More Praise for This Book

“Keep this book by your bedside, on your desk, or in your backpack. In an era where our greatest asset is our ability to learn, Elaine has convened the brightest minds in the field to help us and our organizations to learn, grow, and develop. If you are leading talent development today or aspiring to do so tomorrow, this handbook will become your go-to resource.”

—André Martin, Ed Tech Advisor; Former CLO, Google, Target, Nike, Mars

“ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development has long been a must-have resource for managers, L&D practitioners, coaches, and students. This newest handbook, masterfully edited by Elaine Biech, responds to the urgency needed to learn, navigate, and lead with optimism and clarity through the turbulence of a shifting workforce landscape. Every chapter is informed by the latest research while offering practical insights and actionable advice to optimize organizational performance.”

—Portia R. Mount, VP Marketing, Commercial HVAC Americas Region, Trane Technologies

“The demand for new skills and fresh, nimble thinking in the post-pandemic world is enormous, which is why there’s never been a more exciting and important time to work in training and talent development. This book provides an exquisite map of where the field is heading—and what professionals can do right now to ensure that they and their colleagues thrive.”

—Vice Adm. John R. Ryan, USN (ret.), Former President and CEO, Center for Creative Leadership

“ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development is a brilliant coupling of notable experts with proven industry leaders offering unique and authentic insight into the future of work. The impressive roster of trainers and corporate professionals recognizes the importance of an inter-professional approach. This handbook, with dynamic web tools, is revolutionary.”

—Kimberly R. Cline, President, Long Island University

“The ATD handbook continues to be a staple for the future of training and development! Filled with expert advice and relevant practices, ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development provides insights for the changing world of HR. An excellent must-read!”

—Marshall Goldsmith, Thinkers50 #1 Executive Coach; New York Times bestselling author, Triggers, Mojo, and What Got You Here Won’t Get You There
“This compendium of authors, topics, and experiences should help anyone inside an organization, whether they’re a talent development leader or not, understand what makes training, HR, or leadership development an integral part of a growing company. I’ll put Elaine up against any person called the Greatest of All Time (GOAT) whether in this domain or sports. Move over Tom Brady and Simone Biles!”

—Rear Adm. Gib Godwin, USN (ret.), President and CEO, Mercy Medical Angels

“It is a rare thing in any field to consistently overachieve. However, Elaine Biech has once again managed to assemble the best insights from some of the best minds available in a concise, readable compendium that should be on everyone’s shelf! This third edition of the handbook is not to be missed—its tools and diverse inputs will open new ways of thinking about training and talent development.”

—Capt. Will Brown, USN (ret.), Former Talent Manager, Office of Naval Research

“Imagine having more than 100 talent development luminaries and thought leaders on speed dial. If you have questions about learning science, growing your TD career, strategic partnering with core business leaders, the future of TD, or a host of other topics, pick up ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development. If you’re looking for insight, inspiration, or innovation for our field, voila, here it is!”

—Dana Alan Koch, Learning Scientist; Co-Host, Learning Geeks Podcast; Team Lead, Accenture’s Institute for Applied Learning Sciences

“Written by professionals for professionals, ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development is your go-to guide to ensure your TD staff are using the most up-to-date content available. The accompanying website also includes tons of tools, checklists, and planning templates to make your job easier.”

—William A. Gentry, Interim VP, Student Life, High Point University; Author, Be the Boss Everyone Wants to Work For
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Foreword

The talent development field has undergone monumental changes in recent years. Massive upskilling and reskilling of the workforce, shortages in available labor, changes in technology, and the COVID-19 pandemic have demanded that TD professionals juggle the development priorities of learners, clients, organizations, and themselves; it has been an incredible feat.

Elaine Biech notes in the introduction that “the timing couldn't be better” for this new edition of the ATD Handbook. She’s right. More than 100 authors—deep subject matter experts in the profession with many decades of experience—offer their practical insights to help all of us understand industry trends, how to focus on our own development, the best ways to move teams forward, and opportunities to contribute to the success of individuals and organizations.

This handbook is an ideal resource for your own growth and development—one to add to your professional library to refer to again and again. Whether you’re faced with a new challenge or confirming your own knowledge, you will find it in a chapter here—there are 57 in all—that will have the answer you’re seeking.

Karl Kapp, a contributing author of this handbook, champions the need to focus on our own growth. In an ATD blog post reflecting on the events of the previous years and considering 2022 trends, he writes that “it’s more important than ever to spend some time focusing on our own personal growth and development. It’s time to reflect on what is important, strengthen the areas that need improvement, and get out of our comfort zone and move forward. We aren’t going to be able to accomplish this without some effort.”

This handbook also features ATD’s Talent Development Capability Model, which provides the foundation for the knowledge and skills needed for success in our field. Chapter 5 provides deep background about how the Capability Model sets standards for the field, helping to prepare talent
development professionals for the future of work by broadening the scope of knowledge and skills that will make them effective. If you’re not familiar with this model, I encourage you to invest time to learn how it can help you develop a lifelong learning mindset and help your organizations navigate the future of learning.

ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development came to life because of Elaine’s countless hours of hard work during many months. ATD is grateful for the energy and dedication she brought to this edition and those that have come before it.

ATD is honored to bring the work of so many talented authors and experts to you in this powerful resource. I know your work will benefit from the time you invest with the content and expertise included here.

Thank you for partnering with ATD to create a world that works better.

Tony Bingham
President and CEO
ATD
Acknowledgments

It is an honor to edit *ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development* for the third time. It’s impossible for anyone to complete a task like this alone. Providing you with the absolute best resources takes a team—but not just any team. It must be a team of dedicated, talented professionals who are not afraid to work long hours and meet insanely short timelines with incredibly high-quality standards. And that’s the team that delivered this handbook to exceed your expectations.

So, who are these wise, committed, and talented team members? I am thankful for the thousands of hours contributed by these dedicated people:

- First and most important, thanks to the 101 authors who responded to our call for content. We appreciate your expertise. I am especially grateful for your willingness to accept the topic we defined, conduct your research, and create a chapter that enhanced the flow of the handbook and met the needs of our readers. Lead authors are listed in the table of contents, but you will also find sidebar authors and contributing authors within several of the chapters.

- Thank you to the eight luminary guest authors who shared their wisdom in each section’s introduction: Tacy Byham, Bev Kaye, Bob Pike, Elliott Masie, Rita Bailey, Kimo Kippen, Ken Blanchard, and John Coné. I know your time is limited and I appreciate that you dedicated some of it to this project. A double thanks to each of you.

- Thank you to the ATD staff who recommended timely topics and awesome authors. Your ability to extend our reach to seasoned and new authors was a bonus, as proven in the table of contents. I am grateful to Holly Batts, Justin Brusino, Kristen Fyfe-Mills,

• Thank you to the fabulous people beyond the ATD staff who helped me connect with exceptional authors, including Howard Farfel, Cheryl Flink, Jonathan Halls, Michael Hansen, and Walt McFarland.
• Thank you to everyone who helped to ensure that this handbook represented a diverse audience.
• Writing the content is the first big task, but honing it into clear, concise, coherent, consistent, and grammatically correct language is the second task—almost as big as the first. I, and all the authors, value the various editing tasks that it takes to make a superb book: developmental editing, copyediting, content editing, structural editing, and proofreading. We appreciate Caroline Coppel, Melissa Jones, and Kathryn Stafford for your editing prowess. You make all of us look good!
• Thanks to everyone who helped me wrap up the details, including Renee Broadwell, Fred George-Hiatt, Jeanenne Ray, and Melissa Smith. You went above and beyond.
• A special and delayed thank you to Capt. (ret.) Joe Ruppert. Without his trust in me, most of this would never have happened.
• Last—but probably should be first—an interminable thanks to Dan Greene, who supports and encourages me to assume these enormous projects. Thank you for your devotion and trust.

And of course, thank you to ATD, Tony, Justin, Jennifer, and Courtney, for continuing to offer me projects that allow me to grow, develop, and be a lifelong ATD volunteer.
Introduction

Much has changed since March 2020. With organizations moving quickly to adjust operations and a large portion of the workforce working remotely because of COVID-19, talent development (TD) departments have scrambled to determine how best to develop employees. Some of this change has been difficult, but many of the results are positive.

TD departments had to rethink how to deliver their services in a matter of days, without a needs assessment or a plan to guide them. Many were completely unprepared for such an upheaval in terms of tools and competencies. Still, they rose to the challenge. Talent development practitioners switched to virtual instructor-led training, they chunked learning into specific lessons, they made it interesting for those distracted by working from home, and they got creative when new technology wasn’t in the budget. And they did it all in days instead of months.

The timing couldn’t be better for this handbook. Many of its chapters relate practitioners’ experiences and offer tools that you can use as you face the challenges ahead.

Why This Handbook?
It is an honor to edit ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development for the third time. Through each edition, the topics have changed to reflect the times and the needs of the profession. You’ll find different sections and different chapters. In fact, it’s all new. The topics have changed, and the emphasis has too.

But one thing that hasn’t changed is the thousands of hours that we’ve invested in bringing you a resource that you will turn to again and again. This book delivers the content you need, written
by experts you respect, to help you comprehend what’s important in your changing role. While it addresses what you need to know today and into the future, it also affords you an opportunity to delve into the historic roots of our profession.

