

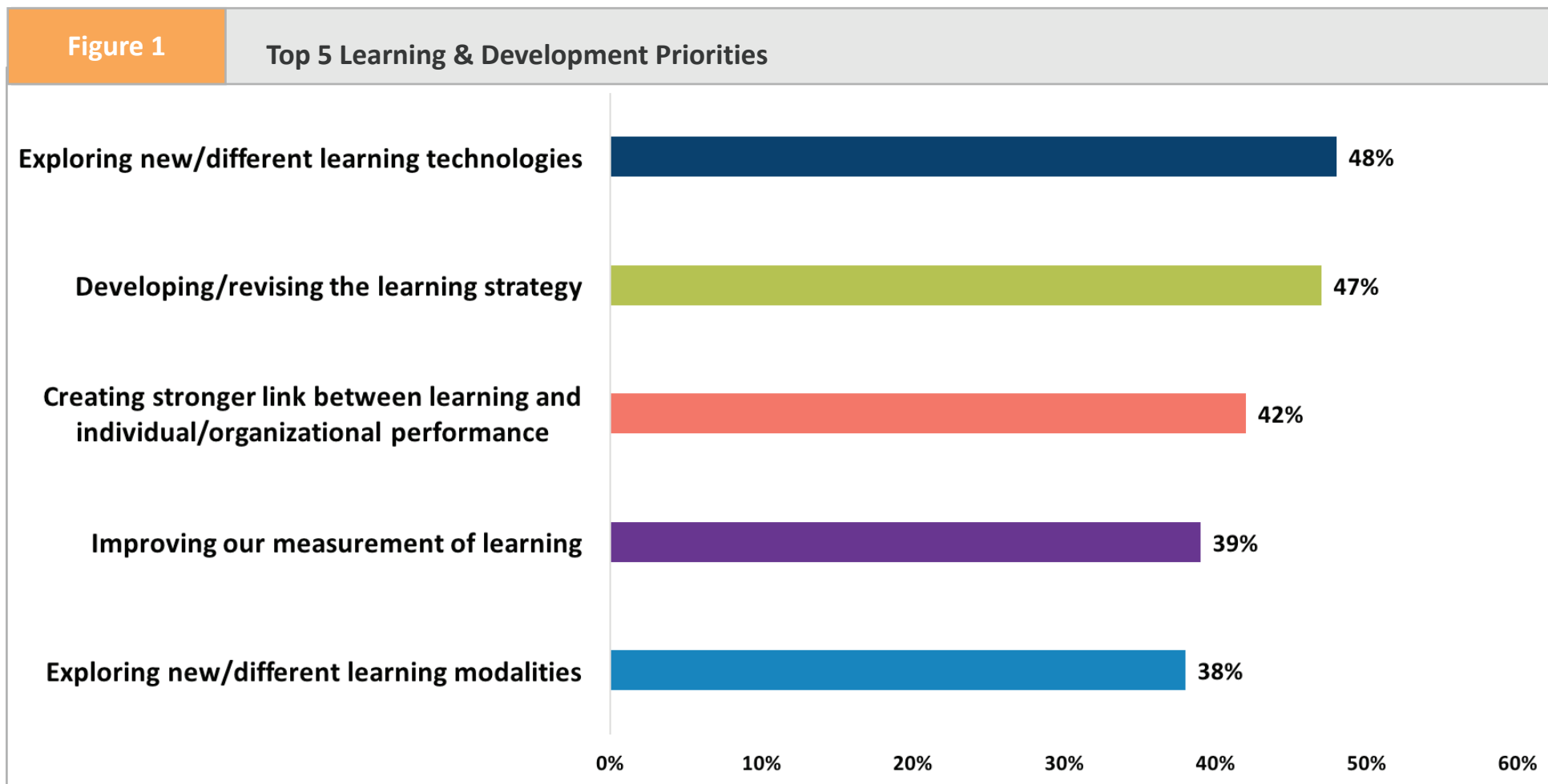
## 2016 Learning Technology Study: Summary of Top Findings

