



Do You Have a Company Learning Roadmap?

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by Linda Google, COO, Scitent, Inc.

These five elements can help create a clear route between employee development and performance and a company's mission, goals and success.

Learning leaders are frequently challenged to align employee professional development with strategic company goals. Often missing is a company learning roadmap, or CLR, a comprehensive plan to help employees understand their role in the context of company goals, which can increase employee engagement, mitigate attrition risk and fuel business success.

There are five key elements in a CLR:

1. A comprehensive onboarding program

This ensures employees understand how to perform their function in relation to understanding the business. The onboarding plan should include both in-person training to foster more one-on-one interaction and self-directed learning through e-learning to cover company policies, communication tools, guided training for specific customer programs and informal team and cross-departmental meetings. The benefit of e-learning for onboarding is using a post-learning assessment to gauge how much of the program is understood and retained, and to identify areas that need extra attention.

2. A personalized skills development plan

Creating one for each employee ensures learning supports the new employee's ability level as well as the skill set needed to perform successfully. The more effective training plans incorporate blended — a combination of online and in-person training formats — and self-directed learning such as e-learning, webinars and professional reading. A strong skills development plan should include action steps, resources and a timeline.

3. A challenging, yet customizable, professional development plan

This is critical for long-term success, improved morale, loyalty and lower turnover. It gives employees the right experiences for growth. For instance, an emerging manager might get opportunities to do presentations, run small meetings, write an article for internal publications or lead small projects. Through specific experiences, the employee will gain new skills and confidence while moving to the next level in their profession. Pairing employees with a mentor is another way to expand the employee's connections and insight into the company.

4. External development opportunities

This element is often undervalued. Teach employees to network. Networking channels such as mentors, professional associations, management training and coaching can jumpstart or reignite employee growth and excitement. Start locally. Encourage employees to lead a company initiative for a charitable event, join social business groups, reach out to the community through volunteer work and attend industrywide events.

5. Monitoring and feedback

These are the most important elements. Employees yearn to feel supported as valued members of the company. By focusing on their progress on all elements of the CLR and genuinely seeking their feedback, you are communicating that they have value. Recognize each individual's progress, adjust for additional reinforcement where needed and seek feedback on a regular basis, both verbally and written. Applaud accomplishments, tweak their plans when necessary, and mutually agree on the next goals.

The commitment to implement a comprehensive company CLR can mean the difference between operational excellence and operational mediocrity. It can help to realize optimized individual performance, increased employee satisfaction and productivity, as well as improved morale, loyalty and lower turnover.