This handbook brings together 101 thought leaders in talent development to provide a multitude of cutting-edge topics—the author list reads like a who’s who in talent development. The wisdom of the best minds in the profession has been woven together to help you create your professional persona. Each section, chapter, and topic has been selected based on what you need to know at this time and in the future. You would need to purchase dozens of books to garner the same critical content that is condensed between these two covers.

Yes, our roles have expanded due to the pandemic, but they were already changing—COVID-19 simply made them transform more rapidly. This handbook provides a definition of the changes, an understanding of why change was required, and some predictions for what you can expect in talent development in the future. All of these changes require a voice of reason, and the handbook answers that call. In its pages you’ll find the rationale to help you sort what’s important and what’s not, what’s new and what’s the past rehashed.

Many practitioners, whether new to the profession or highly experienced, do not have a clear understanding of the history of talent development. There is always a fire to put out, an immediate question that must be addressed, or a development opportunity to create, thus leaving little time to research our history. Why do we do the things we do? It’s highly unlikely that you will readily find information about the history of training and the theories and practices that support it in most of your current resources. However, it is important to know that there is scientific evidence behind what we do and that some options work better than others. A fundamental purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a description of how talent development has evolved and the gurus who led the early efforts.

What’s in This Handbook?

_ATD’s Handbook for Training and Talent Development_ is divided into eight sections, representing key areas of the TD profession. You will find that the sections are less ADDIE-dependent and more focused on the expanding role that you are experiencing in the profession.

Although the design does not match the Talent Development Capability Model, care has been taken to ensure that the content in the handbook aligns with ATD’s Talent Development Body of Knowledge (TD BoK). For example, the glossary has new and different words with their own meanings, but if the word also appears in the TD BoK glossary, you will find the same definition. Consistency is critical, especially for those who are preparing for certification.
Each of the eight sections is introduced by a luminary—a unique individual who has reached legendary stature in the TD profession and has had an active role in developing and leading the topic addressed in that section. Let’s look closer at each section:

1. **The Foundations of Learning and Development.** As you might expect, the handbook starts with a strong foundation and builds on that. I am so excited to share our leadoff luminary, Tacy Byham’s, perspective on what it takes to have a strong foundation. She challenges us with 10 simple words: “Match the demands of the business with ready-now talent.” This section prepares you to create the business case for learning in your organization by creating your own strong foundation as you review critical adult learning basics and the science of learning.

2. **Planning a Career in Talent Development.** There’s no one better to initiate a section for developing a TD career than Bev Kaye, the indisputable authority on career development. You’ll love her perspective on the eight talent development mindsets. The rest of this section introduces you to the Talent Development Capability Model and certification, the importance of lifelong learning, and the relationship of EQ and mindset to your professional success. You’ll also gain Jean Greaves’ advice about how EQ is important for you as well as the clients you develop.

3. **Training and Development Basics.** Bob Pike, the trainer’s trainer, kicks off section III, sharing some of his favorite models and his Learning Preference Continuum. The rest of the section offers 10 chapters that focus on the various elements of ADDIE, plus new ways to think about ADDIE. Check out the chapter by Nancy Duarte, the Storyteller of the Valley, and Jeff Davenport; they advise us to use story structure to influence others—because “stories stick.” Another must-read chapter is written by Mhairi Campbell, award-winning media producer and executive at the BBC, who addresses 21st-century media skills. Don’t miss the excellent chapters in this section that take you beyond the basics.

4. **Enhancing and Supporting Talent Development.** Who better to introduce a section that requires us to modify our thinking than the provocative and entertaining Elliott Masie? This section addresses many of the questions we have about the future of talent development. These topics include blended learning, accessibility, learning transfer, critical tools that support e-learning, and advice for those designing and delivering virtual training. We are fortunate to have authors whose names you’ll recognize share their best with you. Who? Have you heard the names Hofmann, Orey, Elkins, Clay, or Huggett? Yes, I thought so.
5. **Required Forward-Focused Proficiencies and Attitudes.** One of the most forward-thinking people I know, Rita Bailey, sets the standard in this section. She asks you to consider the knowledge, skills, and attitudes you require to be successful as you experience “change on steroids.” She offers a checklist for assessing your readiness for the future and even relates her skydiving experience to what our profession is currently experiencing. This section also offers a list of the essential skills required of TD professionals, suggestions to work with SMEs, tips to perfect your facilitation skills, advice to improve your communication with executives, and ways to integrate DEI into talent development.

6. **Expanded Roles of Talent Development.** The ever-positive Kimo Kippen, a native Hawaiian, opens this section by encouraging us to upskill and reskill ourselves and our colleagues to ensure success for our organizations. You’ve probably experienced some of the new roles that TD professionals are being asked to play—coaching managers to develop their people, supporting workforce planning, or implementing a mentoring program. Perhaps you’ve been tasked with encouraging employees to take ownership of their careers or transforming a dysfunctional team into a productive team. You may have even been asked to play the role of an internal consultant. Each of these new roles helps define the ways the TD profession is expanding. Read more about each topic in this section.

7. **Aligning the Learning Function to the Organization.** The highly respected and influential Ken Blanchard starts our discussion about how we can help ensure our organization’s success. It requires that we become leaders, and Ken shares the three steps you can take to “become the kind of leader people want and organizations need.” This section continues with Kouzes and Posner’s take on the five leadership fundamentals, then Zenger and Folkman share L&D’s role in achieving a corporate vision. To align the learning function to the organization, you’ll also learn how to structure talent development, build your business acumen, support onboarding efforts, and measure your impact. Be sure to review the steps Dean Griess shares for working successfully with their leaders. Finally, there’s a chapter just for the TD department of one.

8. **Talent Development’s Role for Future Success.** The distinguished futurist and thought leader John Coné challenges us to let go of yesterday’s approaches, look beyond the concerns of today, and prepare to build the future of tomorrow. I encourage everyone to read his perspective on what’s possible in the future. This section also challenges you to determine how to sustain DEI and create a thriving learning culture. You can explore emerging technology, people analytics, workforce agility, and organizational design practices. Be sure to check out a special contributor, Andy Trainor, VP of Walmart US Learning, as he shares secrets to partnering with executives.
That’s a lot of content to compile in one book, and even more for you to digest within its 900+ pages. Yet I can’t think of one topic I’d remove. Our profession has become more complex, and this handbook can help you make sense of it all. If I sound excited about this content, it’s because I am! I can’t wait for you to read it and share your perspectives as well.

**What Should You Watch For?**

While you are reading, you may want to look for themes throughout. You may also want to compare authors’ perspectives. They aren’t all the same, but they are all thoughtful. I’ve read most of the books and articles that our authors have published, and knew they had the necessary expertise.

We asked more of them than just to write 3,000 words. We asked each author to ensure that their submission was practical and implementable by you, the readers. We asked them to address diversity in their chapters when appropriate and to recommend additional resources so you could go more in depth on topics that intrigued you. We also asked them to provide tools that you could download from the website to make it easier for you to implement their ideas. Finally, we asked for a list of glossary terms and definitions that they thought were critical to their submissions.

I believe that there is something in the handbook for everyone in the TD profession:

- You will find the basics of L&D. It couldn’t be called a handbook without covering the basics, and they are all here.
- We incorporated the Talent Development Capability Model. While we certainly didn’t want to repeat what’s in the TD BoK, we did expand on several topics. The TD BoK addresses what and why; the handbook goes beyond to address how.
- The handbook is relevant to what we’ve experienced throughout the pandemic. COVID-19 and its variants have thrown entire businesses into disarray. Every one of the 101 authors lived through that experience and you will find mention of it throughout. (However, we did remove some references because you don’t need to be reminded of the pandemic more than necessary.)
- You should find a focus on diversity in three ways: First there are whole chapters devoted to DEI and accessibility, and both are mentioned in many other chapters as well. Second, my goal was to include diversity in contributions including country and culture, race and ethnicity, age and generation, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, disability, and socioeconomic status and background. Where appropriate you will see the diversity peek through. For example, we maintained spellings that are culturally unique. And finally, you’ll see diversity of thought as I sought contributors who are not only in the TD profession, but from education, IT, and corporate areas.
Finally, you will see several themes running through the handbook. These themes should be a wake-up call to all of us in the profession:

- Be prepared for the future.
- Gain new skills for new responsibilities.
- Promote DEI.
- Stay abreast of the warp speed of change.
- Ensure your organization’s is success.

Watch for these themes throughout the handbook. Then ask yourself these questions:

- How prepared am I for the future?
- What skills do I need to traverse the changes in my organization?
- Who could mentor me to build the competency and the confidence to do more?
- How can I be a better lifelong learner?

**How Can You Get the Most Out of Your Handbook?**

If you need some motivation, I suggest you start with John Coné’s luminary introduction to section VIII, Talent Development’s Role for Future Success. John has a wonderful ability to inspire others, and in this case, his rousing projection of the future is stimulating and thought provoking.

If you are new to the profession, get a serious dose of learning and development philosophy in section I. Then move on to section III, Training and Development Basics, to explore the skills you’ll need from assessment to evaluation and everything in between.

Are you looking for that illusive seat at the table? Have we got resources for you! Turn to section VII, Aligning the Learning Function to the Organization, where Ken Blanchard discusses being the leader your organization needs. Next check out chapter 43 by Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, and chapter 45 by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner to discover the five fundamentals of learning leadership.