The technology employed to deliver Learning and Development has grown increasingly varied and complex. The cloud, social tools, mobile technologies, and other advances have created a host of opportunities for new learning experiences – so much so that technology has become the top L&D priority. Exploring new and different technologies surpassed even the learning strategy as the top focus over the next 12 months.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **48% of organizations surveyed list exploring new technologies as the top Learning & Development priority over the next 12 months.**
- **The top targets for technology exploration are social/collaborative tools (43% of respondents) and mobile delivery (41%).**
- **Satisfaction with current learning technology is low -- the highest score equates to a C -- and the biggest reasons for considering a technology change is user experience and administrative experience.**
- **Despite its shortcomings, learning technology has a strong correlation to improved KPIs, such as revenue, productivity, engagement, costs and turnover. Investment in technology is strong and forecasted to increase.**

Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)



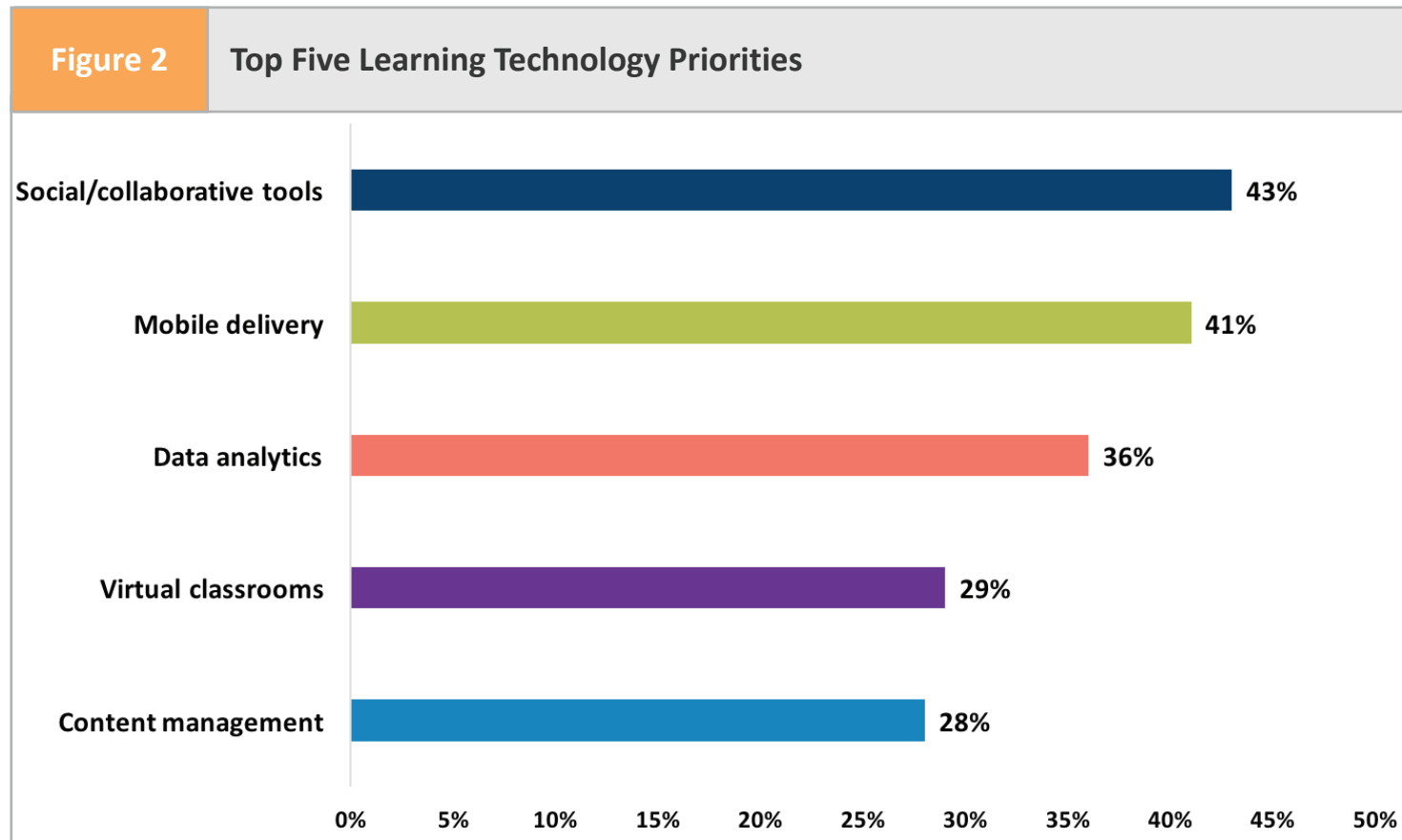
Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

The other highlight here is that the number three priority is creating a stronger link between learning and performance. Previous Brandon Hall Group research has shown that companies that adopt a framework that incorporates more informal and social elements report an improved link between learning and both individual and organizational performance.

