



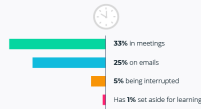
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The modern learner...



### Is overwhelmed and distracted

In a typical working week they spend...



### Is keen to learn

Learning is the #1 reason why people want to join organisations.



### Wants personalized, timely, quality content



Users want content tailored to their needs...but it has to be the best.



And they give content just 7 seconds to decide if it's for them or not.

### Learns as needed, anywhere, anytime



### Turns to their phones



Turn to their phones and search in moments of need



And check their phone 10 times an hour

### Prefers learning to be...



### Most values...



### Wants to learn about...



### Is motivated to learn...



Modern learners seek **timely, relevant** content **as they need it**.

They are keen to develop skills and want to be **empowered** to take learning into their own hands.

Yet **only 7%** of employees are involved in the design of their learning. And **less than 20%** of workplace learning is mobile-enabled.

Find out about why we believe in **people-centered learning** and how it can help you meet the needs of modern learners.

[www.elucidat.com/people-centered-learning](http://www.elucidat.com/people-centered-learning)

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# The modern learner – busy, savvy, and hungry to learn

Meet the modern learner. Busy, savvy and hungry to learn. But are they getting what they need?

The terms used by Josh Bersin to describe modern learners still hold. They are still ‘overwhelmed, distracted and impatient’ ([Bersin by Deloitte](#)). But, they are also **hungry to learn** and keen to grow their skills to the point that if an organisation isn’t enabling them to develop professionally, they’ll up and leave. That’s right, according to [Fosway](#), learning and development opportunities are the **#1 attraction to working somewhere**, and can make or break employee retention and performance. But the learning and development opportunities have to be good.

**The modern learner is savvy** – hunting out the best answers to their problems, in the moment of need, mostly on Smartphones. Learning content has to be **useful** and **relevant** to engage them.

70% of people will move on if learning content isn’t obviously optimised for them, and it has just 5 – 10 seconds to prove it [@Josh\\_Bersin](#) [@treeon](#) [#modernlearner](#)

Sadly, many aren’t finding what they need in their workplace.

**The modern learner also has an eye on the future.** In an era of rising AI, more fluid job roles and rising contractors, people are reaching out for the kinds of skills that will do them well in the future. Whilst hard skills are, perhaps sensibly, focused on data analytics and machine learning, **soft skills are tipping the balance** in lists of more popular online courses. What’s interesting is that they feature skills such as ‘emotional intelligence’ and ‘critical thinking’ – skills that the bots can’t offer? – but also ‘learning how to learn’.

It seems that the modern learner is crying out to self-develop, but needs extra empowerment and support from their workplaces to figure out how, and where, to go.

Here’s the detail and sources behind the facts and stats we’ve shared.

# The modern learner is...

## 1. Overwhelmed and distracted

In [Insights from IMPACT 2018](#), Josh Bersin shared that the average worker spends **25%** of their time on emails and checks their phone **150 times a day**. We spend around **35%** of our working week in meetings with more than **half** deemed unproductive ([The Muse](#)). And, on top of that, we are interrupted around **56 times a day** ([Atlassian](#)). Being productive is challenging!

Meanwhile, the average time people have put aside to learn for work, is around **20 mins a week** ([Bersin & Forbes](#)). A mere **1%**. It's no wonder people are begging for targeted, timely learning content.

## 2. Keen to learn

Professional development opportunities are essential for attracting and retaining people to organisations. Not only is it the **#1 attraction to working at an organisation** (Fosway), other studies, such as this one from [Brand Learning](#), show how learning is essential to employee engagement, and in turn, essential to **growth in business performance**.

According to LinkedIn [2018 Workplace Learning Report](#), **94% of employees would stay at a company if it invested in their career development**.

But it's not always the case that people are getting what they want. In their [2018 Benchmark Report](#), Towards Maturity report that only:

- **15% can access learning directly relating to their job**
- **10% can determine own path through learning**

## 3. Wants personalized, timely, quality content

Relevance is king. The majority of workplace learning is done in the **moment of need**. And, according to Treion Muller's [7 Consumer Realities report](#), in moments of need **96% of people turn to their phones and search for the answer**.

What's more, increasingly people are getting more focused on quality and relevance. [Think with Google](#) reports that mobile searches that include the term "**best**" and "**\_\_\_**for

me” have grown by 80 and 60% respectively, in the last two years. People are hunting for the most useful answers, and stripping out what’s not helping them.

Google searches that include the term “best” and “\_\_\_ for me” have gone up by 80% and 60% in 2 years. Quality and relevance in content are key. #modernlearner

On top of that, the average person gives content around **7 seconds** to decide if a page of content is for them or not, and **70% of users will leave** if it’s not optimised for them and their needs.

## 4. Learns as needed, anywhere, anytime

According to Towards Maturity’s [Bridging the Divide report](#), which has researched the movements of 43,000+ workplace learners since 2003, over half of people learn at the point of need. This takes the lion’s share of the survey. We understand from Treion Muller’s 7 Consumer Realities, that the majority of users in this case turn to their smartphones for this.

Mobile learning is also popular with those on commutes, with around a **third of people learning whilst they travel to and from work**. But there’s still a substantial amount (41%) that learn at their desks. Is this an indication that not all content is optimised for mobiles, or the reality that this is where many people are working and so are switching to learning through on the job experience and where it’s convenient? It could also be because a lot of learning needs dedicated focus and is easier to do on a larger screen.