If you are still wondering about the changes from training to talent development, check out section VI, Expanded Roles of Talent Development. Explore your role in workforce planning, helping your managers coach their employees, implementing a mentoring effort, building teams, and consulting. Yes, our role is changing, and we need to accept the responsibility to change with it. Get a pep talk from luminary Kimo Kippen then slip on over to Halelly Azulay’s chapter 37 to learn how to take ownership of your own career development.

Finally, remember the tools on the website (ATDHandbook3.org). Choose your favorite chapter and download the tools that will help you implement the content.
How can you get the most out of this handbook? To quote Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, “You have to make learning a daily habit.” Use this book to enhance your knowledge. Turn to any page or any chapter to learn something every day. The handbook makes it easy.

**Final Thoughts**

Much has changed since March 2020. We live in a dynamic world. Thankfully we are also part of a vibrant, prepared profession. The training and talent development landscape has been changed forever. However, we have proven that we can quickly rise above to successfully address the challenges our organizations face. Talent development is made up of professionals who will find a way to support and lead—no matter the challenge. I am delighted to share this handbook to help guide you into your professional future.

Elaine Biech, CPTD Fellow
Norfolk, VA
May 2022
SECTION I
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT BASICS
Breakdown or Breakthrough?

Tanya worked in supply chain management for an aeronautics manufacturer. She excelled in her job as an individual contributor and had a real knack for anticipating things that might become problems later. So, when she was promoted to her first leadership role—and was relocated to Florida, an added perk!—she felt both proud and ready. It was her time.

When she met with her team, a group of more seasoned contributors, on her first day, Tanya talked about how excited and privileged she felt to lead them, and acknowledged their unique role in the organization. So far, so good. “They were smiling, nodding, and asking great questions,” she recalls.

Then it was her turn to listen.

The team took turns reporting on projects, accomplishments, and bottlenecks: One talked about the new vendor exploration, while another shared progress on the inventory management system. Then an associate passed out the team’s monthly dashboard, a common report that had been distributed to the operations team earlier that day. When Tanya saw the report, she panicked.

And in a single moment, Tanya damaged everything she’d worked for until that point.

“What?!?!” Her shriek jolted the team out of their collective happy place and into a defensive crouch. “This report just went to MY boss? Who else on our team read this over?” she remembers exploding. “I complained about the grammar, the graphs, the formatting, and the data. Everything.” She publicly yelled at the associate for letting the document out the door.
When Tanya shared this story in a leadership training session—between deep gulps and face palms—the pain of her mistake was still fresh, even though it was eight years later. “I was labeled as a hothead and a perfectionist by everyone on the team,” she says, noting that even worse things were probably said that she wasn’t aware of.

It takes 20 “atta boys” to overcome that one “oh @##$%!” moment. And sometimes that doesn’t even help.

All it took was one moment—one breakdown—to destroy her reputation. And it took her years to recover it.

We all have moments when our surprise and emotions get the better of us. But that’s exactly where training kicks in. With the right training, we can rewire ourselves to do better.

As learning and development professionals, this is our gift to give. We help people, especially leaders like Tanya, develop the foundational skills that serve them in every moment of their jobs. We help them deal with those big, scary, stressful moments, when they don’t know where to turn for help and they need help fast. We are their lifeline and their coach so their pathway to success is easier the next time around.

And when we do this well? We turn breakdowns into breakthrough moments. Instead of spending years overcoming a bad moment, we give them the tools to make the best of each experience.

The Crack in the Foundation

Our challenge in 10 simple words is to “match the demands of the business with ready-now talent.” We’ve devoted our careers to pursuit of this straightforward ideal. We build visions of robust talent pipelines, with multiple qualified people ready to step up to any given challenge.

Can it happen? Absolutely. According to DDI’s Global Leadership Forecast 2021, about one in 10 organizations (11 percent) says it has a “strong” or “very strong” bench. But most of us aren’t doing that well. In fact, bench strength is at its lowest level in the last 10 years.

Where are the other 89 percent of us going wrong?

As you dig into this “Learning and Development Basics” section, you’ll find three clear differences in the practices and programs that result in a robust leadership pipeline, based on success rates of more than 1,700 organizations (Neal, Boatman, and Watt 2021):

1. Shorten transitions to help leaders become successful in new roles quickly. Ninety days or less is ideal.
2. Give leaders self-insight via a high-quality assessment as a catalyst for development.
3. Deliver personalized, relevant leadership development experiences that support people in key moments.
Each of these topics deserves its own chapter, if not a full book or semester of university study. And yet, I urge you to pause for a moment of reflection. If you were to assign a letter grade to your company’s adoption of these principles, would you be an A student or a C student (or worse)? And what impact does that have on the speed and quality with which you fulfill your mission of “matching the demands of the business with ready-now talent?”

Let’s build a case for the cumulative power of these three practices.

**The Urgency of Successful Transitions**

As we learned from Tanya’s story, you can make a mistake on your first day in a new role. And it can haunt you for years. Yet companies rarely apply a sense of urgency to support leaders in their transitions. That’s why our first pillar of foundational training is around support in transitions. For example, here are a few things some of our research has revealed about leadership transitions:

- On average, it takes four years for a first-time leader to get training, leaving them to sink or swim (DDI 2019).
- The longer it takes for leaders to get up to speed, the more stressful it is. More than a third of leaders at every level describe their transition as overwhelming or extremely stressful. Five percent frequently dream of quitting (DDI 2021).
- The stress isn’t temporary. Regardless of how long ago it was, leaders who report long and stressful transitions are significantly less engaged in their roles. They’re more than three times less likely to feel accountable for being an effective leader, engaged in their role as a leader, and finding their jobs full of meaning and purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Duration</th>
<th>Feeling Accountable</th>
<th>Feeling Engaged</th>
<th>Meaning and Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 3 Months</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–11 Months</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+ Months</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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times as likely to report burnout compared with their peers with low-stress transitions. Worse, they feel less accountable for being a good leader for their team and find their work to have less meaning and purpose (DDI 2021).

Are you likely to hear about any of this? Probably not. For many people, especially leaders, it feels too risky to admit they’re struggling. What if their boss holds it against them? What if their team loses confidence in them? What if they don’t get a raise or promotion because of it?

So they put a smile on and stay silent. They assume there’s something uniquely wrong with them, because everyone else seems to be fine (even though they’re experiencing the same thing). And eventually they leave, opening up yet another gap in your pipeline.

And don’t expect the leader to be the only one who leaves. The risk stretches into their teams as well. A single disengaged leader has a compounding effect on the organization, and their poor skills can drive talented people out the door long before they throw in the towel themselves.

As learning and talent professionals, this is where we have the power to change things. If you wait to deliver training until someone asks for it, it’s probably too late.

Our job is to anticipate what’s ahead for these roles and create development experiences that prevent leaders from falling into deep pitfalls. We need to give them the foundation they need before they know they need it.

“Know Thyself”
Stepping into a new role is like being asked to fly a plane, despite never having done it before. You might have ridden on the plane and worked in a support role, and you might understand how the plane works. But as you sit in the pilot’s seat, you realize you’re suddenly responsible for hundreds of lives on board. It’s a totally different experience.

There’s very real risk in not knowing if you’re capable of doing something. Simply “faking it until you make it” doesn’t work. Leaders may not only be missing some key skills—their previous instincts may also be wrong. They may have to unlearn things that were strengths in a previous role because they’re now liabilities.

Leaders don’t want to fly blind. They want to know that they can handle the responsibility. And if they have a weakness, they want to fix it. The last thing they want to do is fail, especially in front of their team.

That’s why our second pillar, high-quality assessment and feedback, is so important. In fact, assessment is one of the top requests leaders would like more of from their employers (Neal, Boatman, and Watt 2021).
But not all assessments are the same. What leaders are telling us, loudly and clearly, is that they want objective feedback on their skills. In our experience, high-quality assessments should:

- Be competency based.
- Offer an objective view of strengths and development areas.
- Pinpoint the exact behavior that a leader needs to focus on within a competency.
- Give insights about readiness for future roles.
- Support development after the assessment.

When done well, insight from assessment data drives the success of your development program. Leaders know why they need development, and how it’s going to drive relevance on the job. They can accelerate their success by understanding where they need to pull back, where they need to focus, and where they need to add something new to their leadership repertoire.

The results are undeniable. On average, combining high-quality assessment with any development program boosts bench strength by 30 percent. Furthermore, HR leaders with strong formal assessment programs say they can fill 56 percent of critical leadership roles immediately, compared with 43 percent at other organizations (DDI 2021).

In short, assessment helps you answer the fundamental question: Does our development strategy help us match the demands of the business with ready-now talent? If you’ve done the assessment, you can answer that question easily, proving the value of the investment in learning and leadership development.

**Create Experiences for the Moments**

Earlier, we mentioned that the third pillar of creating a robust leadership pipeline depends on delivering personalized, relevant development experiences that support people in key moments. When we talk to most L&D clients about this, their mind first goes to the type of technology they might use.

Technology is certainly an important part of the equation, but it doesn’t get to the heart of the problem. People aren’t asking for what technology will make learning personal and relevant. Rather, they are wondering what they can learn that is personal and relevant to their problem right in this moment.

It might sound a bit basic, but it’s one of the most common fundamentals of learning that I see companies overlook. So often, we get caught up in the details and tactics of the huge array of learning options that we overlook our real goal, which is the impact we have on people’s lives and the moments within them.