## TOP 5 FINDINGS

### 1. Social and Mobile Technologies are the Biggest Priorities

Companies say that new technologies are the top priority, but there are myriad technology issues clamoring for attention. Within the chaotic learning environment, the biggest priorities within technology are social and mobile solutions.



Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

Brandon Hall Group has been researching learning technology for years, and mobile and social have been steadily climbing the priority list. Now, they sit firmly on the top, and organizations are hungry for platforms that leverage new technologies to allow for a more “just-in-time, just-for-me” learning experience. While the LMS accounts for about 39% of the learning technology budget on average, companies are still spending averages of 4.7% and 4.3% on social and mobile technologies, respectively. That’s on top of the money they are already spending on their LMS, and more than one-third of companies expect those percentages to grow over the next year.

When it comes to technology-enabled informal learning, more than half of companies consider discussion forums and collaboration platforms as either essential or critical to the business. The problem is that they give all major solutions a failing grade.

When 46% of companies consider discussion forums essential and 8% consider them critical to the business, it’s a significant problem when only 5% say they are very satisfied with the discussion functionality of their current platform.

<b>Figure 3</b> Satisfaction with Informal Learning Technology (Average Score)	
	<b>Satisfaction on a 100-point scale</b>
<b>Video channel</b>	<b>57.5</b>
<b>Collaboration platform</b>	<b>57.5</b>
<b>Media sharing</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Threaded chat</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Coach/Mentor facilitation</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Blogs</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Discussion forum</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

