



How Learning and Development Integrates with Recruitment to Drive Retention

Over the past 25 years in recruitment, I've had the opportunity to wear many hats; starting from the high-speed world of staffing and temporary hiring, evolving through the complexities of executive search and permanent placements, and later stepping into account management and internal HR, where the focus shifted from filling roles to sustaining talent and aligning people strategy with business needs. Along the way, I became deeply drawn to Learning & Development, where I discovered a missing link that could change how we recruit and, more importantly, how we retain talent.

In every role I've held, from the buzzing energy of recruitment floors to strategic workforce planning with clients, I noticed a common challenge: we were investing enormous effort into attracting talent only to lose them too soon. It wasn't about the wrong hire. Instead, it stemmed from unmet expectations, a lack of clarity in growth paths, and missed opportunities to develop and engage talent effectively.

This realisation grew stronger as I transitioned into HR consulting focusing on L&D, where I saw firsthand how development opportunities or the lack thereof, directly influence whether someone stays or leaves. I noticed that when learning is part of the conversation from day one, rather than an afterthought, employees are more engaged. They see the company is not just hiring them for a role, but investing in their growth. That shift in perspective makes a difference in both attraction and retention.

This whitepaper is shaped by those lessons. It explores how a strategic integration of Learning & Development into recruitment processes not only enhances hiring quality but serves as a critical driver of long-term retention.

The Disconnect: Recruitment vs. Retention

Most recruitment teams focus on short-term goals: time-to-fill, quality-of-hire, and offer acceptance rates. If companies focus solely on attracting talent without considering what happens after hiring, they risk making a significant investment only to see new employees leave within the first year.

According to LinkedIn's 2024 Workplace Learning Report, organisations with a strong learning culture see **57% higher retention, 23% more internal mobility, and 7% more promotions to management** compared to those with weaker L&D commitment.¹ Additionally, 90% of organisations regard offering learning as their top retention strategy.²

Similarly, SHRM reports that effective onboarding can improve employee retention by 52% and productivity by 60% in 2024.³ Employees who undergo a thorough onboarding experience are approximately 82% more likely to remain with the company.⁴ These numbers show that recruitment doesn't end once an offer is signed; in fact, that's just the beginning of the process.

Deloitte's 2024 Global Human Capital Trends emphasises that in an increasingly boundaryless world, organisations prioritising human sustainability—through wellbeing, skill-building, belonging, and purpose, drive stronger human and business outcomes.⁵

A recent survey of 14,000 global respondents highlights a significant shift from traditional metrics to a more human-centric approach to performance. This trend emphasises the importance of moving beyond simple hiring practices to focus on comprehensive talent development.⁶

This disconnect can be addressed by forging a closer alliance between recruitment and L&D.



Why L&D Adds Competitive Edge in Recruitment

Employer Branding through Learning Promise

Modern talent, especially Millennials and Gen Z, looks beyond compensation, they seek growth, learning, and purpose. Communicating L&D offerings (e.g., onboarding journeys, upskilling paths, mentorship), during recruitment, it elevates employer value proposition and improves candidate acceptance rates.

Focusing on Potential, Not Just Experience

Traditional recruitment often filters candidates by years of experience or hard skills. However, modern hiring must evaluate learning agility; a person's ability to adapt and grow. When L&D teams co-design assessments with Talent Acquisition (TA), organisations can better identify high-potential candidates who may not "tick every box" today but can grow rapidly with the right support.

Stronger Early Engagement via Learning-Focused Onboarding

SHRM data shows most companies end formal onboarding after six months, yet 90% of first-year departure decisions occur during this phase. Effective L&D-led onboarding programs using microlearning, buddy systems, and 30-60-90 day learning roadmaps increase the likelihood of long-term retention.

Strategic Integration Framework

To successfully link recruitment with L&D for better retention, consider the following 5-step framework:

Co-Create the Talent Profile

Define not only job qualifications but also growth behaviours, learning styles, and adaptability traits. This aligns recruitment with L&D's development capabilities.

Align Candidate Experience with Learning Culture

Showcase real employee growth stories, internal mobility programs, and access to learning platforms during interviews to build credibility.

Incorporate Learning into Onboarding

Shift from information overload to phased learning journeys. Encourage early wins with role-specific microlearning and feedback loops.

Track Learning Engagement Early

Within the first 90 days, monitor learning progress and engagement to help predict which hires are likely to stay or disengage.

Loop Back to Hiring Criteria

Use data from L&D platforms (course completion, participation, promotion timelines) to refine future recruitment filters and interview questions.

