



## Nine learning and development predictions for 2023

By Becky Norman, 16th Jan 2023

**What's in store for the L&D profession in 2023? We asked some of TrainingZone's top writers to shed light on the key areas organisations cannot afford to overlook this year.**

Yes, we know predictions need to be taken with a (large) pinch of salt – especially following the unwanted surprises bestowed upon us in recent years. But the new year grants us an opportunity to ponder what might be, where we should focus our attention and – perhaps even more importantly – which upcoming trends we shouldn't pay heed to.

With this in mind, we reached out to some of the writers of TrainingZone's most popular reads in 2022 to share with us what they believe is most important for the learning and development profession to consider as we embark on 2023.

### 1. Skills must become central to business strategy

*Robin Hoyle, Head of Learning Innovation at Huthwaite International*

My hopes and expectations for 2023 are that we use our greater access to senior teams to advise them on capability requirements and how they are best achieved. Once we know what those requirements are we can choose technology wisely to support the business strategy through improved capability. In the past, we've used technology as a solution in search of a problem.

Finally, if we are to convince organisational leaders that skills are central to strategy, then we'd better be able to demonstrate how and where our work made a positive impact.

### 2. AI will lift L&D out of its rut

*Donald Clark, CEO of Wildfire Learning*

In my book *AI for Learning* I explain how AI is the technology that will change everything, including learning. Smart platforms will deliver smart content using smart data. That is coming to pass.

We have been stuck in a linear, flat, text-heavy 'course' model for decades, which does not match how people actually learn in the workplace. Engagement, content production and curation, personalisation, assessment and evaluation are now possible using AI. Another shift, enabled by AI, which can also create 3D worlds, is from 2D to 3D – from flat text and graphics to mixed reality, using context, doing and transfer. Resistance is futile!

### **3. Reflection practice will become BAU**

*Jackie Clifford, Director of Clarity Learning and Development*

This year we will need to be more reflective than ever before. During 2022 we saw the results of failing to pause before taking action. In 2023, individuals, teams and leaders at all levels will need to learn to take a breath, wait for a moment whilst the dust settles and then consider what action to take based on:

1. The past – so that we don't repeat previous mistakes and unhelpful patterns
2. The future – to consider the potential impact (positive, negative and neutral) of proposed actions on all stakeholders
3. The here-and-now – taking stock of what is actually happening in the moment

### **4. Organisations will stop throwing L&D budget down the drain by utilising apprenticeships**

*Erica Farmer, co-founder of Quantum Rise*

Corporate training and career paths will be propped up by apprenticeship schemes and further investment of the apprenticeship levy.

More than £3.3 billion has gone back to the government over the last three years. This means organisations who are not taking full advantage of great apprenticeship programmes are throwing away L&D budget.

Cost squeezing this year will see more levy-paying organisations (payroll greater than £3m per year) finally take up or scale up their apprenticeship provision, moving more towards creative applications such as blending graduate programmes, leadership development initiatives, and data skills and qualifications.

L&D will need to grasp the numbers and understand how much their organisations are losing in expired funds, which simply requires an open mindset and a little education.

### **5. L&D maturity will be defined by how we take personal responsibility and step out with courage**

*Laura Overton, Founder of Learning Changemakers*

There are some exciting developments heading our way in 2023. These include data (hello AI – we're looking at you!), new platform and content options to address critical business challenges, plus a plethora of new L&D models.

I predict that those who are looking at any of these to deliver bottom line results for them in 2023 will be extremely disappointed. Those who take responsibility for evaluating new ideas and their application in the context of their own organisation and who have the courage to experiment, test and learn will be the ones delivering business value against all the odds.

## **6. The AI bot will reap hype status – but we must be wary**

*Dr Nigel Paine, Co-Presenter of Learning Now TV*

Following on from 2022's hybrid learning hype, the next fad will be AI-enabled or -enhanced learning – don't fall for it! We have always had technology-enhanced learning since blackboard and chalk. We have comfortably absorbed wave after wave of analogue and now digital technologies without blinking, but we also have a tendency to be over-impressed by something that is new and shiny.

You won't remember how educational television was going to make teachers and lecturers redundant, nor how interactive videodisc was going to deliver such learning efficiency that teachers and trainers could be replaced by technicians.

I fear that the AI bot is going to reap similar hype status. Have a look at the fuss surrounding Stanford University's ChatGPT to track the overreactions from seeing it as a learning darling or a deadly force! It will be neither (see Stanford GSE's recent article).

AI will find its place for sure. But don't get on the hype wagon too soon!

## **7. Coaching conversations will gain prominence**

*Jo Wright, Co-founder of Coaching Culture*

In 2023 we'll see the momentum continue to build behind the 'ask, don't tell' coaching approach.

Increasing numbers of organisations will realise the importance of genuinely enabling their people to be the ones who come up with solutions, rather than being told what 'the right way' is.

Leaders and managers will increasingly use coaching conversations to create this behaviour change, as they continue to recognise the importance of building trust and providing a psychologically safe environment. From this, we'll start to see more people feeling secure enough to share their own ideas, opinions and feedback, as well as empowered to think for themselves.

## **8. JOMO is the new FOMO**

*Nicky Marshall, Director of Discover Your Bounce*

Following the easing up of Covid restrictions in 2022, we were all excited to get back out into the world. People got together, holiday destinations were flooded with relieved travellers and our business event calendars filled up with networking, exhibitions and meetings.

In 2023 I believe we will transition to JOMO (the joy of missing out) as people acknowledge how busy the latter months of 2022 got. People will be more discerning, valuing their time,

recognising their impact on the planet with travel and enjoying the peace that free time gives them. Happiness will become a treasured commodity.

## **9. As more employees speak up, organisations will need to listen up**

*Anna Shields, Co-founder of Consensio*

More and more, people are finding their voices and demanding to be heard. At work, increasing numbers of employees are speaking up by lodging grievances. In the media, we hear Prince Harry very publicly sharing his perspective on a painful and complex family conflict. This changing landscape means that there will be more of a requirement to listen.

Across organisations, employees need to be supported to have the mindset and skills to listen more deeply and to make space for perspectives that are very different to their own. Even when we don't agree, we can listen, understand and connect. This way, we can find a way forward, which avoids destructive conflict and builds stronger relationships.