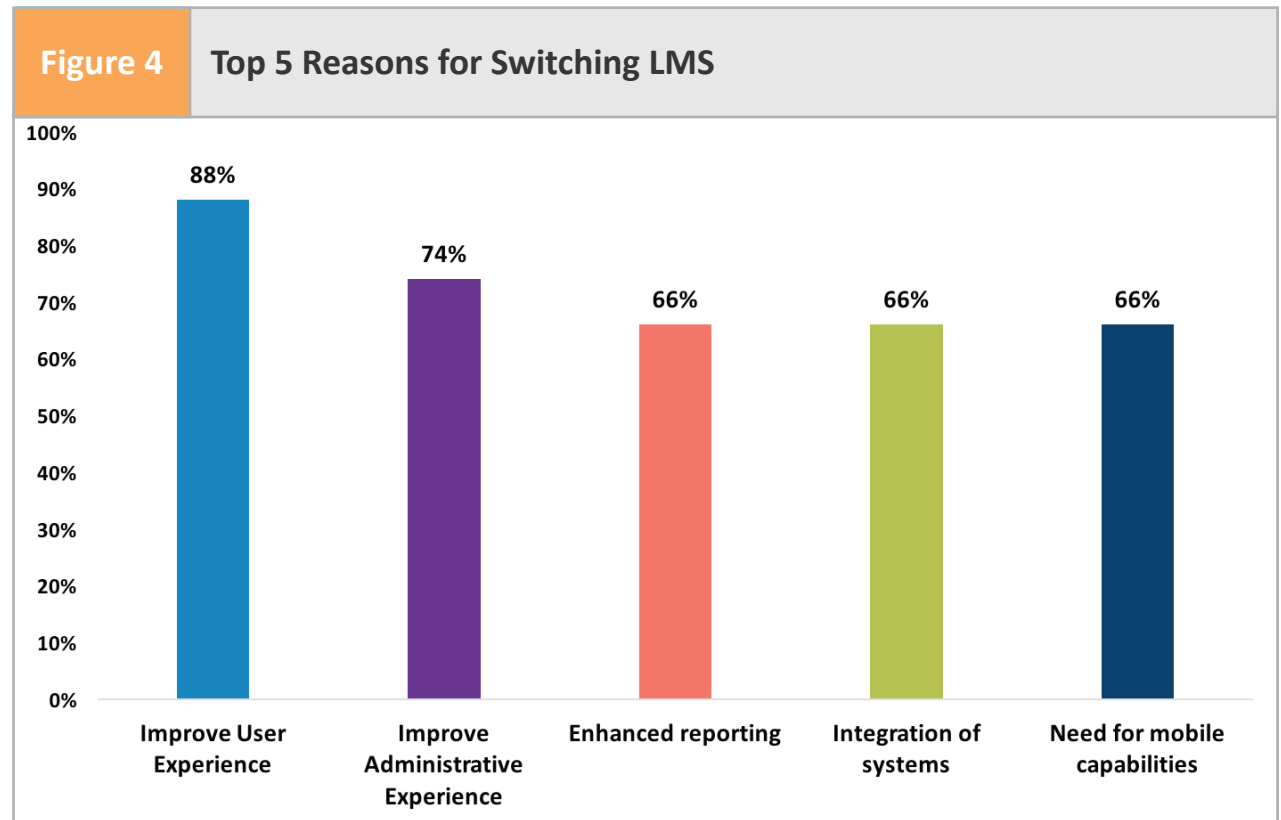
## 2. User Experience is Critical

About 44% of companies are actively considering replacing the current LMS solution. This number is up 16% from 2015, so what is driving companies to change? An overwhelming 87% indicate it is the need for an improved user experience. The second most common reason is the need for an improved administrative experience (74%). Ease of use has always been near the top of drivers for change, but never with such authority.

It seems to be common sense that a system should be easy to use, but the stark reality is that many learning software applications are anything but. User experience (UX) is critical in learning, as this software is often the first interaction an employee has with the organization.

Also, in our increasingly virtual workforce, it can sometimes be the only connection an employee has with the organization. A bad UX equals poor engagement that can be difficult to turn around.

To put into perspective just how important UX is, 43% of companies say that an intuitive, user-centric interface is essential when buying new learning technology, and 40% say it is critical to their business.



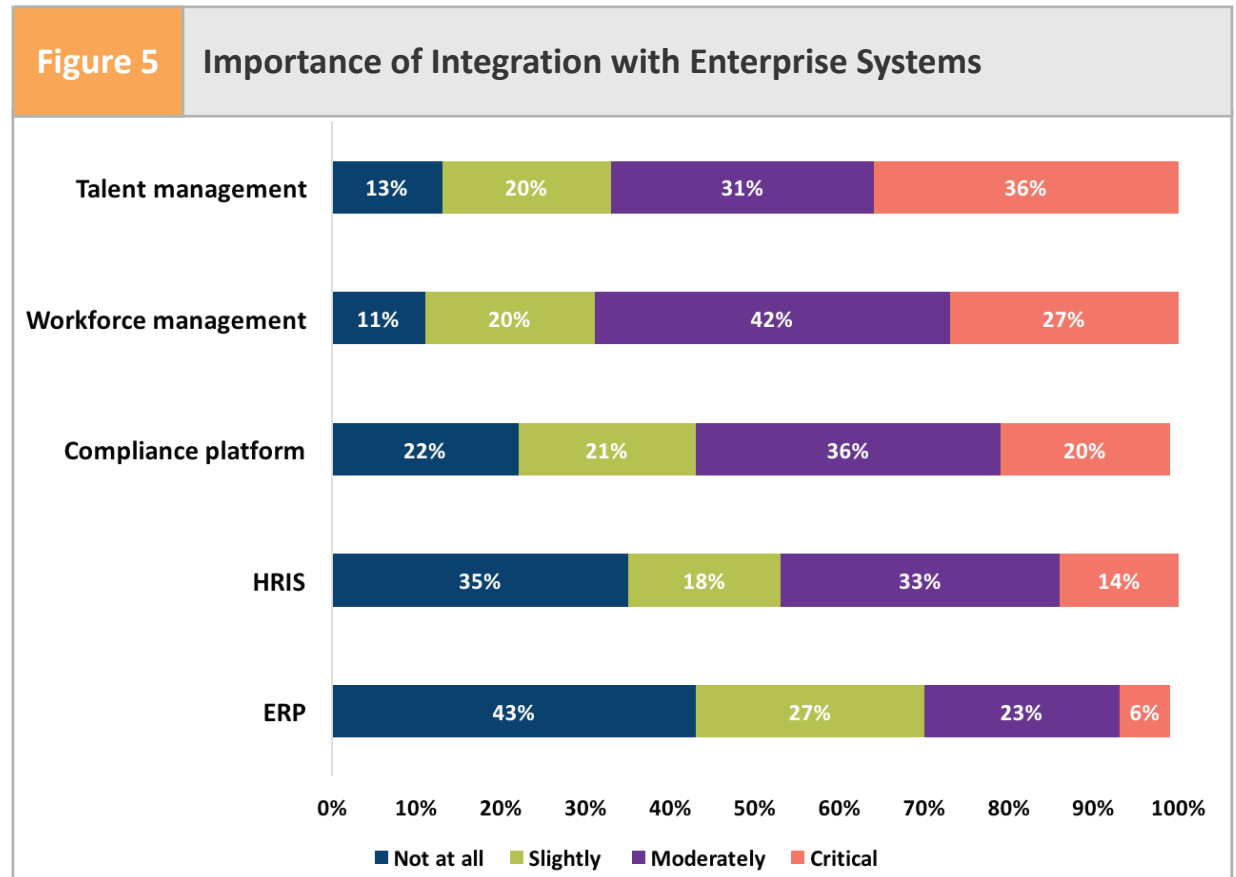
Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