In what ways are they struggling? How can we design learning experiences that go beyond conveying information to changing their behavior in those moments? And how do you measure the impact of those moments?
For leaders, these moments might be big changes that happen over time, like taking on a new role or driving a transformation. Or they might be small and quick, like resolving a team conflict. Or they might be large but urgent, like reacting to a crisis.

The mistake we often see companies make is trying to deliver the same type of learning for every moment. For example, they might offer only live group courses, which are great for learning proactive skills during big moments of change but are rarely timely enough to solve on-demand problems. Or they might swing the other way completely, offering only on-demand courses or microlearning. While these approaches can be helpful for giving quick advice, they are ineffective at building major skills.

In short, you can think of it like a pendulum, with each extreme living on either end. In addition, companies may offer multiple types of training content, but they come from different sources. For example, they might develop a few courses in-house for proactive moments and supplement them with an online learning library. The problem? If the content is inconsistent, leaders are likely to get mixed messages.

The Pendulum of Digital vs. Classroom Learning

The Pendulum of Digital vs. Classroom Learning

All Classroom
- Proactive
- Cohort-based
- Episodic

All Digital
- Reactive
- Individual
- On demand

Instead of swinging wildly across the pendulum, L&D professionals should be looking to find balance by focusing on key moments, then designing consistent content that meets those needs but offers flexibility in timing and modality.

Let’s take a look at a couple examples.

**Moment 1: Stepping Into a Leadership Role for the First Time**

Becoming a leader for the first time is a big moment of transformation that changes a person’s career. And they need a lot of support to develop in these moments.
Here are a few considerations for meeting new leaders in the moment:

- **Group or individual?** Ideally, this is a moment when leaders really benefit from learning together. It helps to share challenges and build a network with other new leaders who can support one another over time. However, it may be a challenge to build cohorts that help leaders as quickly as they need it. So you may have to consider providing individual learning first, and following up later with group experiences.

- **How fast?** As we learned from Tanya, speed is critical. If you have identified someone in advance as a high-potential leader, you can start building skills before they get into the role. If the promotion is a surprise or fast decision, start developing them as soon as possible.

- **How complex are the new skills they need?** Leadership requires learning significant new skills, and leaders will need to put in significant time to master them. Learning theory won’t be enough. They will need the opportunity to practice.

- **How personalized should it be?** It’s crucial for first-time leaders to build a core set of skills and have an approach that’s consistent with the organization’s leadership culture. However, as they are building their own leadership brand, personal insight is critical. Each leader might also want to explore some specific topics where they are personally struggling.

A lot of companies we’ve worked with try to meet these needs by building great onboarding experiences. Ideally, they kick off with an assessment to personalize the experience, then bring leaders together to learn and practice new skills over a few days or a few months.

While these onboarding programs are excellent, I caution L&D professionals to make sure they move fast enough. Many hold onboarding only once a year, or they wait until there are enough people for a cohort. But that can leave leaders waiting for a long time. In many cases, it would be best to provide some on-demand learning to get them started quickly, even if they go through a larger program down the road.

When leaders are met in this moment, it can change the entire course of their career at the company. But the big mistake is that many companies stop with basic training.

**Moment 2: Resolving a Team Conflict Right Away**

While proactive learning is extremely helpful, new problems pop up all the time. For example, a leader might have a conflict on their team, and they need some guidance to resolve it.

These spur-of-the-moment issues create the “Google problem” for L&D professionals. Basically, every employee’s first instinct is to type their question into their browser and click on whatever comes up first. The problem? They could find literally anything. It could be bad advice. Or outdated advice. Or simply an approach that doesn’t fit within your company culture.
These moments are common, and they are worth our attention. We need to be better than Google. We need to provide resources on demand that people can trust to help them in these critical moments. Consider how new leaders would answer these questions about their development:

- **Group or individual?** For the moment, individual is fine, although they may need or want to practice their skills with a group later.
- **How fast?** Now!
- **How complex are the new skills they need?** At this point, they should be building on their foundational skills. As long as what they are learning is consistent with what they learned in those core skill-building programs, they should easily be able to expand their skills.
- **How personalized should it be?** It doesn’t necessarily need to be personalized, but leaders may benefit from tools that help them quickly assess themselves and their situation. For example, if they need to resolve a conflict, they might benefit from a tool that helps them quickly assess their natural approach to the topic.

So, consider this the moment where you pull out all your digital tools! How can you leverage 10-to-15-minute microcourses to quickly build skills? Employ digital tools that can help employees understand their approach and, ideally, help them quickly practice their newfound skills.

Above all, make sure that what you put together is proven, so leaders can trust what they’re learning in the moment. Otherwise, they’ll be off to find their own approach!

### Making Development a Way of Work

These are just two examples of the many moments leaders experience. But they illustrate a few key things:

- Think of the moment of need first and how to solve that problem.
- Build your content and approach on the same foundational set of principles. Otherwise, leaders will get mixed messages.
- Fit and flex the modality for the moment, rather than dictate how people learn. Going all-or-nothing on any side of the pendulum leaves huge gaps in development. Rather, you can flex the modality to meet people with the speed and type of learning they need right now.

When you do this well, you can achieve a big goal: Making development a way of work. When you meet people in their moment of need—big or small—you teach them how to truly integrate learning into their job, and not as something extra.
Our Calling Is to Deliver Breakthrough Moments

In the rest of this section, you’ll learn a lot about the fundamentals of learning, including the science, the history, and the strategy behind it. But as you dive in, I hope to impress upon you the importance of the human moments in all that we do.

As learning and development professionals, we aren’t here to just convey information. We work to create breakthrough moments of learning that change how people view themselves, their jobs, and their relationships (at work and often outside it). We can ease their stress in tough moments and prepare them to achieve great things.

When we do that well, we’ve done so much more than effectively build a skill. We’ve changed lives. We can spark a hunger for learning and constant improvement. And when we do this not only in individuals, but throughout organizations as well, we can alter the trajectory for success in our entire companies.

And that’s why we have one of the best—and one of the hardest—jobs in the world.

About the Author

Tacy Byham is passionate about empowering leaders to declare their true worth and ignite their impact in the workplace, from the start of their careers all the way to the C-suite. She is CEO of Development Dimensions International (DDI), a global award-winning leadership consultancy that helps the world’s most successful companies transform the way they select, develop, and accelerate leaders. An internationally recognized presenter on leadership, Tacy co-wrote the global bestseller Your First Leadership Job, and her featured articles have appeared in Forbes, Fast Company, and Inc., as well as numerous blog postings on LinkedIn via the Forbes Coaches Council. Tacy also launched the #LeadLikeAGirl movement, which provides women with practical strategies and real-world wisdom to ignite their careers. Learn more about Tacy and DDI at ddiworld.com.

References

Recommended Resources


The continuously evolving theories and practices of learning, training, and talent development are integral to the story of human history, with accounts of formal training frameworks and approaches dating back to ancient Greece, Egypt, and Rome. Storytelling (which encompasses, among other things, today’s case studies, TED Talks, interviews, classroom learning, and on-the-job training with a mentor) is the foundation on which the acquisition and passing down of knowledge and skill was built.

Over time, the training profession has seen its initial focus on skills training progress from an emphasis on individual development, to systems theory and organization development, to learning, to, most recently, performance and the development of talent.

**IN THIS CHAPTER:**

- Explore the historic roots of training, learning, and talent development theories and practices
- Discover how the profession of talent development has evolved
Today’s organizational learning and development function is reflective of the breathtaking speed of continuous change that has taken place over the past several years. It has transformed from functioning as a fixed locus of learning content creation and delivery for the organization into a dynamic hub of talent development with trainers acting as facilitators, coaches, advisors, and curators—increasingly of user-generated content that is produced across the enterprise.

As learning becomes more easily accessible and personalized to each individual's abilities, aptitudes, and potential, the organizational culture is also transforming. For example, talent acquisition professionals look at talent in new ways—eschewing the outmoded approach of screening out candidates driven by rigid requirements of knowledge and skills to screening in for learning agility.

As CEOs and senior leadership teams recognize the bottom-line business impact that training, learning, and development delivers, the identity and role of L&D to include reporting lines, titles, remit, and so forth continue to change and vary worldwide; training departments and the professionals therein can be known as:

- Learning and development
- Learning and talent development
- Learning and performance management
- Learning and workforce experience
- Talent and employee experience
- Talent and organizational effectiveness
- Talent management and organization development
- Talent, learning, and culture
- Talent and inclusion

While this is not an exhaustive list, it illustrates the evolution of the profession and its expanding role, specifically, as a key pillar of talent management—which takes a holistic view of developing individuals throughout the employee life cycle as well as building and sustaining the capacity of the organization’s entire workforce.

What follows is an overview of the history and evolution of training and development. Use this knowledge to help frame your thinking about where we have been, where we are today, and what might be ahead.

**Early Learning Models and Practices**

The earliest documented form of training was on-the-job training (OJT), with records dating back to ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Sometimes referenced as an “earn while you learn” or “sit by me” scenario, on-the-job training takes place when an individual learns by observing an experienced worker performing a job in the work setting. This remains a popular approach for some industries, in part because of the simplicity (Shay 2019).
Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are the gold standard of on-the-job training—nine out of 10 apprentices are employed after completing their apprenticeship, with an average starting wage of more than $50,000. Apprenticeships are a reliable source of highly skilled and loyal workers for employers, and an apprentice worker’s lifetime compensation can be more than $300,000 compared with that of their peers (i4cp and Aspen Institute 2016a).

