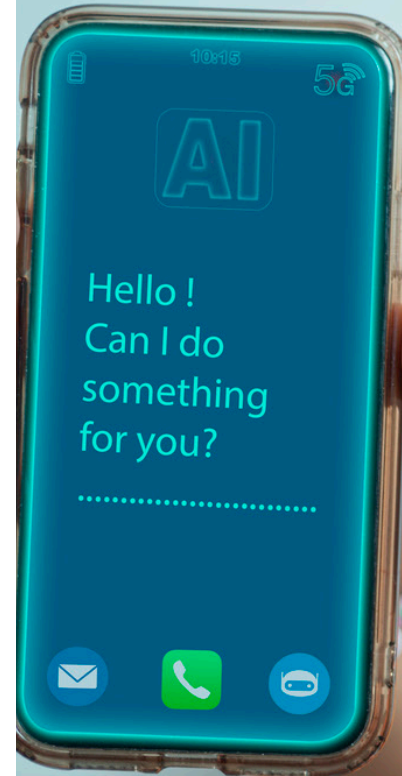
**30%** said they were using AI as a learning tool now

**91%** of current users plan to expand its use in 2024

**46%** of respondents not using AI said they plan to start using it as a learning tool in 2024

When asked about HR applications for AI, respondents are most interested in using AI to assist in career development by analyzing an employee's skills and offering suggestions on which skills should be addressed, and in performance management by analyzing employee data and providing insights to managers.

Regarding L&D applications for AI, respondents are most interested in using it to evaluate learner needs, suggest content, create educational content, and offer chatbots to provide real-time feedback and guidance.





# Training Budgets

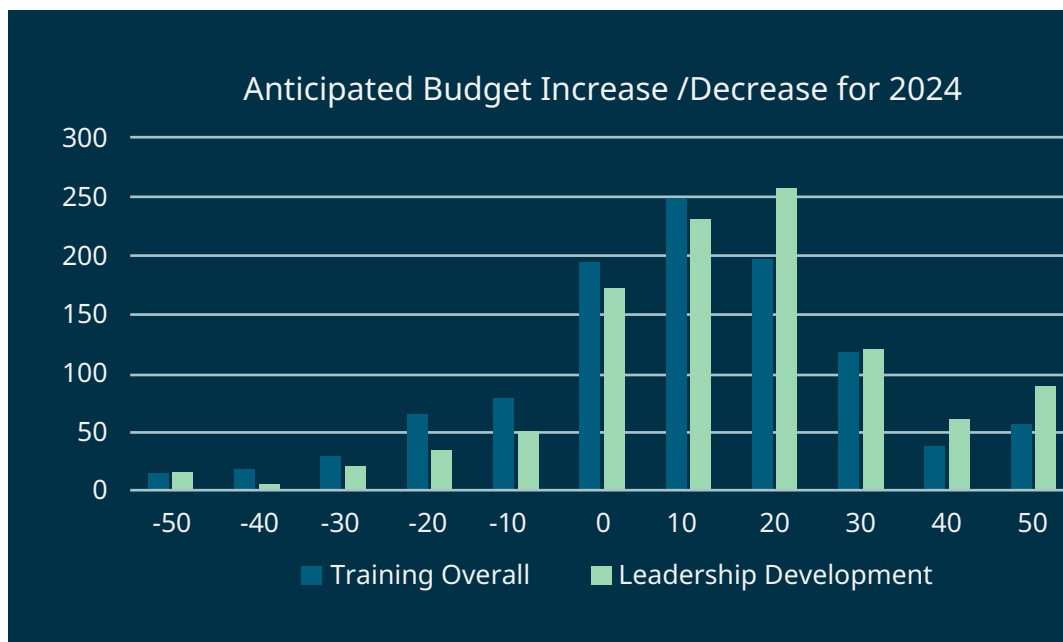
Respondents were asked about the factors impacting budgets going into the new year. These key themes emerged:

- **Economic Factors:** Economic conditions, including inflation, recession, and changes in the global economy, will play a significant role in shaping training budgets. Economic instability and uncertainty affect overall business performance and, consequently, training budgets.
- **Organizational Performance:** Company performance, profit, revenue, and overall financial health are critical factors influencing training budgets. Business direction, initiatives, and strategy changes impact the allocation of resources to training and development.
- **Leaders' and Managers' Priorities:** Leaders' decisions and attitudes toward learning and development influence budget allocations. The need to upskill leaders and address talent challenges is a recurring issue.