## 3. Integration is Becoming More Important

As we see in Figure 5, the need to integrate with other systems is a big factor in why organizations switch learning technology providers. Also, 77% of companies say that integration capabilities are either essential or critical for their learning technology vendors to have.

The most common systems that learning technology integrates with are HRIS (37%), content management (29%), and talent management (28%). For many of these systems, organizations are finding it important, if not critical, that their future learning systems integrate.

As for the learning technology itself, more than two-thirds of companies say that the next learning technology they buy will be a suite of integrated technologies from a single vendor. So, despite the APIs and ease of integrations that come with the cloud, twice as many companies are interested in suite solutions than best-of-breed solutions that they must get to work together.



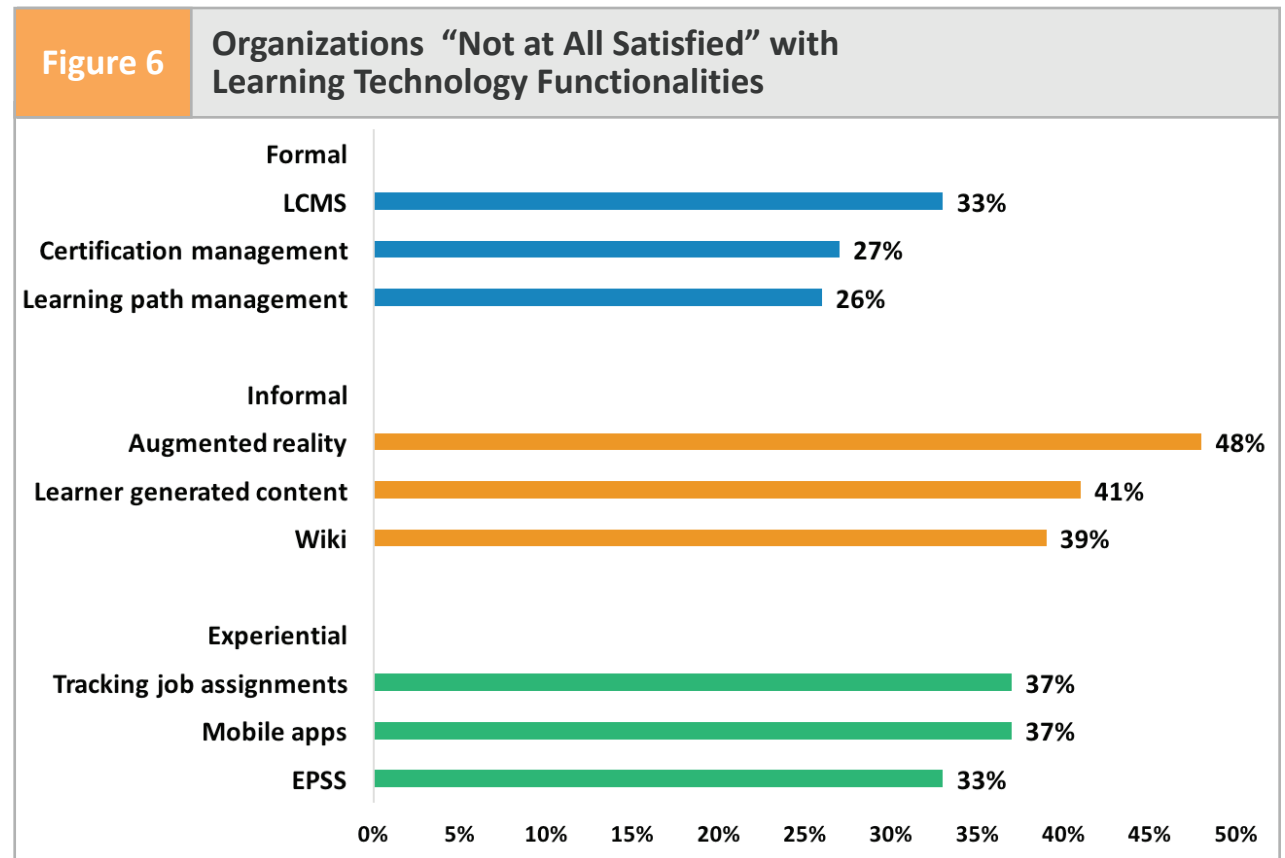
Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