The concept of the apprenticeship—passing down mastery of a trade, craft, art, or profession from master to novice—remains largely unchanged from its earliest documented origins. Evidence of this more formal arrangement of on-the-job training survives in contracts written on papyrus during the 600-year Roman occupation of ancient Egypt: Heraclides was apprenticed as a nail smith in 18 BC; Panechotes had a two-year apprenticeship to learn shorthand with his master in 155 AD (Lewis 1983; Westermann 1915).

Apprenticeships took firm root during the Middle Ages, with the types of these arrangements varying widely, and distinctions were made between teaching contracts and apprenticeship contracts, which sometimes included indenture (Morgan 2001). The latter was more likely to include the master providing room, board, and even clothing, because the work of the apprentice immediately benefited the master’s business (Westermann 1915). Although apprenticeships are generally thought of as applying only to artisanal crafts, they were not restricted to such jobs and could apply to medicine, law, and education (Steinmetz 1976).

In some strata of society, apprenticeships were highly sought after because they were often how people could ensure both a livelihood and position in society, which sometimes came with such opportunities. For example, the Inns of Court provided legal education to young men in Britain beginning in the 1300s. Men learned the practice of law by living at the Inns, reading and discussing law books, and attending court daily. The Inns also became centers of intellectual and social activity in Renaissance England. While many of the men who attended them became practicing lawyers, others used the Inns to make connections with members of high society and better their future prospects (Friedman 1985).

Apprenticeships were an integral part of the colonial period in the United States; as colonial society developed and commercial activity increased, so too did the need for competent legal counsel. Law apprentices combined self-directed reading of law books (sometimes loaned by tavern owners) with guidance from lawyers before being examined for admission to the bar (Friedman 1985).

Today, apprentices in the US are safeguarded by the US Department of Labor (USDOL), which ensures equality of access to apprenticeship programs and provides employment and training information to sponsors and the employment and training community. Apprenticeships are
rebounding in popularity—the USDOL reported that the number of registered apprenticeships increased by 64 percent between 2010 and 2020 (Cooper 2021).

Apprenticeships also remain the preferred method of vocational worker training in many countries and, according to a 2013 World Bank survey, they’re increasing in use worldwide. Today’s apprentices are paid employees who are engaged in the process of mastering the work skills of a particular trade or occupation (Cantor 2015). In Germany, they are an important part of the successful dual education system, which combines apprenticeships with vocational education.

**Guilds**

Also developed in the Middle Ages in England, the guild system was made up of “associations of people [guilds] whose interests or pursuits were the same or similar. The basic purpose was mutual protection, assistance, and advantage” (Steinmetz 1976). The guild system controlled the quality of products by establishing standards and regulating the people who were authorized to produce them. This also meant that apprenticeships came under the authority of the guild, which determined when a worker had reached a certain level of proficiency. Guilds also strictly regulated worker hours, tools, prices, and wages, and required that all workers have the same privileges and pursue the same methods.

**Vocational and Manual Schools**

The onset of industrialism sparked the rapid and continuous evolution in business we see today, as well as changes in training and learning practices. It was during this time that vocational and manual schools were created.

Vocational education or vocational education and training (VET)—also known as career and technical education (CTE) or “trade school”—is traditionally nonacademic and prepares learners for jobs in specific occupations. The one-to-two-year learning period submerges the learner in a trade or vocation, such as welding, plumbing, nursing, firefighting, the culinary arts, court reporting, or mechanics. One of the earliest vocational schools was established by the Masonic Grand Lodge of New York in 1809; in 1824, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, became the first technical college; and in 1828, the Ohio Mechanics Institute opened in Cincinnati, Ohio (Miller 2008; Steinmetz 1976).

Vocational schools have fluctuated in popularity in the US—in 1999, 9.6 million students were enrolled in a trade school, but by 2014, this number had increased to 16 million, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2021). Trade schools are an important force in training, especially in Europe, which included vocational training in the draft Constitutional Treaty establishing the European Community.
Agriculture and Mechanical Education

Postsecondary teaching of agricultural and mechanical (A&M) arts via land-grant colleges began in the US in the 1840s and is credited to Jonathan Baldwin Turner (1805–1899), a classical scholar, botanist, and political activist. Turner’s idea and advocacy resulted in the 1862 passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act during the Civil War, in which federal lands were given to the states to sell and use the proceeds to establish A&M colleges (Turner 1961). In signing this act into law, Abraham Lincoln provided a way for average people to get an education, which had previously been restricted to the wealthy.

A second Morrill Act, passed in 1890, required each state to demonstrate that race was not an admissions criterion, or required each state to designate a separate land-grant institution for people of color (LII n.d.). Many of today’s historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) can trace their beginnings to this act.

However, the legacy of the land-grant acts is not without criticism and ongoing controversy, as much of the land used for the program was seized from Native Americans (Lee and Ahtone 2020).

Factory Schools and Vestibule Training

The New York City printing press manufacturer R. Hoe & Company is credited with providing the first on-site classroom learning to employees in the 1870s. It was described as “evening school for the firm’s apprentices, six months in the year … with suitable books and appliances competent teachers are employed. They are instructed in the various branches of a common English education according to their needs and capabilities, and those who are sufficiently advanced are also taught mathematics and mechanical drawing” (Tucker 1973).

Near the turn of the 20th century, an innovation came about that addressed some of the challenges of classroom training: vestibule training, in which new employees learn the job in a setting that approximates the actual working environment as closely as possible. Using simulated cockpits to train airline pilots is an example of this type of training. Vestibule training is generally used when the actual equipment would be too risky for untrained employees to use or when the actual work setting would be unconducive to learning (Law 2009).

The 20th Century: World Wars and Systematic Training

US historians assert that training and development in the 20th century took form during World War II, when a surge in demand for products came at the same time that scores of experienced workers were enlisting in the armed forces. The expanding wartime economy, technological innovations, and a dramatic increase in the demand for trained workers all combined to drive
rapid maturation of the training and learning profession and growth of employee training and
development, as well as the rise of the US labor movement (Torraco 2016).

When men were drafted for the war, large numbers of untrained women and men over the age
of 40 surged into the workforce to replace them. When the supply of vocational school instructors
could not meet the demand, the Training Within Industry Service of the War Manpower Commiss-
ion developed the Job Instructor Training (JIT) program. The JIT’s purpose was to teach first-
and second-line supervisors how to teach their skills to others (Shaw 1994; Steinmetz 1976). These
train-the-trainer programs became known as J programs and expanded to include topics such
as human relations, job methods, safety, and program development. Influences on these topics
included Abraham Maslow’s *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943) and Kurt Lewin’s first experi-
ments with group dynamics (1948).

In concert with systematic training came a systematic approach to instructional design.
During World War II, the military applied a systems approach to learning design, which
became the forerunner for today’s instructional systems design (ISD). The research and theo-
ries of B.F. Skinner on operant conditioning affected the design of these training programs,
which focused on observable behaviors. Training designers created learning goals by break-
ing tasks into subtasks, and training was designed to reward correct behaviors and remediate
incorrect behaviors.

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**B.F. SKINNER (1904–1990)**

B.F. Skinner was a renowned behavioral psychologist and a major proponent of behaviorism, an
influential school of psychological thought that was popular between World War I and World
War II.

Skinner believed that the best way to learn about human nature was to explore how an organism
responds to stimuli, both from the external environment and from internal biological processes, in
a controlled, scientific study. Skinner’s scholarly interests were influenced by psychologists such
as Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, Bertrand Russell, and the founder of behaviorism, John B. Watson. Skin-
ner’s major works include *The Behavior of Organisms* (1938), *Walden Two* (1948), and *Science and
Human Behavior* (1953).

His research found that in most disciplines, learning is most effectively accomplished when it is
taught through incremental steps with instantaneous reinforcement, also known as reward, given
to the learner for acceptable performance. Programmed learning should be implemented using
teaching machines, which present the user with a question, allow the user to answer, and then
immediately provide the user with the correct answer. Programmed learning as an educational
technique has two major types: linear programming and branching. Linear programming rewards
student responses that lead toward the learning goal; other responses go unrewarded. A correct
response also moves the learner along through the program.
In addition, the industry came to recognize how important it was to train supervisors. As Steinmetz (1976) puts it, “Management found that without training skill, supervisors were unable to adequately produce for the defense or war effort. With it, new production methods were being established by the aged, the handicapped, and industrially inexperienced women.” The need for leadership in training had become obvious, and so the title of training director became increasingly common in management hierarchies. In 1942, during a meeting of the American Petroleum Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana, the American Society of Training Directors (ASTD) was formed.

In addition to developing leadership in the training function, organizations realized the need for development in leadership more generally. This led to the emergence of the first management development programs, which were sponsored and guided by universities and colleges that offered college-level courses in management and technology (Steinmetz 1976).

**The 1950s—The Influence of Educational and Behavioral Psychology**

Following World War II, the industry’s newfound efficiencies to accommodate the demands of war production were channeled into peacetime reconstruction. However, some of the methods that had been used to achieve those efficiencies—specifically, scientific management—were beginning to prove demotivating to employees. As a result, human relations training grew increasingly popular, and many supervisors were trained in psychology (Shaw 1994).

