

Grow your business by investing in employee learning and development

Providing employee development opportunities can boost retention while helping your workers and business grow together

By Audra Williams, September 23, 2019
<https://slackhq.com/employee-learning-and-development>



In the *State of Frontline Employee Workplace Training*, a 2019 report by business education software company Axonify, 76% of frontline employees surveyed said that a job would be more attractive to them if it came with employee learning and development opportunities. Despite this, the same report found that only 41% of employers offer up these opportunities.

What's more, [professional development](#) can fuel employee engagement. "Investment in employees will give back to you and the company tenfold," says **Laurie Barth**, a software engineer at [Ten Mile Square Technologies](#). "It improves morale and internal knowledge, and employees feel as if they're continuing to grow instead of stall, giving them plenty of incentive to stay if they're otherwise happy."

In order to [increase employee engagement](#) and productivity, it's important to establish opportunities for employee learning and development that will also [boost team productivity](#). Here's how to get started.

Create employee learning and development opportunities

Nigel Paine, the author of *Workplace Learning: How to Build a Culture of Continuous Employee Development*, says in the video below that, "A learning culture is when an organization can take insight from outside, share it rapidly inside and turn it into action." Sharing new information internally can take a variety of forms, such as lunch-and-learns or employee courses with formal curriculum. One workplace education trend gaining traction is "[microlearning](#)," projected to be a \$2.7 billion industry by 2024. Microlearning encompasses informative content delivered in the form of short videos, flashcards, infographics and gamification, all of which can create a more robust and engaging internal education program.



"We're seeing an increase in organizations developing their own internal education programs, resulting in badging, certifications and endorsements," says **Preston D. Cameron**, the managing director at [Oculus Consulting Group](#). "These programs are being led by employees granted bootleg time to develop the educational programs and content exclusive to their organization."

Employee development programs should benefit workers and employers

Carol Leaman, the CEO of [Axonify](#)—a microlearning platform—advises employers to take a considered approach to establishing these programs. "Employers need to create a path for employees to embark on that upskills them in meaningful ways," she says. "Employees want exposure to—and programs around—the learning paths that result in better employment opportunities and bigger paychecks for them."

Essentially, an employee is more likely to be invested in a learning and development opportunity they have selected for themselves. And an employer will feel more comfortable footing the bill if there is a clear gap that will be filled by [investing in employee development](#).

"Managers and employees need to work together to find the courses and resources that are going to help that employee grow to their strength and into the roles the business needs," says **Dawson Whitfield**, co-founder and CEO at [Looka](#), a platform for creating logos, websites and brands. "Not all education has the same ROI, but the right education can help employees and businesses grow together."

One of the ways learning and development can help employees grow is by [building resilience](#), one of the keys to personal and professional success. According to *How a Learning-Oriented Organizational Climate Is Linked to Different Proactive Behaviors: The Role of Employee Resilience*, a study by [Social Indicators Research](#), "A learning-oriented organizational climate will stimulate proactivity in employees via employee resilience."

Resilient employees are more able to withstand failure, and that gives them greater capacity for innovation. And one of those innovations might propel your company toward meaningful growth.

Actively steer your team toward learning and development

A sincere commitment to employee learning and development [communicates to your workers](#) that you are invested in them, and want to give them every possible tool for success. It is important to ensure that you don't just *offer* employees these opportunities, but actively *encourage* them to take you up on them.

"Employees learning new skills benefits everyone, and business owners know that," says **Reuben Yonatan**, the founder and CEO of [GetVoIP](#), which helps identify the best Voice over Internet Protocol phone system solutions. "But we may need to work on our compassion and understanding, and make sure to communicate better with our employees so that they feel welcome and supported in availing themselves of all opportunities for growth."

5 signs your company has a pro-learning and development culture

Marcia Conner, the author of *The New Social Learning*, recommends workplaces do an audit in order to measure their attitudes toward learning and development. According to her [assessment tool](#), there are five characteristics of a pro-learning workplace culture:

1. Customer feedback is solicited, actively examined and included in the next operational or planning cycle.
2. Senior managers are willing to explore their underlying values, assumptions, beliefs and expectations.
3. Senior managers participate in training programs designed for new or high-potential employees.
4. Performance reviews include and pay attention to what people have learned.
5. Everyone creates, keeps and propagates stories of colleagues who have improved their own processes.

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