## 4. Learning Technology Satisfaction Lags

The highest average satisfaction rating (4-point scale) for any type of technology – formal, informal or experiential -- is 2.83, while the lowest is 1.90. We’ve seen the impact a poor user interface can have, but there are many other areas in which organizations give learning technology providers failing grades. Let’s take a look at some of the areas that fare the worst.

In the formal arena, one-third of companies are not at all satisfied with the learning content management system (LCMS) aspect of their technology. Content plays a huge role in learning, and an inability to properly manage it can be a challenge. The management of certifications and learning paths were also rated somewhat poorly.

However, overall, the technology aspects of formal learning delivery score higher in satisfaction than those for informal and experiential learning. This highlights the difference between technologies and modalities companies have been using for years and those newer technologies with which they are still grappling.



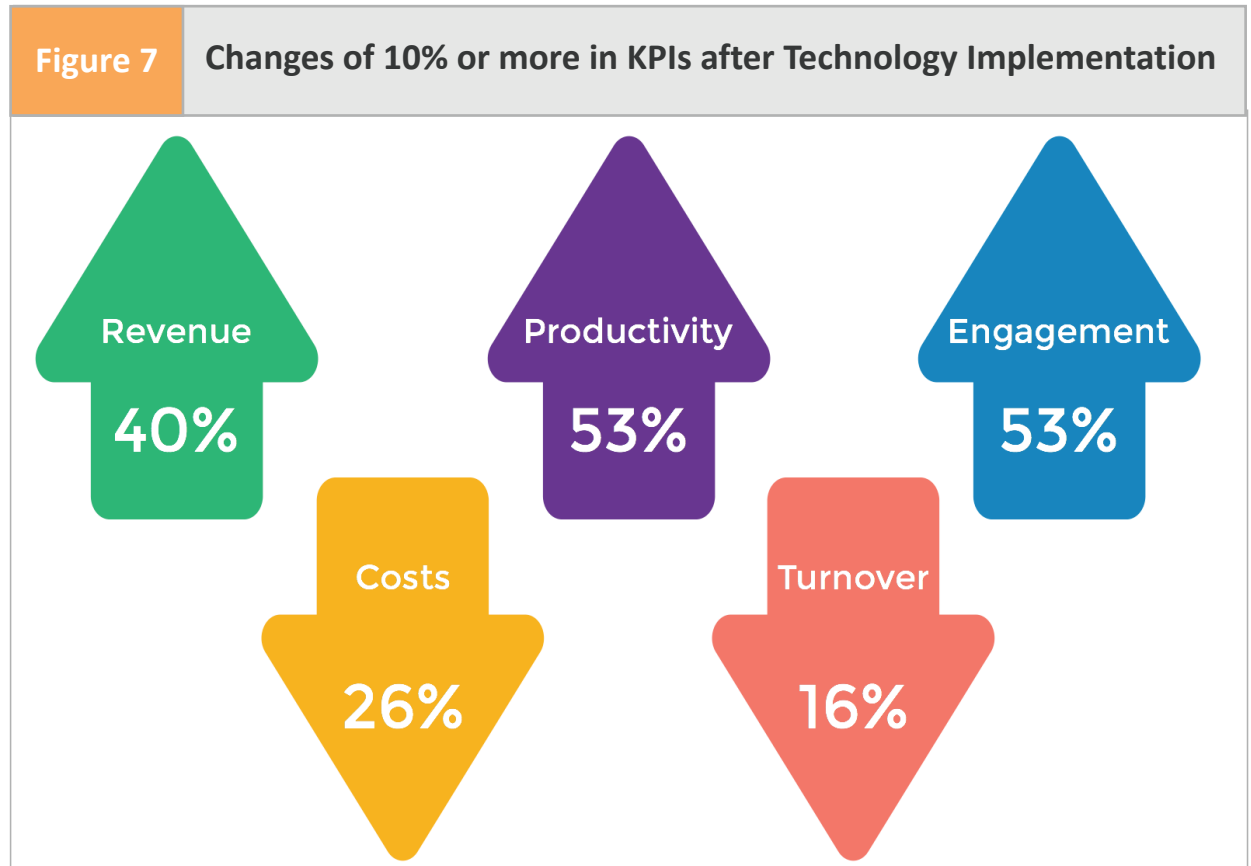
Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