Individualized instruction was later automated using teaching machines in the 1960s and also formed the basis for early computer-based training. It had the advantages of enabling learners to learn at their own pace, giving them privacy to correct mistakes, and reducing training time and error rates when back on the job. However, individualized instruction could be expensive to produce, included only what the designer put into it, and required the learner to transfer knowledge back to the workplace. Another development in ISD that occurred during the 1950s was the introduction of Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives. Bloom published his classification of learning objectives, which describes cognitive, psychomotor, and affective outcomes, in 1956. The six levels of behavior are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Cognitive outcomes, or knowledge, refer to the development of intellectual skills. Psychomotor outcomes, or skills, refer to the physical movement, coordination, and use of motor skills to accomplish a task. Affective outcomes, or attitudes, refer to how people deal with things emotionally. These categories are often referred to as KSAs (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and relate to the way that learning objectives are written to specify the types of learning to be accomplished. For example, a knowledge objective might be to describe how the increased production needs of World War II dramatically affected the field of training and learning.

At the end of the decade, ASTD published Donald Kirkpatrick’s articles about the four levels of evaluation in *Journal of the American Society of Training Directors* (later *T+D* and then *TD*), which introduced a new theme into the field: measurement.
BENJAMIN BLOOM (1913–1999)

Benjamin Bloom was an educational psychologist whose contributions to education involved his model of talent development and his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the cognitive domain.

The focus of Bloom’s research was the study of educational objectives. He proposed that any given task favors one of three psychological domains—cognitive, affective, or psychomotor:

- The cognitive domain deals with the ability to process and use (as a measure) information in a meaningful way.
- The affective domain is concerned with the attitudes and feelings that result from the learning process.
- The psychomotor domain involves manipulative or physical skills.

Bloom is credited with being instrumental in shifting instructional emphasis from teaching facts to teaching students how to apply the knowledge they learn.

The 1960s

The introduction of measurement into the field of training was closely linked to another theme that started to emerge in the 1960s: the need to understand the business. During the 1950s, more publications appeared noting the importance of involving top management in training, and in 1960 Gordon M. Bliss, then executive director of ASTD, urged members to seek “wider responsibilities” and to understand “the vernacular which is used to report profits” (Shaw 1994). To reflect this broader focus, in 1964 ASTD changed its name to include the word development.

Another sign that the training profession was broadening its horizons was the adoption of organization development (OD). According to the Organization Development Network, a professional organization for OD practitioners, “Organization development is a values-based approach to systems change in organizations and communities; it strives to build the capacity to achieve and sustain a new desired state that benefits the organization or community and the world around them.” Its roots lie in the behavioral sciences, using theories about organization change, systems, teams, and individuals based on the work of Kurt Lewin, Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, Richard Beckhard, Wilfred Bion, Ed Schein, Warren Bennis, and Chris Argyris (Haneberg 2005).

The wider focus on business results was also related to the emerging field of human performance improvement (HPI) or human performance technology (HPT). Performance improvement is a systematic, systemic, results-based approach to helping organizations meet their goals through the work of people. The work of Thomas Gilbert, Geary Rummler, Donald Tosti, and Dale Brethower moved the field of workplace learning from a singular focus on training to a wide variety of activities that improve business results.
More popular during this period was the psychology of influence, motivation, and attitude change. Topics related to the emerging US civil rights movement, such as workplace diversity, were also becoming more common.

In the areas of learning theory and design, the 1960s saw Jean Piaget, a Swiss developmental psychologist, create a model of cognitive development with four stages:

- The sensorimotor stage (birth to two years)
- The preoperational stage (ages two to seven)
- The concrete operational stage (ages seven to 11)
- The formal operational stage (ages 11 and up)

His theories form the foundation for the development of constructivism, which began to appear in the 1970s and 1980s.

Robert F. Mager proposed his model for instructional objectives in his 1962 book, *Preparing Objectives for Programmed Instruction*. This model indicates that objectives should have three components: behavior, condition, and standard. That is, the objective should describe the specific, observable behavior that the training should accomplish; indicate the conditions under which the behavior should be completed; and state the desirable level of performance. This type of objective is alternatively known as behavioral, performance, or criterion-referenced objectives.

Mager’s theory of objectives was originally developed for use in programmed instruction. In the 1960s, programmed instruction became increasingly automated through the briefly popular use of teaching machines, which were electromechanical devices for delivering programmed instruction. Another development in technology in the mid-1960s was the increasingly wide availability of minicomputers.

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## ROBERT F. MAGER (1923–2020)

The criterion referenced instruction (CRI) framework developed by Robert F. Mager is a comprehensive set of methods for the design and delivery of training programs.

Some of the critical aspects include:

- Goal/task analysis—to identify what needs to be learned
- Performance objectives—exact specification of the outcomes to be accomplished and how they are to be evaluated (the criterion)
- Criterion-referenced testing—evaluation of learning in terms of the knowledge and skills specified in the objectives
- Development of learning modules tied to specific objectives

Training programs developed using the CRI format tend to be self-paced courses involving a variety of different media (such as workbooks, videotapes, small group discussions, and computer-based instruction). Students learn at their own pace and take tests to determine if they have mastered a module. A course manager administers the program and helps students with problems.
In 1965, Robert Gagné published *Conditions of Learning*, which describes eight types of learning and nine corresponding approaches of instruction. His theory is that there are different types or levels of learning and a need for types of instruction that complement them. He asserted that learning tasks for intellectual skills can be organized in a hierarchy according to complexity: stimulus recognition, response generation, procedure following, use of terminology, discriminations, concept formation, rule application, and problem solving. The primary significance of the hierarchy is to identify prerequisites that should be completed to facilitate learning at each level. Prerequisites are identified by doing a task analysis of a learning or training task; learning hierarchies provide a basis for the sequencing of instruction (Gagné 1985).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROBERT MILLS GAGNÉ (1916–2002)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions of learning theory:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gaining attention (reception)</td>
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<td>• Informing learners of the objective (expectancy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stimulating recall of prior learning (retrieval)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Presenting the stimulus (selective perception)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Providing learning guidance (semantic encoding)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Eliciting performance (responding)</td>
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<td>• Providing feedback (reinforcement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assessing performance (retrieval)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enhancing retention and transfer (generalization)</td>
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The 1960s also heralded the era of corporate universities, which began with the founding of Hamburger University by the McDonald’s Corporation in 1961. Hamburger University was designed exclusively to instruct personnel employed by McDonald’s Corporation or by McDonald’s independent franchisees in the various aspects of the business and operations. By the end of the 20th century, Hamburger University had branches in England, Japan, Germany, and Australia. Other corporations soon followed McDonald’s lead (Schugurensky 2009).

**The 1970s**

Sociotechnical-systems theory, which indicates that the interaction of social and technical factors supports or hinders the successful functioning of an organization, became widespread in the 1970s (Shaw 1994; Pasmore 1988). Trainers began to understand that to achieve peak performance, both the technical and the social aspects of organizations had to be considered and optimized together. This aligned with the broader focus for the field that OD and HPI started establishing in the 1960s.
Social issues such as racism, discrimination against women and members of other under-represented groups, and political and environmental concerns were at the forefront of popular culture in the 1970s; these issues also began to influence changes in how training took place in organizations.

Another emerging focus during the 1970s was sensitivity training—also known as the laboratory method—which was a form of human relations training that took place in groups and was designed to raise self-awareness and understanding of group dynamics, enabling attendees to modify their own behavior appropriately. The method had vocal detractors who did not think it was appropriate for workplace training to help “managers achieve authenticity and develop self-esteem,” but Chris Argyris of the National Training Laboratories was its principal defender (Shaw 1994).

Chief among other new forms of training developed during the 1970s was the case method, which had been used in business schools but not in training programs. The case method involves the use of a case study to explore a topic. Storytelling trainers also began to teach management by objective, introducing expectancy theory as a way to predict employee behavior (Shaw 1994).

Learning theory also saw several developments; Malcolm Knowles’s book *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* introduced adult learning theory in 1973. Although he wasn’t the first to suggest that adults learn differently from children (Eduard C. Lindeman challenged the notion that pedagogy was appropriate for adults in *The Meaning of Adult Education* in 1926), Knowles coined the term *andragogy* and presented key principles that affect the way adults learn (see the sidebar for more).

At about the same time, Robert M. Gagné and Leslie J. Briggs presented the nine events of instruction in their 1974 book, *Principles of Instructional Design*. The nine events represented a new theory in learning called cognitivism. While behaviorism focuses on outward behaviors, cognitivism focuses on how information is processed, stored, and retrieved in the mind.

Another emerging learning theory in the 1970s was constructivism. With roots in Piaget’s theories about cognitive development, constructivism posits that learning is a process of constructing new knowledge. Jerome Bruner, an important theorist related to constructivism, saw learning as “a social process, whereby students construct new concepts based on current knowledge. The student selects information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, with the aim of integrating new experiences into his existing mental constructs” (Thanasoulas 2002). With the constructivist learning theory, the impetus in learning design is to create learning experiences that enable learners to discover and construct learning for themselves.
MALCOLM KNOWLES (1913–1997)

Regarded as the father of adult learning, Knowles made numerous contributions to the theory and practice of human resource development, but is best known for popularizing the term andragogy, which is the art and science of teaching adults. Andragogy recognizes that adults learn differently than children and as a result need to be treated differently in the classroom. In 1973, Knowles defined four assumptions about adult learning in his book *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. These were expanded to six assumptions in a subsequent edition (1984):

- Adults need to know why it is important to learn something before they learn it.
- Adults have a concept of self and do not like others imposing their will on them.
- Adults have a wealth of knowledge and experience and want that knowledge to be recognized.
- Adults become ready to learn when they know that the learning will help them with real problems.
- Adults want to know how the learning will help them in their personal lives.
- Adults respond to external motivations, such as the prospect of a promotion or an increase in salary.

