


Modern Learning Is a Team Sport

A PLAYBOOK

for Achieving Organizational Alignment





“Achieving alignment around a modern learning strategy is key for creating a modern learning culture within your organization—a winning culture that makes learning and development a core component of your corporate DNA.”

Great things happen in the workplace when you achieve alignment among teams. You say goodbye to skepticism and confusion.

Decisions happen faster. Employees are happier.

In business as in sports, when players know their role, connect as a team, clearly communicate the game strategy and flawlessly execute on the plays...well, magic happens. This can be especially true when making the move to modern workplace learning.

Achieving alignment around a modern learning strategy is key for creating a modern learning culture within your organization—a winning culture that makes learning and development a core component of your corporate DNA. But what if there isn't alignment around your modern learning game plan? According to **Bersin by Deloitte**, learning and development within the enterprise is more aligned when it speaks the same language as the business, when it understands and communicates with all stakeholders, and when it is focused. But lack of alignment across teams and players can mean that the execution of a modern learning strategy becomes a costly, losing game. It is estimated that employee misunderstanding costs businesses \$37 billion a year.¹

So, let's pull together the right plays and get the entire team rallied around modern learning as a winning objective.

¹ <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/37-billion-us-and-uk-businesses-count-the-cost-of-employee-misunderstanding-870000.htm>



Who's on the field?
What's the play?
How do you equip for success?

HUT!





The People

Executive Leadership (aka the Team Owners)

As the leadership team, your executives' role is to be the sponsor and voice of change. Key advocates of a modern learning strategy, their purpose is to outline why a new learning culture is needed, how it will support the achievement of business goals, and how it will rally others across the organization to join in the modern learning journey.



On the athletic field:

Team owners are responsible for funding and growing the franchise, managing operational expenses, and building and preserving the team's brand.





The Plays

Use key metrics to keep your leadership engaged and to communicate progress against program goals.

- What's the tangible benefit to the business from moving to modern learning?
- What is the return on investment (ROI) to date?
- How are these results tracking to **SMART goals** and objectives set out in your modern learning business case?
- How is the modern learning strategy improving efficiencies within the organization?



The Gear

- Use dashboards to help your L&D team monitor employee engagement in the modern learning initiative and communicate **qualitative metrics** back to executive sponsors.
- Monitor and respond to employee feedback.
- Identify champions at all levels of the organization to advocate for the cultural shift on your behalf.



Coaching tip:

Consider using an executive scorecard as a visible reminder of key performance metrics and achievement against modern learning objectives.





The People

Line Managers (aka the Coaching Team)

These folks aren't sitting on the sidelines. These are your team leads and supervisors. Their role is to coach in order to implement the change and help their people understand that a modern learning culture is important to the team because it opens up new learning paths. They also need to communicate to team members why they should be involved and why now.



On the athletic field:

Coaches help athletes develop to their full potential. They are responsible for training athletes by analyzing their performance, by teaching relevant skills, and by providing encouragement. They are also responsible for guiding athletes in life as well as in their chosen sport.





The Plays

These folks are often asked to do “a bazillion things” on top of their team lead responsibilities. So, you need to make it super easy for them to support your modern learning initiative.

- Package up materials and make them quickly and easily accessible so managers have all the resources they need at their fingertips.
- Communicate!
 - *Brief them on the modern learning strategy well in advance.*
 - *Help them understand how modern learning will enable them to improve/achieve their results and targets, and how it will impact their team's performance.*
- Make them feel like they have voice. These are your management allies, so respect their input and provide ample opportunity for feedback.
- Demonstrate that their management feedback has meaning and is being reflected in future decision-making.
- Some managers are just fantastic coaches who thrive on supporting their teams. Show them how this modern learning strategy is helping open up opportunities for their employees.



The Gear

- Introduce **the building blocks** of modern learning to enable huge leaps in team performance:
 - *Content curation and creation*
 - *Video capabilities*
 - *Social learning and assessment*
- Leverage your learning platform to start discussions, encourage social interactions and build communities.

