



# Embracing Change in Retail Businesses

Improving Performance of Businesses,  
Individuals and the L&D Team

[www.towardsmaturity.org/sector/2016/retail](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/sector/2016/retail)

Authored by Laura Overton  
& Dr Genny Dixon

Supported by



Sector  
Benchmark  
Report

May 2016

## About this research

Data for this report is drawn from the Towards Maturity 2015 Benchmark™ research with over 600 L&D leaders, reported in *Embracing Change* ([www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark)). Study methodology and participant demographics can be found in Appendix B on page 79 of that report. Within this study are results from 40 retail businesses. All the direct quotes are from respondents within the retail sector.

*Embracing Change* is free to download, thanks to the support of the Towards Maturity Ambassador programme. For more information, visit: [www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/ambassadors).

Previous studies in this series can be downloaded at: [www.towardsmaturity.org/static/towards-maturity-benchmark-reports](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/static/towards-maturity-benchmark-reports).



## KALLIDUS

This report is free to download thanks to the specific support of Kallidus.

Download and find out more from the Towards Maturity website: [www.towardsmaturity.org/sector/2016/retail](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/sector/2016/retail)

The full range of Towards Maturity research reports is available from: [www.towardsmaturity.org/research](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/research)

**Authors:** Laura Overton and Dr Genny Dixon

Terms and conditions relating to this report: [www.towardsmaturity.org/terms](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/terms)

© Copyright Towards Maturity CIC, 2016 London. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of Towards Maturity CIC.

## Foreword by Rob Caul, CEO of Kallidus



Retail is rapidly changing and so must learning too. Just as the marriage of clicks and bricks brings together the best of online and offline shopping for consumers, retailers that are able to embrace a more blended approach to learning and development, seamlessly integrating traditional and modern learning practices, stand to deliver greater value to their learners and the business.

Constant connectivity and a multi-screen world are changing consumers' online and offline shopping experiences, opening up new and exciting opportunities for innovative retailers. This 'digital savviness' that is driving the retail revolution and helping retailers do what really matters – to serve their customers better – needs to be mirrored by the L&D function too.

Encouragingly, this year's In-Focus Report shows that the retail sector is increasing its investment in learning technologies and is building up its internal L&D capability, but could benefit from using a broader range of technology-driven learning techniques as seen in other sectors. Many retailers remain wedded to formal learning and are yet to explore the benefits of social and informal learning. And because they are offering less choice in terms of how, when and where learning can be accessed, learning is still being driven by the organisation rather than the learners themselves.

It is perhaps not surprising then that, compared with other sectors which are delivering a more blended approach to learning, retailers are struggling to improve productivity and customer satisfaction through learning and development, both of which are key drivers for success in the retail industry.

The good news is that progress is certainly being made, despite the many challenges the retail industry faces. L&D departments that have gained the support of the business and their line managers and have begun to modernise their learning to deliver a more consumer-style learning experience are seeing some significant business benefits.

As a longstanding Towards Maturity Ambassador and an experienced provider of award-winning learning and talent solutions to the retail sector, it has been a pleasure to support and sponsor this year's report providing valuable insight into today's best practices from top-performing learning companies. We hope you will find it a great source of inspiration for understanding how modern learning practices can drive performance improvements within your organisation.

### **Rob Caul**

CEO, Kallidus

# Contents

About this research	2
Foreword by Rob Caul, CEO of Kallidus	3
Fast Facts	5
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 The retail sector – setting the context	7
1.2 Benchmarking with Towards Maturity	8
1.3 Compare with the best	9
<b>2. Learning in the retail sector</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Resourcing	11
2.2 What is the sector trying to achieve?	12
2.3 What skills does the sector need?	13
2.4 What underpinning technologies are they using?	15
2.5 What is holding the sector back?	17
2.6 What success are they having?	18
<b>3. Working with the business</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Delivering impact to the bottom line	20
3.2 Integrating business and learning	22
<b>4. Supporting the self-directed learner</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1 Choice and availability of learning	25
4.2 How is the sector embedding new models of learning?	26
4.3 Embracing new technology	27
4.4 Supporting informal learning	28
<b>5. Equipping the L&amp;D team as agents of change</b>	<b>31</b>
5.1 What are the priority skills for L&D?	31
<b>6. Conclusions and call to action</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix. Data tables</b>	<b>36</b>
Appendix A. What is driving change?	37
Appendix B. What skills are being offered and e-enabled?	39
Appendix C. What technologies support modernisation?	40
Appendix D. What are the barriers to progress?	42
Appendix E. Implementation Practice Benchmarks	43
About Kallidus	46
About Towards Maturity	47

## Fast Facts

40 businesses from the wholesale and retail trade sector took part in the Towards Maturity Benchmark Study during 2015. 63% of these are multi-national organisations. Their responses form part of the wider sample reported in *Embracing Change*.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the average across the 600+ organisations that took part in the 2014 Towards Maturity Benchmark Study, retail organisations are investing more heavily in learning technologies:

- **47%** have increased their training budget in the last two years (38%) and predict further increase in the next two years (36%)
- **79%** will increase the proportion of training budget spent on technology (71%)
- **43%** will increase their L&D team size in the next two years

L&D teams are skilled at content development in house, but lack skills for facilitating social media or supporting workplace performance:

- **28%** are developing content in house (22% average)
- **73%** have instructional design skills in house (57%)
- **52%** have skills for digital content development (37%)
- **4%** have skills for facilitating social media (20%)
- **22%** have skills for supporting ongoing workplace performance (32%)

The drivers for learning innovation are similar to other sectors with high aspirations for improvement in business outcomes, individual motivation and performance and training efficiency resulting from digital learning. The retail sector is less concerned with risk and compliance than most:

- **77%** have adopted learning technologies in order to prove compliance with new regulation and legal requirements (88% sample average)
- **65%** hope to improve compliant behaviours (78%)
- **65%** want to manage risk more successfully (76%)

The retail sector suffers from the same ‘performance gap’ as other sectors between the drivers for investing in modernisation of their learning strategy and the benefits it manages to achieve, but they are especially struggling to improve productivity and customer satisfaction through learning and development:

- **13%** of those seeking to improve productivity have been able to demonstrate this benefit (38% average)
- **14%** have seen an improvement in customer satisfaction (38%)
- **8%** have improved organisational performance (27%)
- **9%** support business innovation (31%)

The average improvement across the five bands of benefits reported in ‘Embracing Change’ are:

- **36%** improvement in benefits relating to training efficiency (41% average)
- **35%** improvement in benefits relating to individual business processes (39%)

<sup>1</sup> Towards Maturity, *Embracing Change* (Nov 2015): [www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark)

- 20% improvement in benefits relating to productivity and engagement (29%)
- 17% improvement in benefits relating to responsiveness to business change (24%)
- 23% improvement in benefits related to embedding a learning culture in the organisation (21%)

Retail organisations are realising significant impact from modernising their learning strategies through technology. These benefits offer a strong argument for exploiting learning innovation:

- 33% strongly agree they have noticed positive changes in staff behaviour (23% average)
- 64% have increased the proportion of staff engaged in learning and development programmes (42%)