The 1980s

Productivity in the US slowed in the 1980s, and many organizations underwent large downsizings while global economic competition simultaneously became their biggest business challenge (Shaw 1994). This led organizations to look more closely at their training budgets, compelling training and development leaders to focus more on the bottom line and prove the value training brings to organizations. For this reason and others, cost-benefit analysis and the concept of return on investment (ROI) became increasingly hot topics.

In addition, women were entering the T&D field at an unprecedented rate in the 1980s; by 1989, women made up 47 percent of ASTD’s members. Assertiveness training flourished, as did training topics such as behavior modeling, teamwork, empowerment, diversity, adventure learning, feedback, corporate culture, and trainer competencies (Shaw 1994).

Trainer competencies were the topic of two competency models published in the 1980s, which positioned the field of training and development as part of the broader field of human resources work. The first modern attempt to define training and development was the 1983 report *Models for Excellence: The Conclusions and Recommendations of the ASTD Training and Development Study*, which captured this expansion of the role of training (McLagan 1983). By 1989, career development and organization development had been added to the repertoire of training and development work, as noted in *Models for HRD Practice* (McLagan 1989). That report used Leonard Nadler’s
term for the field, human resource development (HRD), defining it as “the integrated use of training and development, organization development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness.”

In technology, the first electronic workstations came on the market in 1981. As laser discs began to be used with training, providing immediate access to video segments, the training community became more enamored of multimedia as a way to engage the learner. Laptop computers soon emerged, followed by smaller disc formats for interactivity and storing media (IBM’s Ultimedia and CD-i by Philips, both of which eventually gave way to the CD-ROM). The rise of these technologies revolutionized much of how learning was designed, delivered, and managed in organizations.

**The 1990s**

The summer of 1991 heralded an inflection point in technological and human progress when Tim Berners-Lee published the code for what would become known as the World Wide Web (Berners-Lee 2000). The internet introduced the era of limitless access to information. Proponents of e-learning, computer-based training, and online learning proclaimed that classroom learning was over. Early e-learning followed the same behaviorist model that had informed the programmed instruction of the 1950s and the learning machines of the 1960s, in which learners went through a sequence of steps, after which they responded correctly (or incorrectly) and then continued to the next learning element or doubled back as required.

The benefits were also similar: Learners could learn at their own pace, make mistakes, and get feedback without being embarrassed, while also repeating sections until they mastered them. E-learning had the additional benefit of more branching capabilities than the earlier programmed instruction and learning machines, which allowed learners to automatically bypass sections they already knew and focus more on problem areas. Multimedia capabilities also made e-learning more effective by stimulating more of the senses and appealing to different types of learners. And finally, it allowed greater accessibility to training by minimizing costs associated with travel to training, time off work to attend, and facilities fees.

However, the early days of e-learning had some challenges, such as low learner engagement due to rudimentary e-learning programs. And while systems-based training took off in the format, e-learning did not work quite as well for training interpersonal skills. Controlling costs and keeping programs current were also concerns.

In response, more organizations adopted a blended learning strategy by combining e-learning with live classroom elements. Learners could use e-learning elements to complete any prerequisite training so that once a classroom session started, everyone was at the same point. This helped minimize time spent to get everyone up to speed and maximize time on the new skills.
and knowledge to be learned. Additionally, while asynchronous training became the early norm for e-learning, technology-based synchronous training gained in popularity, allowing students to mimic the classroom environment online, no matter where they were physically.

Another development in HRD was the concept of the learning enterprise. Peter Senge’s 1990 book, *The Fifth Discipline*, presented this concept: A learning organization commits itself to disciplines that will allow it to develop its learning capacity to create its future. Ideas underlying the learning organization are systems thinking, mental models, personal mastery, and shared vision and dialogue.

The last two topics—performance support and learning organizations—were popular training topics in the 1990s. Other popular topics included reengineering, reorganization and transformation of work, customer focus, global organizations, “visioning,” and balancing work and family (Shaw 1994).

**The 21st Century**

In learning theory, behaviorism continues to have strong influence on learning design; cognitive and constructivist learning theories use Gagné’s nine events of learning and discovery learning. Knowles’s theory of adult learning informs most training by emphasizing making learning relevant, using learners’ experience as a platform for learning, and giving learners some say in how or what they learn.

While the basic ISD model has evolved, the industry has also developed new models of instructional design that are applicable to varying situations and have different emphases, such as rapid prototyping and learning modules. But the legacy theories of the 1950s and 1960s—Bloom’s taxonomy, and Mager’s model for learning objectives—continue to influence how learning objectives are written by specifying first the type of learning (knowledge, skill, or attitude) and then the behavior, condition, and degree.

Measurement also remains a key concern in the field of training and development. Kirkpatrick’s classic four levels of evaluation—reaction, learning, behavior, and results—and the work of Jack and Patti Phillips in ROI continue to dominate how learning content is measured and reported.

In 2010, a group of industry thought leaders and preeminent practitioners coalesced to create standards for learning and development to provide the learning profession with templates to operate more like a business. The result was the Talent Development Reporting principles (TDRp). The nonprofit Center for Talent Reporting (CTR) was created in 2012 to be the permanent home for TDRp. Since then, hundreds of organizations around the world have adopted TDRp, and CTR has further refined the principles, measures, and reports based on feedback from the early adopters (Vance and Parskey 2016). This guidance includes a simple yet comprehensive framework for
planning, collecting, defining, and reporting the critical outcome, effectiveness, and efficiency measures needed to deliver results and contribute to the success of the organization.

Other significant developments in the learning community included the widespread use of social and informal learning throughout the enterprise and increased leveraging of user-generated content. In an ode to the oft-cited 70-20-10 model, based on studies by the Center for Creative Leadership, training departments have slowly evolved from being the sole provider and deliverer of content in their companies to a role that fosters sharing knowledge in the organization and becoming a connector of people. In a study by i4cp and ASTD, informal learning was shown to play an acknowledged role to varying degrees in the organizations of 97 percent of participants; 27 percent reported that informal learning represented more than half of the total learning taking place in their companies (ATD and i4cp 2013).

Technology has taken center stage in learning; easy-to-use content generation tools have enabled the workforce to share knowledge and expertise in an environment centered on performance support. Furthering the concept of performance support, the ubiquity of mobile devices and internet connectivity has hastened the adoption of mobile learning and instant access to information, which the newest generation of workers has grown up with and expects. A big piece of this, of course, is the capacity to deliver learning in simple, quick, mobile ways that mirror the instant connections and transactions we’re all accustomed to making daily. Microlearning, highly customized learning, and apps that provide learners with assistive chatbots and daily nudges appeal to a wide range of workers across all generations.

The continuous evolution of and advancement in technology demands upskilling and reskilling that is also continuous. The rapid increase in the adoption of advanced work automation including AI, machine learning, and robotics has already fueled a significant capability gap in knowledge and skills, according to research conducted by i4cp, which found that only 16 percent of the organizations surveyed reported having focused upskilling or reskilling programs to close this capability gap (Stone 2019).

The Emergence of Talent Management

In 1997, McKinsey & Company published a seminal article, “The War for Talent”; the overarching theme was that organizations must compete for talent (Chambers et al. 1997). This competition was cooled by the slumping economy in the dot-com bust and recession of the early 2000s, but the concept of talent management was born and has expanded exponentially since.

In The Executive Guide to Integrated Talent Management, co-authors Kevin Oakes and Pat Galagan (2011) made the case that learning professionals often act as partners, collaborating with others or working with function owners to support talent management integration, or to serve as
facilitators who provide guidance and support for integration efforts. This shift in thinking presents an opportunity for learning professionals to play leading roles in developing and managing talent across an organization.

Human resources in most organizations has historically functioned in siloed departments, meaning that each area rarely shared data with others or worked collaboratively to have a more holistic view of talent. For example, some of the strategic areas that commonly exist under HR but function separately include:

- Talent acquisition (recruitment, selection, assessment)
- Total rewards (compensation, benefits)
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Engagement (employee experience)
- Leadership development
- Learning and training
- Performance management
- Succession planning

Organizations have moved swiftly in recent years to integrate these functions to create a unified view of their current talent and for strategic workforce planning, which asks these questions:

- What is the inventory of skills, capabilities (including languages spoken, backgrounds, subject matter expertise), and relevant experiences among the workforce?
- What are the gaps between current technical and professional capacity and the capacity required in the next one to three years?
- How will the jobs at your firm today be augmented or perhaps replaced by automation in the next three to five years? (Martin 2020)

**Social and Collaborative Learning**

A study by i4cp and ATD defined *social learning* as information and experience sharing, collaboration, and co-creation between and among networks (both employees and outsiders) using interactive discussions and conversations, social media, internal networking platforms, and other technology-based methods that facilitate social interactions and communication (such as blogs, forums, internal or external social networks, and video sharing). The study found that while most organizations encourage and support content sharing, few track user-generated content or reward workers who regularly share content (ATD and i4cp 2016b).