Coaching tip:

Managers are also learners. Show them what's in it for them personally.





The People

Employees/Learners (aka the Players)

These are the people across your organization who need to execute on the strategy and put modern learning into action—the end users. Every person on every team has a job to do. It's important for them to buy in.



On the athletic field:

Whether it's on the football field or baseball diamond, players must understand the roles and tasks required of their position and how they fit within the coaches' scheme. Furthermore, they must know the playbook and what their responsibilities and actions are as they relate to execution of the game plan.





The Plays

If **90% of well-formulated strategies fail due to poor execution**, how do we ensure your modern learning strategy is not another statistic? The key is to get employees/learners engaged across the organization.

- Clear and constant communication is key. Why should employees care about this change?
- Explain how it will impact them individually.
- Why now? You need to create a sense of urgency across the organization for the modern learning initiative and explain the impact it will have.
- Make it fun! Celebrate the wins. Offer encouragement and pep talks. Remember to deliver pats on the back for participation and progress.



The Gear

- Enable **learning in the flow** of work.
- Use **gamification** to engage learners and reward learner participation.
- Provide employees with **easy ways to access coaching and mentorship**.
- Encourage and support anywhere, anytime learning through mobile-optimized learning platforms.
- Offer formal and informal learning programs.

Coaching tip:

Recruit people at the employee level to become champions for the change. This allows staff members to serve as role models for colleagues and demonstrate their leadership skills, which looks good on the resume.





The People

Learning & Development (L&D) Team (aka the Club/Team Manager)

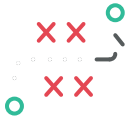
This is the group that “owns” the modern learning master plan and is responsible for enabling change. They determine what will be communicated and when, how to structure the approach, and what content and supporting tools should be released and when. They also support executive leadership, line managers and employees/learners in their execution of the modern learning game plan.



On the athletic field:

The team manager is responsible for the administration and management of the team and the welfare of all team members at training and competition.





The Plays

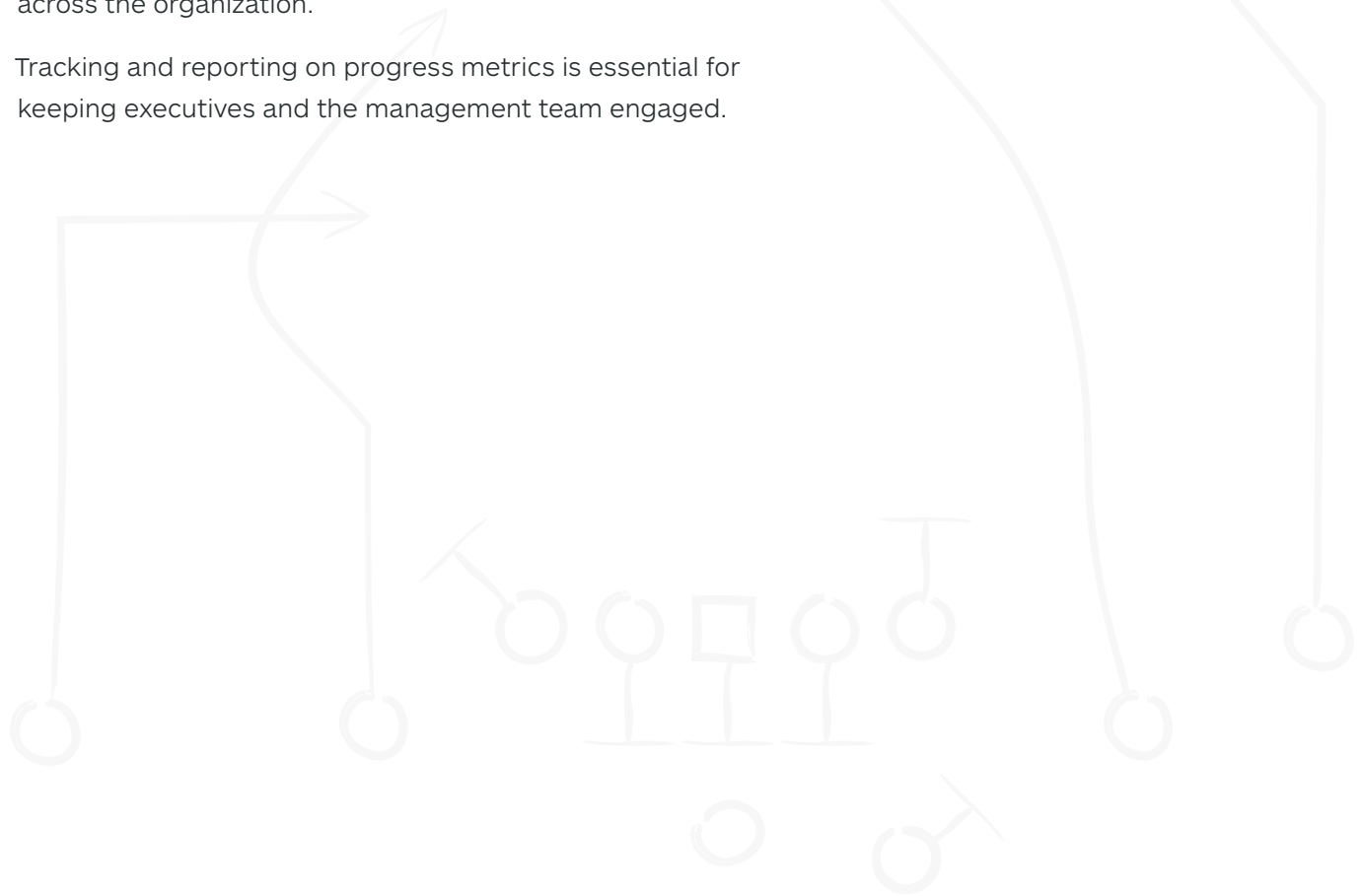
The support system for a modern learning initiative will look different depending on the organization. For some, it might be represented by a call center; for others, it might be an online resource, such as a knowledge management portal.