Across the whole sample of different industry sectors, cost is cited as the top barrier to enabling learning through technology. For retail, overcoming line manager reluctance is causing the most problems:

- 75% report a reluctance amongst line managers to encourage new ways of learning (75% average)
- 71% report a lack of skills amongst employees to manage their own learning (63%)
- 63% cite the cost of development, set-up and maintenance (63%)

This report illustrates a number of areas of implementation practice where retail organisations can take action to improve learning and business outcomes. We have compared them with top learning companies that are getting the best results from learning innovation and score in the top quartile for the Towards Maturity Index:

**Working with business leaders:** 47% of retail organisations agree that staff understand how their work is linked to the organisation's performance (85% of top learning companies)

**Motivating the self-directed learner:** 20% agree that they use available support systems to promote self-reliance, not a culture of dependency (37%)

**Building a skilled L&D team:** 44% agree that their L&D staff are confident in incorporating the use of new media in learning design (73%)

# 1. Introduction

*The retail sector is undergoing radical transformation – fuelled in part by technology and the relentless shift to online transactions. It is time to shift from traditional views of training and development and consider how innovation through technology can transform how we build talent and support learning and performance.*

## 1.1 The retail sector: setting the context

The global retail sector is undergoing an unprecedented transformation. Weakness in the global economy, low interest rates delaying consumer purchases, new entrants reducing the market shares of established businesses, global expansions and contractions, price wars and consolidation are all factors causing turbulence. However, the single factor causing the greatest change in the sector is technology – the rapidly increasing share of retail purchases made online. The UK Office of National Statistics<sup>2</sup> is typical of national bodies around the world reporting that, despite the challenges, 2015 saw a continuation of the longest period of sustained growth (5.2% - compared with 1-4% in the USA and 3% in the EU) in retail volumes since records began in 1996. The sector contributes £90bn to the UK economy (House of Commons, 2015). However, this volume of growth was accompanied by a continuation of falling prices. The upturn in spending is attributed to a corresponding upturn in wages and employment, and a downturn in saving as consumers seek bargains.

The UK Retail Skills Report<sup>3</sup> (UKCES) indicates that sector employment is around three million and is currently rising. Low wages continue to characterise the sector (60% of the retail workforce are on low wages compared to 20% of all businesses). The age profile of the sector is changing, as older and less qualified workers retire and are replaced with a much younger cohort, many of whom are graduates. The percentage of qualified workers is predicted to rise from 22% to 34% by 2022 (compared to the average across all industries, which rises from 41% to 50%). The report highlights major gaps in customer handling skills and parallel difficulties in recruiting those skills (60% of retail employers have identified skills shortages). There is significant investment in training in the sector (by 60% of employers) but this is lower than across the private sector as a whole (66%). 50% of employers have a focus on the use of new technology in learning, with a greater emphasis being placed on sales and customer service staff in comparison to managers. Of significance is the reported finding that “insufficient motivation and post-training improvement is reported by 40% of employers”.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/bulletins/retailsales/january2016>

<sup>3</sup> UK Commission for Employment and Skills, *Sector Insights: Skills and Performance Challenges in the Retail Sector* (July 2015): [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/466696/151008\\_Retail\\_SLMI\\_report\\_edited.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466696/151008_Retail_SLMI_report_edited.pdf)

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) predicts a loss of up to 30% of all retail jobs by 2025, suggesting that the current increase in employment is simply a consequence of the need to recruit skills into the online and other technology enabled parts of the retail business. Up to a quarter of all retail outlets may close. However, BRC suggests that wages in the sector will rise as the skill profile increases.

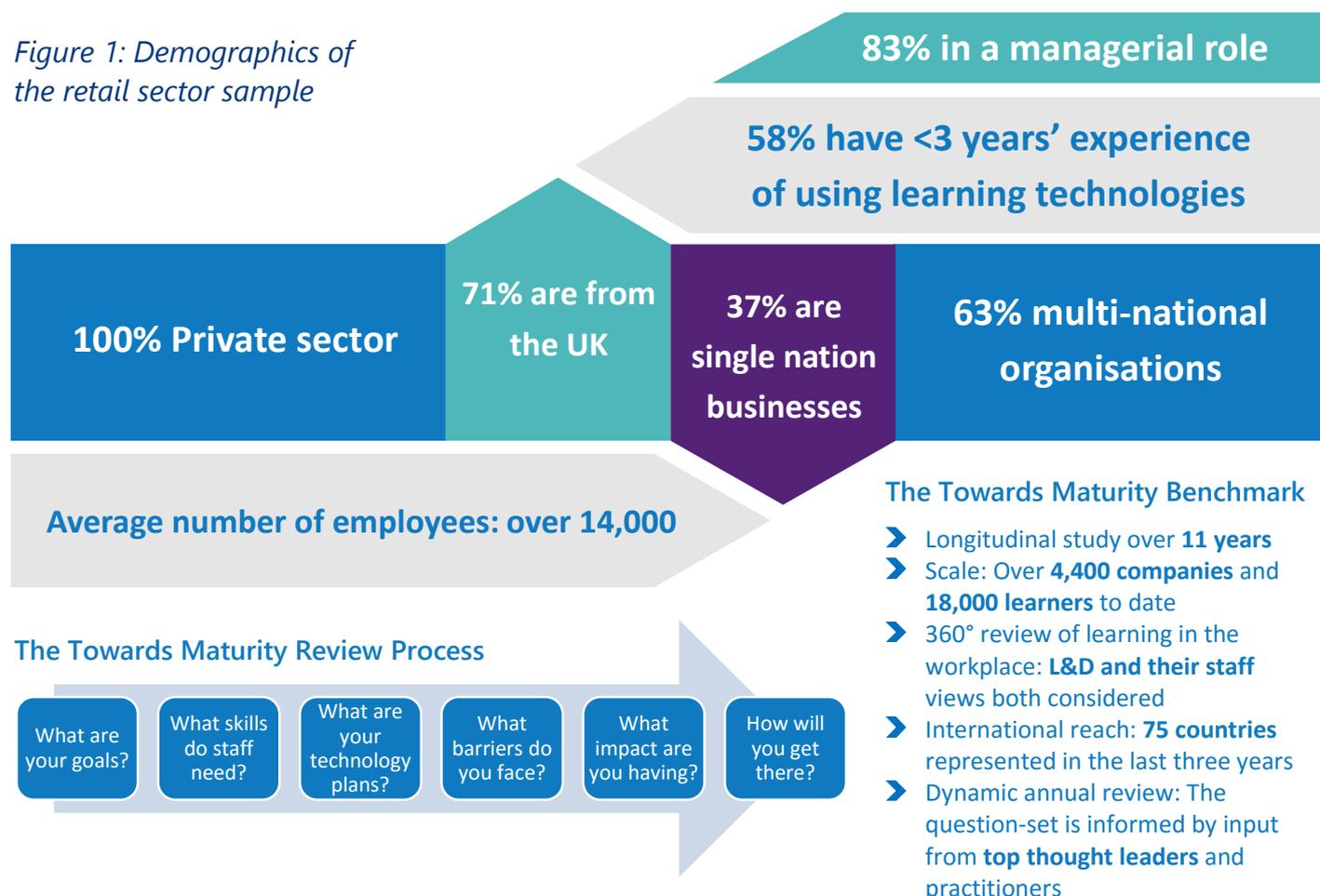
## 1.2 Benchmarking with Towards Maturity

Over 600 leaders in learning and development completed the Towards Maturity Benchmark™ review between June and August 2015. 11% of these were from businesses in the retail sector. 39 participants received Personalised Benchmark Reports™ to help them with their strategic planning in 2015.

