# Shaping a Digital Learning Culture

**What are your Learning and Development priorities for 2018?**

They're all working under the umbrella of the future of work. There will be more technology integration into everything that we do: the Internet of Things, robots, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and all of these things are going to be at play. Given that backdrop, my number one priority for 2018 is to integrate "digital" into every piece of learning that we do.

There are two reasons for this. One is that the entire ecosystem of the organisation will need to work digitally, whether it's through digital products that we take into market, the way we're communicating with our customers, or the experiences we're trying to create for our employees. So, if everything else is going to be digital, learning has to be digital also. In fact, it has to lead the way.



The other reason is that technology today is much more affordable. When I buy an application, simulation, gamification platform, or learning management system today, it gives me scale and standardisation, and it is much more reasonably priced than it ever was before.

**What skills should learning and development professionals themselves look to nurture to keep up with the increasingly digital landscape?**

The skills that HR and learning professionals need now and tomorrow are: system and design thinking; coaching and emotional intelligence; and a very high appreciation of technology.



When I say technology, I don't necessarily mean the internet.

What I mean is if a person is working in the banking industry, they must understand how, for example, bitcoin and cryptocurrency are going to change the business. If they're working in the telecoms industry, they should understand how bandwidth, cabling, and fibre optics are going to change the landscape. If they're working in retail or e-Commerce, they must know or understand what Amazon and Flipkart are doing, and be able to impact their own businesses accordingly.

The fourth thing that HR needs is social skills. That means being more open and more transparent in their communication with people. Be available on all online social media, whether it's Twitter or Facebook or LinkedIn, so that people can talk to you and your customers can reach out.

**What are the limitations of digital learning?**

That's another reason why one of the skills I mentioned at the beginning was system and design thinking. Through this entire learning process, HR must know what the moments of truth are – when human intervention is important, and when they can blend in technology. With design and system thinking, that can get processed or mapped out.

The other key skill for all managers – not just HR but all managers, as led by the learning and development team – has to be in making sure that there is a culture of coaching in the company.  If I'm a manager and I have a team of great people, I must know that there are specific transition phases in my employees' lives: when they get hired, when they get promoted, when they move to another assignment, if they go overseas, or if there's a problem at home. I must be able to coach and mentor my employee through these.



That absolutely requires a human touch – I can't just send an email and expect that to happen by itself.

**Thanks to disruption, the very nature of work is changing. How can training leaders incorporate that issue into their learning programmes?**



What we're all trying to figure out when we say "future of work" is, what are the skills of tomorrow? What do our people need to know? A lot of the existing skills are going to go away as things become increasingly digital in the next two to five years.

Many of us are convinced of one thing: that the human has to be at the centre, while technology revolves around them. Having said that, the training interventions that I'll be bringing to my people will be of two kinds. One is in getting them to understand technology better, and build a better mindset of adoption so that they can work with the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and so on.

The other skill that I'm getting them to build are the social skills that I talked about – more emotional empathy and coaching, basically.

**How would you sum up your strategy towards Learning and Development in 2018?**

If one can master the art and science of learning agility, they can sail through the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous times and surge towards the future of work with aplomb.

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