Another area presenting challenges is integration. The most common systems learning technology integrates with are HRIS (37%), content management (29%), and talent management (28%). Looking ahead, 36% of companies say it is critical that their next learning technology platform integrates with a talent management system and 36% say the same for a content management system. So while integration will be an important aspect of learning technology, only 3% of companies say they are satisfied with their current integrations.

## 5. KPIs Improve Significantly after Technology Implementation

Despite its challenges, technology is key to delivering effective learning, and its role will only continue to grow. We asked organizations if there was any change in key performance indicators after implementing their learning technology, and the results are promising (see Figure 7 at right).

This does not necessarily represent causation in that the technology is responsible for the improvements, but rather a correlation. Organizations



Source: 2016 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)



report improvements after implementing the technology. Keep in mind that the vast majority of companies that did not report any improvement indicated that their KPIs remained the same. For example, only 1% of companies reported that productivity had decreased.

Companies are recognizing the important role learning technology can play in improving the overall business. Just 3% of companies say they have no plans to implement learning technology. And those that are or have implemented solutions are putting their money where their mouth is. Nearly half of companies say learning technology typically accounts for 1% to 5% of the overall HR budget, 25% say it's 6% to 10%, and the other 30% say it is even more. 42% of companies expect their allocation to increase next year.

Given the size of the average HR budget, this represents a significant investment in learning technologies moving forward. As companies expand the palette of technologies they want/need, they will become more acutely aware of how each technology helps them achieve their learning goals and, consequently, their business objectives.

The key for organizations is to identify the ways in which technologies such as social/collaborative platforms and mobile devices can help them deliver a more effective, relevant and engaging learning experience.

## Authors and Contributors

**David Wentworth** ([david.wentworth@brandonhall.com](mailto:david.wentworth@brandonhall.com)) is Principal Learning Analyst at Brandon Hall Group, focusing on all aspects of learning and the technology that supports it. David has been in the human capital field since 2005 and joined Brandon Hall Group as senior learning analyst in early 2012.

**Claude Werder** ([claudio.werder@brandonhall.com](mailto:claudio.werder@brandonhall.com)) edited this report. He is the Vice President of Research Operations and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. His responsibilities include overseeing Brandon Hall Group's team of analysts, directing research priorities, content quality assurance, and producing the annual HCM Excellence Conference.

**Nissa Benjamin** ([nissa.benjamin@brandonhall.com](mailto:nissa.benjamin@brandonhall.com)) is the Marketing Coordinator at Brandon Hall Group and created the graphics and layout for this report.

## About Brandon Hall Group

Brandon Hall Group is a HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management.

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 20 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

At the core of our offerings is a Membership Program that combines research, benchmarking and unlimited access to data and analysts. The Membership Program offers insights and best practices to enable executives and practitioners to make the right decisions about people, processes, and systems, coalesced with analyst advisory services which aim to put the research into action in a way that is practical and efficient.

### *The Value of Membership*

The Brandon Hall Group Membership Program encompasses comprehensive research resources and an array of advisory services. Our Membership Program provides:

- **Cutting-Edge Information** – Our rigorous approach for conducting research is constantly evolving and up-to-date, providing your organization with current and future trends, as well as practical insights.
- **Actionable Research** – Your membership includes advisory services and tools that are research-driven and provide you a breakthrough approach to addressing immediate challenges and opportunities inside your organization.
- **Customizable Support** – Whether you are an executive or entry-level practitioner, our research and analyst insights can be leveraged at an individual level and across the entire organization. We realize that every organization has unique needs, so we provide multiple analyst and research access points.
- **Community of Peers** – We realize the value of connecting with your peers and being part of a community that is focused on continuous improvement. Your membership provides you with personal connections to fellow professionals.
- **Unlimited Access** – Every member of your team has the ability to utilize research, best practices, and advisory services when they need it most.

To learn more about Brandon Hall Group, please call us at (561) 306-3576 or email us at [success@brandonhall.com](mailto:success@brandonhall.com).