In this report, we focus on the responses from those in wholesale and retail trade to inform leaders in learning and development in this sector by:

- Reviewing the learning and development approaches delivered within this sector
- Analysing these in the context of the sector and its drivers for change
- Comparing against the best practice of the top learning companies
- Identifying actions for the learning and development teams within this sector

Figure 1: Demographics of the retail sector sample



### 1.3 Compare with the best

Since 2003, the Towards Maturity benchmarking process has sought to discover which organisations are achieving the *best* results in terms of staff impact and business impact and what they are doing differently to achieve those results. Benchmark reviews with over 4,500 organisations over the past 13 years have highlighted six key areas that consistently correlate to performance. For L&D professionals, benchmarking against the framework helps identify strengths and weaknesses within the organisation, prioritise next actions and accelerate progress.

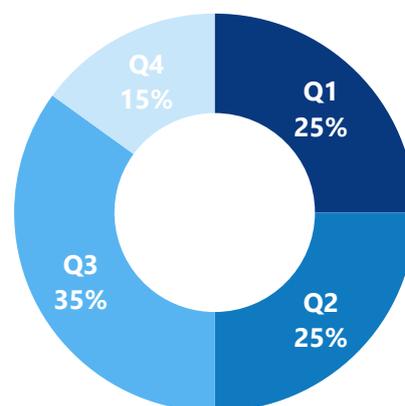
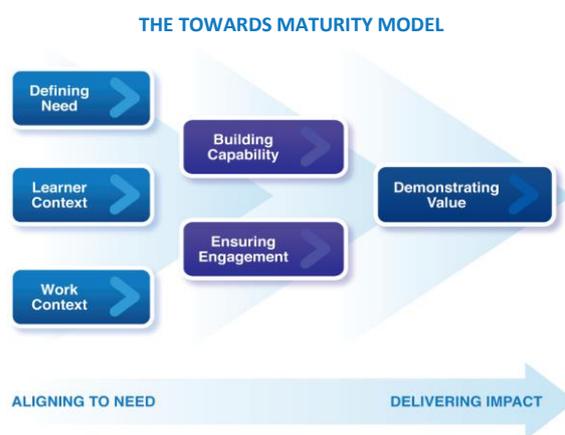
These effective practice workstreams are described in the Towards Maturity Model™ and the extent to which they are adopted is measured by the Towards Maturity Index (TMI).<sup>4</sup>

Organisations active across all six areas are consistently achieving better business and individual performance.<sup>5</sup>

The Towards Maturity Benchmark scores represent the average of the scores from ‘top learning organisations’ – the top quartile of those from all sizes and sectors who participated in the Towards Maturity Benchmark Study in 2015.

As expected, 50% of retail businesses are listed in the top two quartiles. However, the fact that not a single business is ranked in the top decile reveals that those organisations classified in the top quartile are at the lower end of that range. Those in the **Top Deck** (those in the top decile for the TMI) are consistently high performers and can offer insights into the practical steps that L&D can take to accelerate their performance. When compared to those in bottom quartile for TMI (Q4), they are:

- **Three times** more likely to report benefits relating to efficiency and business process improvement
- **Five times** more likely to report benefits relating to productivity and business responsiveness
- **Eight times** more likely to report benefits relating to culture such as learning engagement and self-directed learning



<sup>4</sup> Towards Maturity Index™ - the unique single score that organisations can use to benchmark their progress across the SIX areas of the Towards Maturity Model.

<sup>5</sup> Towards Maturity, *Embracing Change*: [www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark)

Their tactics, across all six areas of the Towards Maturity Model, are reported in *Embracing Change*.<sup>6</sup>

When looking at top performing learning organisations, we can see how successful organisations are reaping the benefits of investing in learning technologies. These businesses provide an aspirational benchmark for those who have yet to achieve the same outcomes and will help to identify areas of strength and weaknesses that need to be addressed. Organisations in all sectors and of all sizes fall into this top quartile and throughout this report, we reflect on the behaviours that characterise top learning organisations.

*In this report, we compare current approaches of L&D leaders in retail businesses with those from top learning companies to offer practical hints and tips to help turn insights from this data into ACTION!*



*The next section identifies the learning and development approaches taken by retail businesses. We examine key drivers for change and consider the technologies they use and the barriers they face – and the benefits their programmes are bringing to the business and its staff.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Towards Maturity, *Embracing Change*: [www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark)

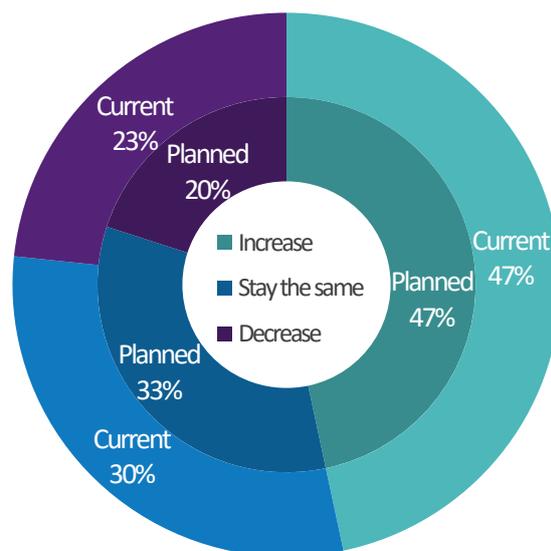
## 2. Learning in the retail sector

### 2.1 Resourcing

In the retail sector, nearly half (47%) of the responding organisations report an increase in learning budgets over the last two years and expect this trend to continue over the next two years. This compares with our sample average of 38%. It also aligns with the findings of the UK Office of National Statistics<sup>2</sup>. Most retail respondents (79%) have seen an increase in the budgets for technology-enabled learning and nearly half (47%) have experienced increases in team size, mainly in content development and instructional design. This contrasts with the total sample where staff increases are more focussed on delivery skills. The retail sector is expanding its learning team size at a rate 50% greater than the overall sample and twice as fast as the top companies in the TM Benchmark (22%).

Figure 2: Changing L&D team size in the retail sector

The graph opposite compares experience over the last two years with plans for the period ahead. The outer ring indicates the proportion of companies that have increased, decreased or kept the same team size over the last two years, whilst the inner ring indicates the changes expected in the next two. Those companies that have increased recently are planning to continue that expansion while those that have experienced a decline in numbers forecast a more stable scenario.



It is likely that these increases are a response to the changing demographic of the sector (for example, new entrants, or the rapid increase in technology literacy requirement taking place in the sector).

However, there is evidence from other sources<sup>3</sup> that the sector may be responding to its skill shortages through simply increasing the formal learning opportunities available to employees, with little attention being paid to matching job profiles to accurate recruitment, learning programmes, or the post-training embedding of learning at the workplace.