- As owners of the modern learning business case, the L&D team needs to keep communication flowing up, down and across the organization.
- Tracking and reporting on progress metrics is essential for keeping executives and the management team engaged.



The Gear

- Return frequently to your **modern learning business case** to ensure you are on track with respect to timing, deliverables and objectives.
- Leverage all capabilities of your learning platform to support the change rollout.



Coaching tip:

Leverage your learning champions to be L&D's eyes and ears. They can help you quickly respond to feedback and alert you to any issues that crop up.





The People

**IT, HR, Finance,
Learning Platform Vendor**
(aka the Nutritionists,
Trainers, Medical Staff)

To be successful, a modern learning initiative requires support and enablement from key functions in the organization.



On the athletic field:

For every medal won, there is a network of support staff who play a role in supporting the team of players. Support personnel must be educated and informed on their own rights and responsibilities and those of their athletes. They hold a position of trust and are pivotal in supporting the coaches and athletes in their decision-making.





The Plays

For internal functions such as IT, HR and Finance, support for modern learning becomes a matter of clarity of role.

These are busy people with their own initiatives and responsibilities. Tell them what you need from them and when you need it, and be sure to provide them with ample time to prepare.

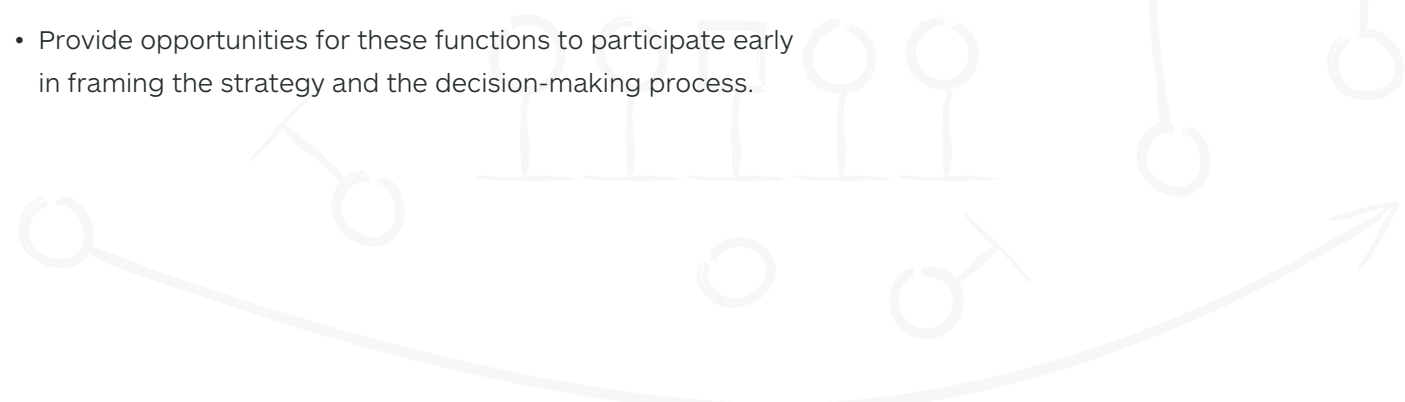
Remember, your learning platform vendor also plays a critical supporting role. Your vendor should be a true partner in a modern learning initiative, bringing its expertise and best-practice knowledge to your organization to help you effect change, create buy-in and avoid common pitfalls.

- Consider IT, HR, Finance and your learning platform vendor as co-playmakers and partners in executing your modern learning game plan.
- Understand what they want to see in terms of outcomes from this initiative.
- Provide opportunities for these functions to participate early in framing the strategy and the decision-making process.



The Gear

- Tap into the value-added services provided by your learning platform vendor, such as learning creative services, and learning strategy and consulting services, to help build your change management plan, create and foster your modern learning culture, and facilitate an engaging branded learning experience for your employees.
- Leverage the expertise of your support team in the planning, rollout and measurement stages of your modern learning initiative.



Coaching tip:

Be sure to highlight the involvement of other functions in your modern learning initiative and celebrate their participation.



What it means to be aligned

A healthy organization is ultimately one that can align around a common vision and execute against that vision effectively. When an organization is aligned around a practical strategy with a clear purpose and shared objectives, its aspirations are not only more credible, but they are also more likely to be achieved. The proof is in the details:

- Companies that work on their organizational health not only achieve measurable improvements in their organizational well-being, but they also demonstrate tangible performance gains in as little as six to 12 months.
- The top quartile of companies in McKinsey's Organizational Health Index deliver three times the returns to shareholders of their counterparts in the bottom quartile

That's why achieving alignment around your modern learning game plan is so critical to the creation of an engaging and effective modern learning culture. Aligned organizations typically experience the following additional benefits:

- ✓ **Increased speed in decision-making**
- ✓ **Better employee engagement**
- ✓ **Less wasted resources**
- ✓ **Improved self-governance**
- ✓ **Less customer confusion**
- ✓ **Increased leadership credibility and respect**
- ✓ **Greater resource visibility**
- ✓ **Optimized talents and skills**
- ✓ **Safe risk-taking**
- ✓ **A dynamic culture**

² <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Operations/Our%20Insights/The%20lean%20management%20enterprise/The%20aligned%20organization.ashx>

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/organizational-health-a-fast-track-to-performance-improvement>

⁴ Ibid.

Let's hit the field, ready to win

So, are you in it to win it? Don't leave your success up to the toss of a coin. With a solid modern learning game plan in hand, clear objectives and business outcomes defined, and everyone aligned to a common goal, your modern learning strategy will be unbeatable.

Contact [D2L's consulting team](#) to help you define your winning modern learning strategy and change initiative.





About D2L

D2L is the software leader that makes the learning experience better. The company's cloud-based learning platform is easy to use, flexible, and smart. By using D2L, organizations can personalize the learning experience to deliver real results. The company is a world leader in content creation and curation and enables employers to act in real time to keep workers on track. D2L is used by learners in higher education, K-12, and the enterprise sector, including the Fortune 1000. D2L has operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Brazil, and Singapore. www.D2L.com

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