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LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT MORE EMPLOYEE DRIVEN

Learning and development (L&D) practices are being driven more by individual employees rather than by a business' overall strategy according to the 2011 National Learning and Development Index.

Launched last year, the Index is a joint initiative between the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI), the Australian Institute of Training and Development (AITD) and online training and compliance management company, Learning Seat. Data was gathered through a survey conducted amongst the membership database of both institutes as well as the Learning Seat client base.

According to the Index, there is a noticeable decrease between this year and last year in the number of respondents who think L&D activities and their outcomes are closely linked to business strategy. Conversely, there is a noticeable increase in the number of respondents who think that L&D activities and business strategy are not linked at all.

The Index also found:

- More than 90 per cent of respondents report that L&D is determined in the performance review process.
- The best ways to rectify negative perceptions about L&D activities are better communication of benefits for personal development (60.69 per cent); implementation of constructive feedback following training activities (42.67 per cent) and better communication of L&D activities affecting the bottom line.
- Just under half (49.35 per cent) of respondents report that learning and development is part of the human resources function in their organisation. This is down from 55.54 per cent of respondents who thought so last year.
- Two fifth of respondents report that their organisation has no training programs for graduates to gain those business skills when they commence.
- Almost one third of respondents believe their organisation does not have a genuine commitment to being a learning organisation.
- Around half of respondents believe L&D activities in their organisation are effective in building necessary capabilities.

National President of AHRI, Peter Wilson said:

"These results show what a number of us have feared for a while – a considerable investment is being made by Australian organizations into learning and development, but the key drivers for that are overly reactive responses to performance reviews, and not a conscious building of strategic capabilities linked to the long term growth of businesses, and the future directions being chosen for an organization. More leverage potential can be developed from these efforts if organizations work smarter to link the considerable investments they are making in their people to both of the clear strategic directions established for the company, and also to the longer term skill needs for the individuals within it"

National President of the AITD, Jeanne Marshall said:

“In an environment where training budgets are stabilising and growing, it is imperative that organisations leverage their training investments by ensuring that L&D is a key component of their business strategy. It is essential that L&D strategy is not only linked to strategy but is a key driver.

“Allowing L&D decisions to be made at the time of performance appraisals whilst empowering for line managers and employees, it is somewhat of a wasted opportunity. L&D strategy needs to be proactive and with a future view rather than being a last minute thought to fill skills gaps.”

Chief executive officer of Learning Seat, Tim Legge said:

“Australian employees are increasingly recognising the benefits of learning and development in their own personal development. The Index is showing us that employees are being a lot more proactive in seeking learning and development options.

“This presents a great opportunity for workplaces to further develop and refine their learning and development strategies to cater for this shift in demand.”

To view further findings from the Index or to download, visit: learningseat.com/nationalindex

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About the survey: The survey was completed by 1156 individuals. Survey participants varied from external consultants or facilitators providing L&D solutions, internal employees providing L&D solutions as a primary function and internal employees with some responsibility for managing or co-ordinating L&D activities. There was a small percentage of respondents who had little or no responsibility for L&D in their organisation.

About AHRI:

The Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) is the national association representing human resource and people management professionals and currently has in excess of 14,000 members. AHRI leads the direction and fosters the growth of the HR profession through actively setting standards and building the capability of the profession. Through its international affiliations and close association with industry and academia, AHRI ensures that its members are given access to a soundly-based professional recognition framework.

About AITD

The *Australian Institute of Training and Development* is the association of choice for training, learning and development professionals. Founded in 1971 the AITD has been helping organisations and individuals to hone specific skills and careers in learning & development. Our focus is in building the capability of professionals who plan, develop and deliver learning activities to individuals and organisations. By joining AITD you are joining a networked community of proactive learning and development practitioners.

About Learning Seat

Learning Seat, a division of News Limited, is Australia's leading online training and compliance management company that provides learning and development solutions and fully customised induction courses for corporations, government groups, industry associations and commercial training providers. Learning Seat's compliance courses

are written and managed by leading law firm, Clayton Utz ensuring that its clients are provided with the best and latest information about compliance management. Learning Seat supports more than 586,000 users across Australia and internationally, growing at around 10,000 new users per month.