## 2.2 What is the sector trying to achieve?

Aspirations are high amongst L&D leaders in the retail sector. Along with most organisations in the sample, increasing learning access and flexibility is a key driver for learning innovation through technology. They are also looking to improve on-the-job productivity and reduce the time that people can spend away from their job in formal training, speeding up the application of learning into the workflow. However, whilst improving training efficiency is paramount, retail businesses are also looking to improve the quality and consistency of the learning experience. They are also looking for greater agility and responsiveness to business change:

- Responding faster to changing business conditions (90%)
- Increasing job productivity (100%)
- Improving customer satisfaction (94%)
- Speeding up implementation of new processes (94%)

It is, however, surprising that in the light of the current context of the retail sector, there is a low emphasis in comparison to top learning companies in:

- Informing customers and suppliers of new products and services (60% compared with 70% in top learning companies)
- Managing risks (65% compared with 96%)
- Driving business innovation (74% compared with 96%)
- Increasing the ability to attract talent (71% compared to 94%)
- Integration of learning into the workflow (77% compared to 97%)

One driver where the retail sector exceeds all others is the need to strengthen its appeal to the millennium worker – a key target group for the sector (65% compared to 56% in top learning companies).

For full details of the drivers for investment in learning innovation, see [Appendix A](#).

### Top drivers for investment set by 100% of retail businesses

- Increase learning access and flexibility
- Improve data gathering and analysis of impact
- Reduce the time to competence
- Improve the quality of learning delivered
- Achieve greater consistency of learning experience
- Improve induction/onboarding process
- Speed up and improve the application of learning
- Improve learning management and administration
- Increase on-the-job productivity

**100% of retail businesses want to improve on-the-job productivity through use of learning technologies**

---

*“We are also looking to learning technologies to help with career mapping discussions and our onboarding process.”* **Learning and Development Associate**

---

## 2.3 What skills does the sector need?

The range of skills learning being offered in the retail sector is wide. Virtually all businesses offer induction/onboarding, leadership and management training and health and safety skills.

The levels of induction and leadership training mirror those of top learning companies. In health and safety training, the retail sector significantly exceeds the provision by top learning companies. It is no surprise to find that this sector exceeds the benchmark in its offering of customer handling skills. However, in teamwork, communications, interpersonal skills and industry specific skills, the sector lags behind top learning companies.

Of perhaps most significance is the low provision of basic skills training (including English as a foreign language), given the proportion of entry-level jobs in the sector.

The level to which skills are e-enabled is measured by the 'e-rating' – the proportion of each skill that is delivered with the aid of technology. E-enabling of learning in the retail sector is significantly lower than top performing learning companies (approximately 50% e-enablement compared with upwards of 70% in top learning companies).

Take-up of learning technologies has been static over the last 12 months. Completion rates are low, suggesting that employees either see little value in improving their skills or insufficient encouragement is provided by line management and L&D to motivate them to do so. Even for compliance-related programmes, only two-thirds of learners are completing the programmes.

See [Appendix B](#) for details of the skills offered in the last 12 months.

### Skills offered by over 4 out of 5 retail businesses

1. Induction/onboarding (100%)
2. Leadership and management skills (96%)
3. Health and safety (96%)
4. Customer handling (92%)
5. Company/role specific skills (92%)
6. Internal systems and processes (88%)
7. Communication/collaboration (84%)
8. Industry-specific mandatory training (83%)
9. IT user skills/digital literacy (80%)

### Skills e-enabled by over 50% of retail businesses

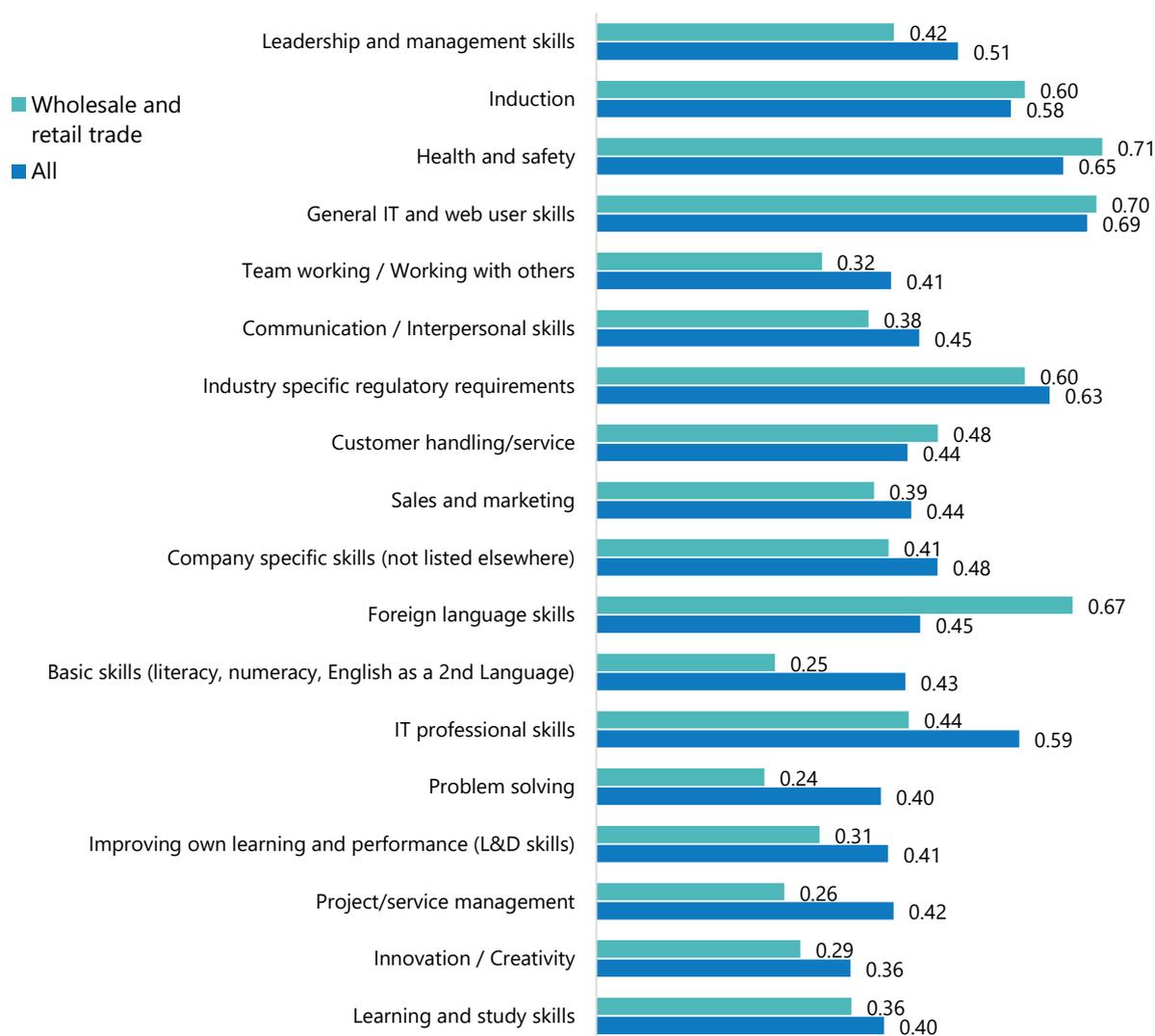
1. Health and safety (71%)
2. Leadership and management skills (96%)
3. Health and safety (96%)
4. Customer handling (92%)
5. Company/role specific skills (92%)
6. Internal systems and processes (88%)
7. Communication/collaboration (84%)
8. Industry-specific mandatory training (83%)
9. IT user skills/digital literacy (80%)