Overall, 62% of respondents said they would be spending more on training in 2024, with an average increase of 8.3% on training overall anticipated.

When asked specifically about leadership development training, 72% said they plan to spend more, with an average anticipated increase of 13%.

The challenge going forward will be using data to demonstrate the impact of training and seeing it as a necessary expenditure to drive performance.





# Measurement and Impact

By measuring the impact of L&D initiatives, organizations can assess the effectiveness of their programs, identify areas for improvement, and make data-informed decisions for the future.

**66%** of respondents said that demonstrating impact is very important for supporting funding or future investment

When asked about the level of measurement they were employing on the four-level Kirkpatrick model, 33% said they are measuring to Level 4, Results.

- **Level 1: Reaction.** The degree to which participants find the training favorable, engaging, and relevant to their jobs
- **Level 2: Learning.** The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in the training
- **Level 3: Behavior.** The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job
- **Level 4: Results.** The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package

Level 4: Results

Level 3: Behavior

Level 2: Learning

Level 1: Reaction



# Measurement and Impact Outlook

When asked which type of impact would be best to measure in the years ahead, respondents identified the following metrics:

- Employee engagement and satisfaction
- Learning and development, including completion rates, measurable learning transfer, and benefit to the organization
- Agility, including innovation, technology adoption, and change capability

and measures:

- For leadership and talent development, such as leader pipeline, succession talent cultivation, and internal promotions
- For business impact, such as financial performance, achievement of key strategic goals, and return on investment

Respondents are increasingly recognizing the need to move beyond traditional measurements of Reaction and Learning to focus more on measures of Behavior and Results.



# Leadership Competencies Now and into the Future

Leaders must equip themselves with a diverse range of competencies to navigate the complex business landscape. What competencies are needed to be successful today and in the future?

Respondents identified five competencies needed in 2024:

- Engaging and developing talent
- Leading and supporting change initiatives
- Coaching people through challenges
- Communicating clearly
- Driving innovation

Looking into the future, respondents' comments identified five more skills that would be required:

**Critical-thinking skills that blend creativity and analytics for effective decision-making.** These leaders will leverage data, foster innovation, and drive transformative results by anticipating future challenges.

**Digital fluency and a continuous-learning mindset.** These leaders will be adept at using AI and other technology to enhance performance.

**Empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence.** These leaders will successfully navigate diverse teams, manage workplace issues, and create a psychologically safe environment.

**Ethical, authentic, and inclusive.** These leaders will attract support by modeling values, responding openly to feedback, and exhibiting personal accountability.

**Resilience.** These leaders will prioritize their own well-being as well as that of others, developing skills for succeeding under pressure, adapting to external turbulence, and overcoming adversity.



Respondents are looking to leaders as their first-level partners in creating strong, vibrant organizations.



# One Step at a Time

The year ahead will be a one-step-at-a-time journey for HR and L&D professionals around the world. Executives everywhere will be exploring ways to move forward during a time of accelerated change. The war for talent, the challenge of employee retention, and raised expectations of today's workforce have all combined to put a renewed interest in the role leaders play.

Today's dynamic business landscape requires strategic adaptation and resilience. The overarching theme of this year's survey centers on the challenges of navigating an environment characterized by constant change, economic uncertainties, and increasing expectations.

As always, the human factor remains crucial, with concerns about employee well-being and the delicate balance between transformation and dehumanization top of mind. These challenges will require strategic planning, innovative designs, and focused application to chart a path through an ever-changing and unpredictable business landscape.

It's a challenge that can—and must—be met. This year's 2024 HR/L&D Trends Survey identifies challenges and strategies for getting started toward that goal.

To learn more about how  
Blanchard can help you  
design a strategy for creating  
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# Survey Demographics

One thousand twenty-six people completed the 2024 HR/L&D Trends Survey. Respondents represented 20 industries and 80 countries. The United States was represented by 25% of the respondents.



- Human Resources 31%
- Leadership Development 11%
- Learning and Development 18%
- Organizational Development 10%
- Talent Development 6%
- Professional Development 3%
- Training and Development 12%
- Other 9%



- Administration 5%
- Specialist 18%
- Manager 35%
- Director 18%
- Vice President 6%
- C-Suite 10%
- Other 8%

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