Organizations are more focused on how to implement continuous learning across the entire enterprise. This is accomplished by producing more curated, user-generated content (created by learners for other learners, which may include text, video, or images) and facilitating collaboration that allows employees to connect (in person or virtually) with internal subject matter experts for
quick tutorial or mentoring check-ins. Part of this shift can mean focusing more on user experience and less on tracking and reporting on ROI for some organizations, recognizing that social learning happens continuously and much of it is not trackable.

The most common current approach to measuring social learning is tracking activity rather than learning quality or effectiveness. But the ability to track and measure where social learning happens and where it’s working well so organizations can adjust or redesign their approaches remains largely aspirational. This will likely change as social learning is viewed less as a self-directed learning option and more as a strategy linked to enhancing collaboration, innovation, and improved talent development performance. Beyond tracking access to specific learning assets, the other most common measures of social learning are activity in online learning communities, use of specific social media tools, popularity of shared content, type of content shared, and the number of users who share content. But more organization are likely to start measuring what high-performance organizations are more likely to measure: tracking activity in online learning communities, tracking the type of content employees shared on social media, and measuring the results produced when social learning was linked to workers’ individual performance objectives (ATD and i4cp 2016a).

What’s ahead? More emphasis on designing learning for delivery through social media, tying social learning to organizational business goals, and accurately measuring learning that takes place via social media. It’s likely that we will see wider adoption of connecting social learning to specific business objectives and measuring the related key performance indicators. And the inclusion of social media capabilities in competency models will likely become more common as a tool to encourage employees to contribute to social learning content, share knowledge and information, and collaborate on projects.

**Upskilling and Reskilling**

Workforce capabilities are the lifeblood of enterprises, directly affecting such vital considerations as competitive market ability, strategic execution, critical role and leadership pipelines, and organizational agility. As a result, ongoing changes in markets, customer preferences, technologies, and other potentially disruptive events are turning upskilling and reskilling programs into critical talent strategies for many companies.

In his 2015 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama called on US employers to adopt or expand additional measures to help frontline workers gain the training and credentials needed to advance into better paying jobs—including paying for college education, offering on-the-job training for career progression, and increasing access to technology-enabled learning tools. The following day, the UpSkill America initiative was launched.

In support of Upskill America’s work, the Institute for Corporate Productivity and the Aspen Institute partnered to study worker development and found a high correlation with bottom-line
business impact when frontline workers took advantage of development opportunities. Yet, a large gap exists at most organizations between what is being done and what should be done to ensure the development of this critical worker segment, which often provides the most direct link between an organization and its customers but receives the least amount of development (i4cp and Aspen Institute 2016a).

A form of upskilling that is receiving renewed attention is rotation programs, in which employees move through different jobs or assignments to gain new experience or skills. These programs have a long history in developing new leaders but can also be a valuable learning experience for frontline workers in a time when skills are rapidly changing or becoming obsolete. Through internal talent marketplaces driven by AI technology, employers are able to track and analyze the skills of employees and offer rotations in other parts of the organization (i4cp and Aspen Institute 2016b).

**Workforce Readiness**

Among the many lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was a reinforcement of the importance of organizational agility. Indeed, the ability to anticipate, adapt, and act on change is no longer a nice-to-have. An essential component of agility is establishing and fostering a culture of continuous learning, and this need for ongoing learning will continue to accelerate.

Consider these two findings from the World Economic Forum’s 2020 report, *The Future of Jobs*, which asserts that by 2025:

- 44 percent of the skills that employees need to perform their roles effectively will change.
- Companies hope to internally redeploy nearly 50 percent of workers displaced by technological automation and augmentation.

Talent shortages are a growing challenge for employers, who also recognize they cannot hire their way to the skills they need now and in the future. The need for upskilling and reskilling is real, accelerating, and requisite for organizational sustainability and worker relevance. Ideally, organizations will redirect the resources currently applied to tracking learning activity to focus on tracking and enabling workforce readiness—the real driver toward sustainable organizational success.

**Final Thoughts**

The most effective and resilient organizations are those that have created cultures in which continuous learning is a foundational element of their mission and guiding principles. The critical role of talent development in promoting a strong organizational learning culture cannot be overemphasized. A workplace in which learning is a valued way of life, knowledge is readily shared, and performance steadily improves—at both the individual and organizational levels—is the vision that drives companies to establish, invest in, and expand cultures of learning. Organizations are more competitive, agile, and engaged when knowledge is constantly and freely shared and celebrated.
From ancient papyrus to classroom, social, mobile, virtual, and performance-based learning, the uninterrupted thread in each evolution of learning has been the drive to acquire new knowledge and skills.

As we navigate the post-pandemic era, organizations will look for new ways to make training and development more accessible, flexible, individualized, and integral to overall employee experience. High-performance organizations will continue to invest in and expand on such offerings and learning opportunities, which in turn will provide a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining the talent they need.

Now more than ever, employers recognize the importance of training to the overall expansion and growth of the business as well as the strengthening of organizational culture—in turn, learning and talent development professionals will continue to rise in importance to the enterprise. New history is created constantly by this profession, and the easiest prediction to be made for the future is that it will continue to change and evolve in areas we can’t imagine. You are more capable than most of not only imagining that future, but also bravely leading into it, inspiring others to accomplish what may have seemed unachievable not that long ago.

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Elaine Biech, CPTD fellow, believes excellence isn't optional. Her passion is helping others achieve their passion. She specializes in maximizing individual, team, and organizational effectiveness using her expertise in OD, training, and consulting. She custom designs every project to address each client’s unique needs. She conducts strategic planning and implements organization-wide systems including process improvement, change management, leadership development, onboarding, and mentoring programs. She has developed hundreds of training courses and apps. As the founder and president of ebb associates inc, Elaine helps organizations implement large-scale change and is particularly adept at turning dysfunctional teams into productive teams.

As a management and executive consultant, trainer, and designer, Elaine’s clients include the US Navy, China Sinopec, China Telecom, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Banco de Credito Peru, Lockheed Martin, Outback Steakhouse, FAA, Land O’Lakes, McDonald’s, Lands’ End, Johnson Wax, Federal Reserve Bank, Department of Homeland Security, American Family Insurance, Marathon Oil, Hershey Chocolate, NASA, Newport News Shipbuilding, Kohler Company, American Red Cross, Association of Independent CPAs, The College of William and Mary, and hundreds of other public and private sector organizations. She designed the first process improvement programs for The Newport News Shipbuilding Company and McDonald’s as well as Hershey Chocolate’s first creativity and innovation program; she also presented one of the first ever virtual training sessions in 1986 for NASA.
Elaine’s been called a titan of the training industry. She’s written 86 books with 14 publishers, including the *Washington Post* number 1 bestseller, *The Art & Science of Training*. She recently served as the principal author of ATD’s Talent Development Body of Knowledge. Her books have won national awards and have been translated into 13 languages. She was the consulting editor for the prestigious *Pfeiffer Training and Consulting Annuals* for 16 years. Elaine has also been featured in dozens of publications including *The Wall Street Journal, Harvard Management Update, Washington Post, Investor’s Business Daily*, and *Fortune*. Elaine has presented more than 400 times for national and international conferences, including keynote presentations to 7,000 trainers in China. She has presented 35 consecutive years at ATD’s International Conference & EXPO.

Elaine has been active in ATD since 1982, serving on the National ASTD Board of Directors and as the Board’s secretary from 1991 to 1994. She initiated and chaired Consultant’s Day for seven years and was ATD’s International Conference Design Chair in 2000. Elaine also designed ATD's first training certificate program and has since written five other certificate programs for the association.

A talent development thought leader and ATD’s inaugural CPTD Fellow designee, Elaine is the recipient of more than a dozen national awards, including ATD’s 1992 Torch Award, 2004 Volunteer-Staff Partnership Award, 2006 Gordon M. Bliss Memorial Award, and the 2020 Distinguished Contribution to Talent Development Award. She is also the recipient of the 2001 ISA Spirit Award, 2012 ISA Outstanding Contributor Award, and 2022 ISA Thought Leader Award, and Wisconsin’s Women’s Mentor Award. Elaine sponsors several scholarship funds and currently serves on the board of directors for ISA and CCL.
About the Association for Talent Development

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) champions the importance of learning and training by setting standards for the talent development profession. ATD is the largest, most trusted organization for the professional development of practitioners in training and talent development, serving a worldwide community with members in more than 100 countries. Since ATD was founded in 1943, the talent development field has expanded significantly to meet the needs of global businesses and emerging industries. Classroom trainers and facilitators, instructional designers, data analysts, coaches, and performance improvement consultants are among the professionals ATD supports with resources, membership, tools, courses, and credentials. Talent development professionals rely on ATD to establish benchmarks and capabilities for best practice.

Today, change is constant for organizations around the world. ATD’s mission is to empower professionals to develop talent in the workplace. The resources we provide help talent development professionals increase their impact and effectiveness include:

- The Talent Development Capability Model
- Education courses
- Certifications and credentials
- Membership
- Industry-leading events held around the world
- Research
- Books and magazines

Learn more at td.org.