---

*“We use blended learning for some of our compliance training. Most technical training is face to face.”* **Compliance Training Manager**

---

Figure 3: Supporting skills development with the aid of technology



Proportion of those offering specific skill support that uses learning technologies

Table 1: Take-up of learning technologies

	All	TM* Benchmark	Retail businesses 2014	Retail businesses 2015
% using technology-enabled learning for compliance/mandated courses	66%	81%	58%	58%
% using technology-enabled learning for other non-compliance related learning	36%	53%	34%	38%
Proportion of formal learning delivered using e-content or virtual classroom	26%	34%	29%	31%
Average completion rate for compliance-related programmes	71%	85%	63%	62%

\*Average of top learning companies agreeing with statement

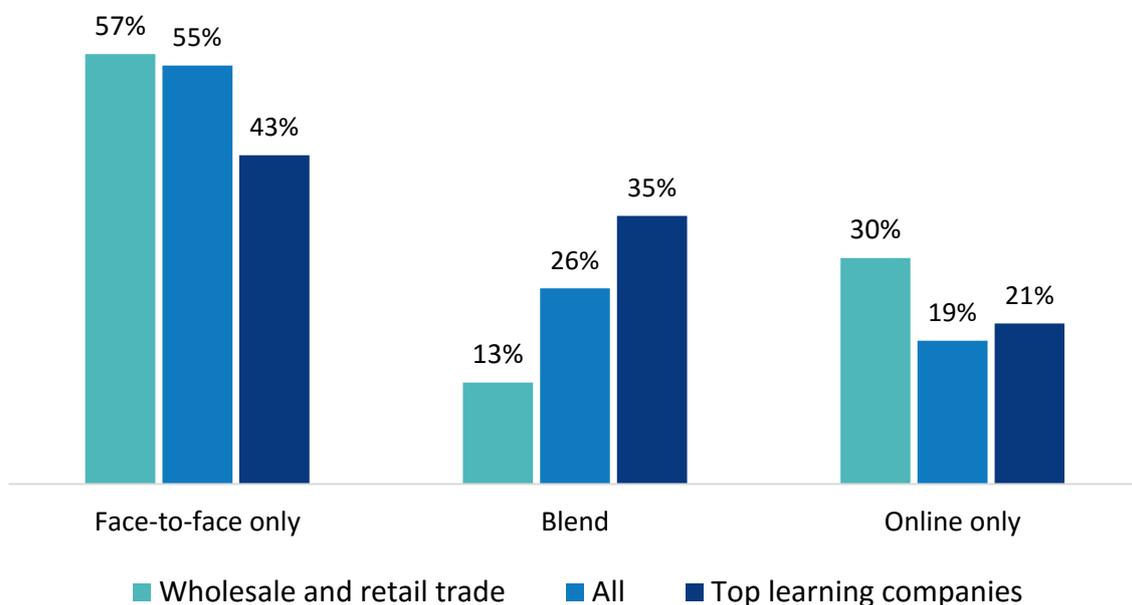
## 2.4 What underpinning technologies are they using?

With 31% of all formal learning underpinned by e-content or delivered via virtual classrooms, the retail sector is ahead of most others in the private sector (26% sample average) in its use of learning technologies. However, the proportion of training budget spent on technology has remained relatively static at 20% (21% in 2014, 15% in 2013), despite four out of five L&D leaders predicting that this proportion will increase in the next two years. This may reflect a lack of perceived benefit from the investment in learning in areas key to the business that will be analysed later in this report.

**31% of formal learning is delivered with the aid of technology**

However, fewer than half (43%) of retail companies in the sample are offering either blended or online learning. While at first glance this is similar to the level in the total sample (45%), what is very apparent is that very few are investing in blended learning – just 13%, compared to double that figure for the total sample (26%). Top learning companies are nearly three times more likely to be using blends than retail companies (35%) as shown in Figure 4 below. The conclusion is that retail companies are still heavily wedded to traditional delivery methods and that their use of technology is more about extending reach than designing to need.

Figure 4: Blending learning approaches in the retail sector



*“There is a shift from exclusive face-to-face training to a blended approach.”*  
**Head of Product Academy**

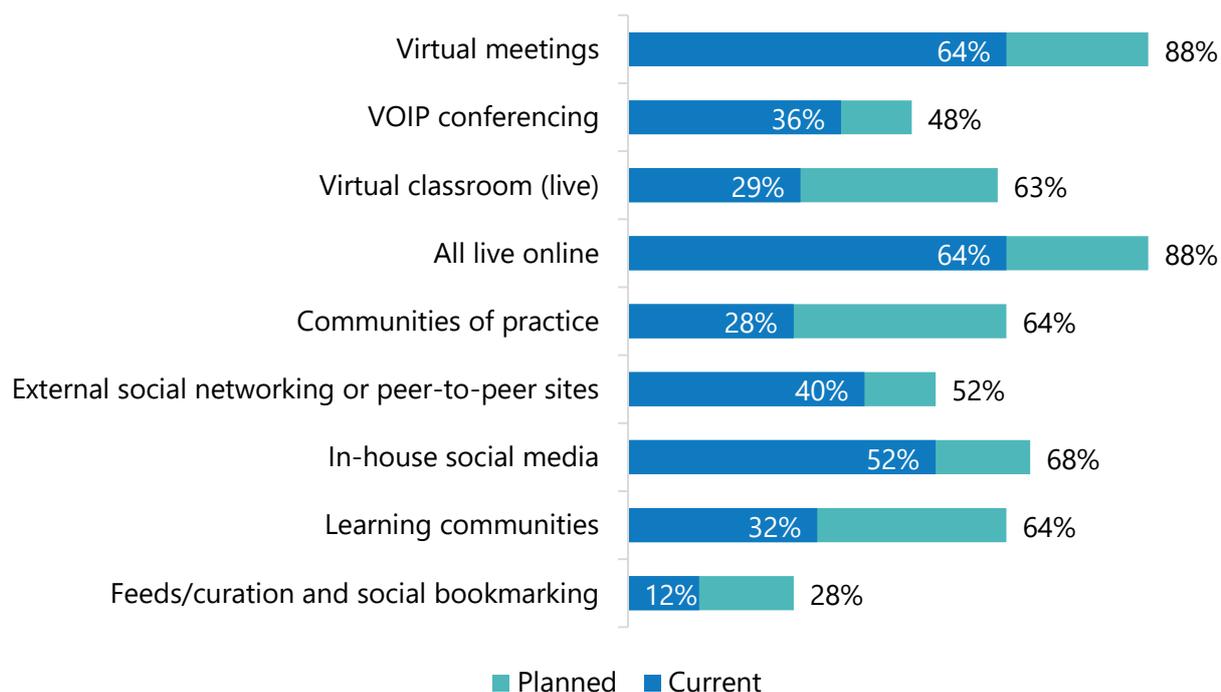
The retail sector is, to-date, using a smaller range of technology tools than most. We have tracked a reference set of 45 learning technologies for several years, but only 14 of these tools are in use by over 50% of the retail sector compared to 18 across the sample as whole and 31 in use by top learning companies.