Case Study: Transforming Turnover through L&D Collaboration

A global pharmaceutical company faced high turnover among early-career hires. Instead of focusing solely on revising salary structures, the recruitment team partnered with L&D to:

- Offer new hires a **6-month development plan** pre-communicated during the interview stage.
- Include a **learning potential assessment** during screening.
- Provide **cohort-based onboarding** with peer learning.

Result: First-year attrition dropped from 24% to 9%, demonstrating how an early focus on learning creates a measurable difference in retention.

Challenges & Enablers

• Overcoming Organisational Silos:

Many companies still operate with separate KPIs and tools for Talent Acquisition (TA) and L&D. Breaking these silos through cross-functional goals is an essential key.

• Budgeting Misalignment:

L&D investments are often considered post-hire. To fully integrate, a portion of the recruitment budget should be allocated to develop programs, especially for entry or high-growth roles.

• Tracking Return:

While retention is influenced by multiple variables, organisations can start by tracking the correlation between L&D participation and employee tenure





Conclusion

Recruitment, onboarding, learning, and retention are no longer separate stages; they form a cohesive journey. By integrating Learning and Development into the recruitment process, organisations send a clear message: **“We’re not just hiring you for a job, we’re investing in your growth”**.

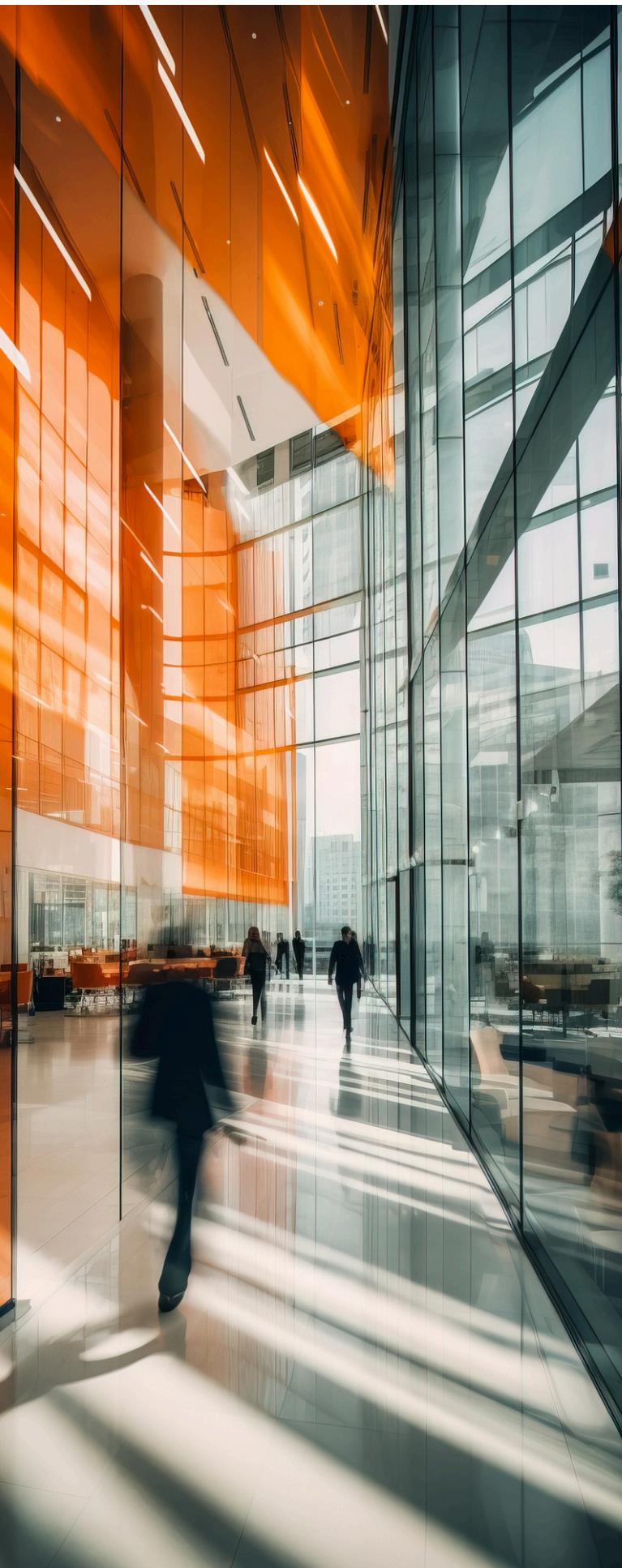
The data is clear: **companies with strong learning cultures retain more talent, and those that tie onboarding to development reduce early attrition by over 50%**.

In today’s talent landscape, aligning recruitment and L&D is not optional; it’s essential to building a thriving, future-ready workforce.

By
Kumar Arasappan
Associate Director,
Learning Academy (RHQ)
PERSOL Consulting

Reference

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2. Learning Academy (LA)
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