## 5. Turn to their phones

We don’t really have to report on the smartphone revolution. It’s pretty obvious these days! But it does help to frame just how distracted and bombarded modern learning audiences are to report on some of the stats.

The average person spends **2 hours a day on their smartphone**. This rises to **3 hours for 18 – 24 year olds** ([Time to log off](#)). The addictiveness of smartphone and social media use is now being recognised by health organisations, like the NHS, who offer treatment for it. The average person **checks their phone** around **10 times an hour** (Bersin).

It’s no surprise that in moments of need we turn to our beloved pocket friends for help when it comes to learning.

## 6. Prefers learning to be through on the job experience

Without a doubt, the majority of people prefer to **learn through on the job experience (93%)**. This comes out top in both the user research conducted, independently, by [Jane Hart](#) and [Towards Maturity](#). In fact, **93% of employees want to integrate learning and work** (Treion Muller), to up their ability to learn through on the job experience and be more efficient.

Combining the findings of both Jane Hart's and Towards Maturity's reports, we get a list of preference that looks like this

- Learning through on the job experience: 93%
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing: 90%
- Google and online resources: 76%
- Manager support: 74%
- Coaching & Mentoring: 65%
- Job aids and guides: 60%
- Classroom: 61%
- Online self-study/elearning: 49%
- Webinars: 44%
- Videos: 40%

**Collaboration and knowledge sharing** takes silver, and is probably no surprise as learning from and with others is natural, and highly effective. We're used to turning to others' for advice in the workplace and this is now easier and more widely cast through the use of social networking tools, like Slack.

**Google and online resources** are equally of no surprise as high rankers, but the need for **manager support** may be one that's not respected enough in workplace L&D. Only **4% of L&D teams provide managers with resources** to support their teams with their learning, according to Towards Maturity's 2018 Benchmark Report. Yet we hear time and time again how imperative managers are to employee engagement and retention, and have already noted how important learning is to these outcomes too. It seems crazy that learning initiatives and manager support aren't knotted together in [L&D strategies](#).

**Classroom learning** is a challenging one. Towards Maturity find **63%** of people find it a useful form of learning, whereas Jane Hart reports that just **31%** users find it very important

or essential. However, Towards Maturity's survey involved 10,000 users as opposed to the 2000 surveyed by Jane. So the average comes in around 61%.

**Self paced elearning** is considered essential or very useful by around **49%** of users, based on the same logic as above.

## 7. Most values quality, ease of use and relevance in online learning...

In online learning, users most value **quality**, **ease of use** and navigation, and **relevance and timeliness**. These findings back-up the idea of modern learners being savvy filters of 'what's giving them value, now' as they swiftly and automatically assess if content is worthy, in those first 7 seconds.

Similarly, around 55% of modern learners desire personalized learning, which fits with the idea of 'right stuff, right time to help me'.

All of these stats come from Towards Maturity's [Modern Learning Content report](#).

## 8. Seeks out learning on soft-skills

Combining the lists of most popular courses from Coursera, LinkedIn Learning and Lynda.com, we found that last year, **soft-skills** weighed in strongly for modern learners.

What's really interesting is how the list of top soft-skill courses highlight modern learners as people **empowered** and willing to improve and promote themselves. '**Body language**', '**Acing your interview**', '**Negotiating your salary**' were some of the courses listed in [Lynda.com's top 25](#). These were alongside '**Emotional intelligence**', '**Critical thinking**' and other leadership-themed subjects, which show modern professionals as people preparing for their futures and looking to develop deep problem-solving qualities.

Ranking in the [top 3 subjects](#) taken via Coursera last year is '**Learning how to learn**'. We know modern learners are keen to learn, but is this telling us they don't know how? Perhaps a comment on modern-day education systems, there's signs that performance consultants and training professionals need to help coach, support and empower modern day users to develop professionally.

Soft-skills were the most popular courses taken online last year (via Lynda and Coursera). '**Body language**', '**Acing your interview**', and '**Learning how to Learn**'

ranked high. Hungry to learn yet looking for guidance?  
#modernlearner

## 9. Motivated to learn because they want to do better and be more productive

Finally, we come to what most motivates modern learners to learn. Ranking way higher than hard edged reasons such as promotion or salary increases, modern day professionals are keen to learn primarily **so they can do their jobs better and be more productive**, and for the innate value within learning itself. Learning brings pleasure, a sense of worth, and has value in itself.

It's no wonder, when done right, it boosts employees' sense of engagement and performance.

## Final thoughts

The modern learner may be busy and overwhelmed, but they are hungry to learn and savvy around the type of content that will help them get there and the skills they deem important for the future.

To engage modern learners, performance support and training and development opportunities need to **empower professionals** to develop their skills easily and flexibly. Learning content must be easy to find, personalized, fit for purpose and help them in those crucial moments of need. Modern L&D is also about enabling people to learn *whilst* working. [See some best practice tips here.](#)

Yet, findings from Towards Maturity Benchmark Report 2018 show that **only 1% of users are involved in the design** of their learning, and just **10% say they can determine their own path** through learning content provided.

[Discover the secrets to successful elearning development here.](#)

What can you do to develop the kind of modern, [people-centred learning experiences](#) users need?

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