Plans for the future, reported by retail sector respondents, indicate an intention to use a much wider range of tools, particularly collaborative tools, suggesting that L&D leaders in the sector are well aware of their potential.

**Technologies used by over 60% of retail businesses**

1. Learning Management Systems (88%)
2. Mobile devices (83%)
3. E-learning custom-made in house (80%)
4. E-learning custom-made externally (68%)
5. Job aids (68%)
6. Surveys and questionnaires (68%)
7. Best practice video – made in house (68%)
8. Virtual meetings (64%)
9. Content authoring tools (64%)

Figure 5: Current and planned technology usage



For details of the technologies in use in this sector, see [Appendix C](#).

---

*“We will explore the use of mobile devices more, and will use learning technologies for both compliance training and competency development.”*  
**Organisational Development Manager**

---

## 2.5 What is holding the sector back?

The retail sector reports a number of barriers to implementation of technology-enabled learning and development. The high proportion of low-skilled employees in the sector is undoubtedly a significant obstacle – shown in the lack of ICT skills reported by survey respondents to undertake learning and their reluctance to learn with new technology. Limited access to computers for learning is also a significant barrier. The situation is further compounded by learning not being seen as a managerial priority, a reluctance of line management to encourage new ways of learning, maybe due to a perceived high cost of set-up and a lack of skills amongst L&D practitioners to implement learning.

Overall, this paints a picture of a general lack of encouragement for learners to engage with digital learning – something which is very demotivating in the face of the 2015 Towards Maturity Learner Landscape Study, which indicated high understanding amongst learners of their responsibility to manage their own learning and a high readiness to engage with online learning without prompting.<sup>7</sup>

The scenario is one that requires attention for technology to be able to assist in the performance improvement and successful change that companies in the sector urgently require to maintain their competitiveness. New, especially young, talent is less likely to join an organisation where new technologies and learning opportunities are out of step with the common culture in society. A lack of learning opportunities may also be a key factor causing people to leave their companies and seek new employment.<sup>8</sup>

On a more positive note, the proportion reporting unreliable IT infrastructure and technical restrictions has decreased by 34% since 2014. The sector is having some success at overcoming reluctance by classroom training staff (down by 8%), gaining support from the IT department (down by 7%) and addressing their own technology skills gaps (down by 10%).

### Barriers reported by over half of retail businesses

1. Reluctance by line managers to encourage new ways of learning (75%)
2. Lack of skills amongst employees to manage own learning (71%)
3. Cost of set-up, development and maintenance (63%)
4. Lack of skills amongst L&D staff to implement and manage e-learning (58%)
5. Reluctance by users to learn with new technology (58%)
6. Lack of access to computers to make it worthwhile (58%)
7. Reluctance by senior managers to use online materials (54%)
8. Unreliable ICT infrastructure/low bandwidth/technical restrictions/firewall (50%)
9. Not seen as a management priority (50%)
10. Lack of attractive, high quality learning that supports our business goals (50%)
11. Lack of learner ICT skills (50%)

*The full list of barriers reported is given in [Appendix D](#).*

<sup>7</sup> Towards Maturity, *The Learner Voice: Part 2* (2015): [www.towardsmaturity.org/learnervoice2](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/learnervoice2)

<sup>8</sup> Harvard Business Review (2016): <https://hbr.org/2016/03/why-so-many-thirtysomething-women-are-leaving-your-company>

## 2.6 What success are they having?

Given the level of barriers restricting the implementation of digital learning strategies, it is not surprising to see that the major benefits sought from learning are not being realised.

It is difficult to make comparisons based on single years, as different businesses take part in this study from year-to-year and may vary widely in their goals and implementation approaches. However, despite apparent improvement in a few benefits in the past year, overall, those reporting benefits remain below sample average.

Most striking of these is in relation to productivity and customer satisfaction, where retail businesses lag significantly below the rest of the private sector. Only 13% of those who want to improve productivity say they have achieved it. The fact that just one in five respondents in the sector report achievement in lowering time to competence and application of learning in the workplace is almost certainly an indicator of the problem, resulting in turn from the lack of support for learners highlighted by the reported barriers.

Shifting towards an embedded learning culture in the organisation is the hardest transformation to achieve, and L&D leaders in the retail sector are experiencing similar frustrations to the rest of the private sector. However, in this respect, the retail sector is ahead of the norm, sharing good practice, harnessing technology to improve internal and external communications and improving their talent strategies to ensure they keep their best people.

**Benefits achieved**  
(as a proportion of those who wanted them)

1. Prove compliance with new regulations and legal requirements (63%)
2. Inform customers/suppliers of new products (53%)
3. Increase learning access and flexibility (45%)
4. Improve induction process (39%)
5. Improve the quality of learning (39%)
6. Increase the volume of learning (38%)
7. Help implement new processes/products (38%)
8. Improve effectiveness of face-to-face learning (37%)
9. Increase ongoing sharing of good practice (30%)
10. Develop a better qualified workforce (29%)

*The full list of benefits reported is given in [Appendix A](#).*

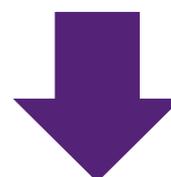


**Above average:**

- 53%** inform customers and suppliers of new products and services (41%)
- 30%** increase the ongoing sharing of good practice (22%)
- 28%** push updated information to employees at the point of need (24%)
- 25%** improve talent strategies to keep the best people (20%)

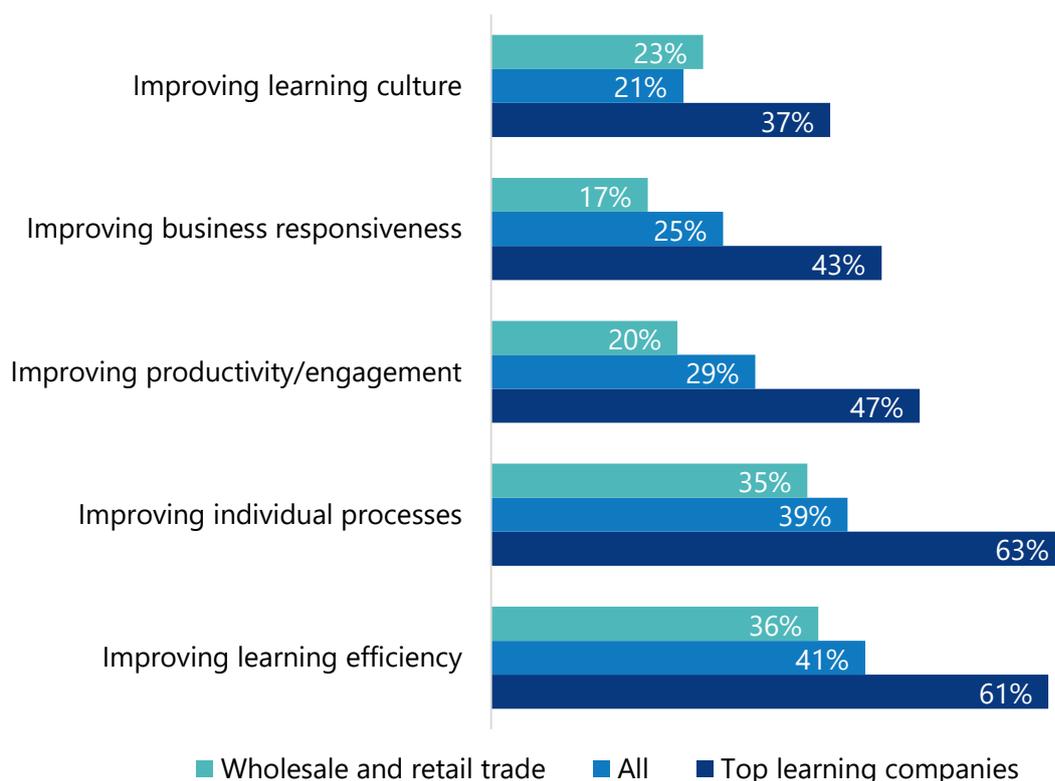
**Below average:**

- 20%** improve compliant behaviours within the organisation (40%)
- 14%** improve customer satisfaction (38%)
- 13%** increase on-the-job productivity (31%)
- 9%** drive business innovation (31%)



*“We are looking to change our learning culture to achieve self-directed learning, giving learners responsibility for their own development.”*  
**Technical Training Team Leader**

Figure 6: Delivering benefits from an e-enabled learning strategy



*“Many of the answers remain in the ‘want but have not yet achieved’, but there has been progress. It’s hard to know when we will be able to say we have achieved some benefits to our satisfaction, but we are achieving successes along the way.”*  
**Manager, Partner Development**

*In the rest of the report, we look at apparent successful strategies that are being used – together with what is not so successful – to identify what we can learn from those that are getting the best results (the top learning organisations).*

*In the next chapter, we will explore the extent to which learning and development teams in retail businesses are working with the business leaders in their organisations.*

### 3. Working with the business

*L&D is able to demonstrate significant impact to the bottom line, despite the barriers still to be overcome. However, lack of alignment to business goals, coupled with weak communication and a yawning chasm in the ability of the business to support learning are all contributing factors limiting perceptions of L&D as a positive business partner, both for managers and for staff seeking to improve their performance, productivity and innovation.*

#### 3.1 Delivering impact on the bottom line

Technology-enabled learning is making a significant contribution to the business bottom line where measures can be attributed to specific learning interventions.

The degree of improvement in these cases is dramatic and should provide line managers with confidence in L&D's ability to make a difference using its range of technology tools. Businesses in this sector report an average improvement of 18% in productivity, 18% improvement in customer satisfaction and a 5% improvement in organisational revenue as a result of learning innovation. Improvement in ability to change procedures and products, staff satisfaction and engagement, and time to competency are above TM Benchmark levels.

*Table 2: Key Performance Indicators*

Key Performance Indicator	TM Average*	Retail sector
<b>Business Impact Indicators</b>		
Our ability to change procedures or products has improved by:	22%	35%
Our measure of customer satisfaction has improved by:	15%	18%
Our ability to speed up the rollout of new IT applications has improved by:	24%	31%
Specific learning interventions have increased organisational productivity by:	12%	18%
Specific learning interventions have increased organisational revenue by:	9%	5%
<b>Staff Impact Indicators</b>		
Our measure of staff satisfaction/engagement has improved by:	16%	19%
Time to competency has improved by:	13%	10%
Qualifications gained by staff have increased by:	15%	11%
Staff turnover has been reduced by:	8%	2%

*\*Three-year rolling average – over 700 companies contributing data. Shading indicates where retail businesses are achieving above average impact*

This data is a very positive sign that specific learning interventions implemented in the retail sector are having a positive impact. However, it is concerning that in the context of the sector, the drive for improved people effectiveness and efficiency is generally below that of top learning companies. Reported success in cost reduction is low (9%) compared to top companies (24%), another indication that learning activities are not yet yielding benefits that address the urgent business needs of companies faced with price squeeze and challenges to market share. Together, the indication is that where specific programmes are implemented thoroughly, significant benefits can be achieved.

Just 25% of managers agree that learning technologies deliver significant business benefit compared to 54% of top companies. Improving communication with managers about learning successes may help to increase buy-in at all levels.

- 48% regularly communicate learning successes to senior management (81% in top learning companies)
- 32% regularly communicate learning successes to line managers (73%)

---

*“Encouraging use of our system for pre-work and blended learning has helped to introduce managers and users to the system.” L&D Associate*

---

Improving communications with line managers in particular, at every stage of the learning and development journey, can help with learner engagement and increase their motivation for learning as well as the support and encouragement they receive from their colleagues.

**16%** collect information from line managers on the extent to which learning points have been applied at work

*Table 3: Proportion agreeing that e-learning delivers bottom line business benefits*

Percentage agreeing with statement	All	TM Benchmark*	Retail sector 2014	Retail sector 2015
Managers agree that technology-enabled learning delivers additional business benefit	31%	54%	23%	25%
Learning technologies have made a significant contribution to increasing organisational revenue	24%	39%	18%	21%
Learning technologies have contributed to improvements in productivity across the organisation	26%	52%	24%	21%

\*Average of top learning companies agreeing with statement

With only 21% (compared with 28% across the rest of the private sector) of retail organisations reporting that learners are recommending technology-enabled learning to their colleagues as a means of improving job performance, there is clearly a long way to go in establishing L&D as a key business performance driver in the sector.

The reported improvements in productivity and revenue show that learning innovation is impacting the business bottom line and gives heart to retail business. Not only is technology increasing the reach of their programmes – as shown by an average increase of 46% (outstanding in relation to the TM Benchmark) in the volume of e-learning delivered, but they are also successfully reducing costs, study time and delivery time. There is robust evidence here to support the business case for further innovation.

Table 4: Efficiency Key Performance Indicators

Percentage agreeing with statement	All	TM Benchmark*	Retail sector 2014	Retail sector 2015
Cost reduction	17%	16%	16%	9%
Reach/volume of learning delivered	26%	22%	25%	46%
Delivery time reduction	26%	23%	26%	25%
Study time reduction	20%	19%	16%	24%

\*Average of top learning companies agreeing with statement

## 3.2 Integrating business and learning

In Chapter 2, we highlighted that there may be a lack of alignment between L&D leaders and the tactical and strategic goals of the organisation. Greater business alignment is certainly one of the key issues that retail businesses need to address to improve their performance.

**50% say learning and development is NOT seen as a priority of the management**

This is not just a case of selling the message to business leaders that learning technology can enhance performance. Learning and development teams in retail businesses need to ensure that they are working towards the same business goals and report against business targets before business leaders will recognise and re-value their potential worth. In the workplace, however, it is clear from the data that many L&D leaders in retail businesses do not work in partnership with senior management to agree on business outcomes:

- Only 31% *identify* specific business metrics/KPIs that they want to improve through learning in partnership with senior management (65% of top learning companies)
- 32% *have a plan* for how they will meet the agreed business metrics (67%)

- 17% *measure* specific business metrics when evaluating the effectiveness of learning technologies (40%)
- 32% *report* against the targets agreed (76%)
- 54% regularly *review* their programmes and check that they support and enhance organisational goals (78%)

With over half of all retail L&D leaders reporting that senior managers are reluctant to use learning technologies for themselves, managers have clearly not bought into the added value that e-enabled workplace learning can deliver:

- 36% agree that senior managers demonstrate a commitment to learning (69% of top learning companies)
- 24% agree that top managers are involved in promoting learning (63%)
- Just 8% of top managers are seen to be using learning technologies (51%)

L&D leaders might usefully reconsider how they are engaging with other leaders and managers in the business:

- 36% involve managers in the design of the most appropriate solution (68%)
- 26% agree that they use learning technologies to support the way they develop managers and leaders (69%)
- 42% of leadership and management formal programmes are e-enabled (71%)

The case study overleaf illustrates how transforming the learning culture has had a significant impact on the organisation's results.

### ***How can L&D leaders in retail work more effectively with business leaders?***

*L&D need business leaders to set an example and champion workplace learning for staff to fully engage. This can only happen when L&D themselves earn credibility with line managers and explore how to be a support for managers and learners at the point of need.*



- ✓ Make sure everyone in the L&D team understands the current priorities for the business
- ✓ Work with business leaders to define business improvement needs and the priorities for how learning can help
- ✓ Think creatively about solutions to business problems and issues – a formal learning intervention is only one of the options
- ✓ Work with managers and with learners to ensure new skills are applied in the workplace
- ✓ Review the communications strategy to ensure all stakeholders are fully consulted

*In the next chapter, we explore how learning and development teams in retail businesses could improve their offering to the self-directed learner. We consider the 'consumer experience' for learners in retail businesses, exploring considerations such as choice and ease of access.*

## Award-winning learning-ready culture at a leading UK wholesaler and retailer

This British builders' merchant and home improvement retailer, consisting of 19 autonomous businesses, employs a diverse workforce of over 26,000 employees operating across 2,000 outlets across the UK and Ireland.

They were using e-learning to conduct compliance and product training, yet their current online strategy could not sufficiently support blended learning across a growing workforce. Learning had become little more than a 'tick-box' compliance exercise, and there was a distinct lack of interest in personal development using online programmes across the workforce.

### A push vs. pull approach to learning

To improve learning outcomes in the long-term, the L&D strategy needed to change perceptions, cultivate leadership support and participation, and instil a true, learning-ready culture.

The organisation launched Kallidus LMS to help them to move from a compliance model – which pushed e-learning out to the workforce – to a pull approach: using an engaging, soft skills-focused programme, which delivered personalised e-learning as part of a new group-wide culture to support long-term learning and development.

### A new culture of self-driven development

Staff now have easy access to personalised, culture-specific online learning. The improved learner journey has significantly enriched user adoption and employee engagement, and by moving to a pull culture of self-driven development, the organisation has achieved key efficiency savings.

- Over 2,500 employees are now regularly accessing non-mandatory training each month, with logins predicted to rise by 300% by the end of the year.
- In just six months, Kallidus LMS users increased by over 100% and the number of e-learning completions increased by 165%. In the past year, user satisfaction has also increased from 50% to 84%.
- With increased access to e-learning and resulting resource savings, the entire blended learning programme was rolled out for £155,000, more than £1m under budget.
- Employees can access learning offline and on-the-go. In the last year, improved accessibility has helped the retailer double compliance rates to 92%.
- LMS automation has streamlined learning management, saving 500 hours of administration; the admin team has now been reduced from ten administrators to just three to co-ordinate the entire blended learning programme.
- With improved accessibility, internal support calls have reduced from 1,000 to just 50 calls per month, a reduction of 95%.

*“The results have been phenomenal: we have exceeded training targets, and our strategy continues to drive key benefits for learners and the business as a whole. Tracking and managing colleague development has become proactive rather than reactive, and we are now combatting key skills gaps far more effectively.”* **Learning Solutions & Services Manager**

*Case study contributed by Kallidus*

## 4. Supporting the self-directed learner

*Technology-enabled learning solutions depend on two related factors for success – access to the technology being provided, and the skills to use that technology. Increasing access to learning and offering a range of technology solutions that meet learner preferences are dependent on these two basic premises in order to empower staff to take greater ownership of their own learning and development.*

### 4.1 Choice and availability of learning

In the 2015-16 Towards Maturity Industry Benchmark Report, *Embracing Change*, we reported that staff who are highly motivated to do their job better and improve their performance are becoming increasingly self-directed in their approach to learning. Learners were typically motivated by opportunities to network and work collaboratively, sharing their experiences – and the resources they were using - with others.

Despite offering an impressive range of learning provision (in terms of breadth of the curriculum), retail businesses lag well behind the benchmark when it comes to offering choice in how, when and where this learning can be accessed. In the retail sector:

- 50% agree that learners can access clear information about the available learning opportunities (81% in top learning companies)
- 56% agree that learners can choose to access e-learning provision at any time (78%)
- 36% agree that learners can choose to learn at places convenient to them (58%)
- 20% of managers allocate time for staff to learn at home (32%)
- 4% encourage, and provide time for reflection (33%)

These figures indicate that despite L&D leaders in the sector clearly recognising in concept the value of self-directed learning, it is not yet commonplace in practice. This finding is another indication of the clear disconnect that exists between L&D and its perceived ability to assist in addressing the priorities of the business and its people.

The reported lack of computer skills cited by half of the respondents, together with a shocking figure of 0% agreeing that learners have the skills to manage their own learning will undoubtedly be holding the sector back. Although 67% of retail businesses offer learning and study skills, these are clearly not translating to employees engaging in self-directed learning. In comparison to the benchmark, employees in the retail sector are only half as likely (36% vs 70%) to have a discussion about their development during appraisals. Indeed, only 36% discuss the objectives and aims of learning with individuals before they start learning (64% of top learning companies).

Just **8%** agree that learners engage in self-development without prompting

## 4.2 How is the sector embedding new models of learning?

In *'Embracing Change'*, we explore how the 70:20:10 framework can provide a useful point of reference when considering how the majority of learning takes place. Opportunities for workplace learning and social learning are critical parts of the mix that are not routinely available to staff within retail businesses. Although the benefits of social learning seem to be well recognised in the sector, it is clear that only half the benefit achieved by top learning companies is being realised. For example, just 7% of retail organisations report improving application in the workplace, compared to 34% of top learning companies.

Some seven out of ten retail businesses agree that their approach to workplace learning is shaped by models that support learning directly in the flow of work - such as the 70:20:10 model (above the level of 68% of top learning companies). In 2015, we introduced the concept of three new indices to help organisations understand the extent to which they are applying 70:20:10 thinking into their practice. This is *not* an indication of the proportion of learning 'delivered' in each aspect (for a full discussion on this, see our In-Focus report<sup>9</sup>), rather a means of identifying priorities for the L&D team. These new indices show that successful learning organisations are proactive in improving across all three areas rather than focussing on just one. Differences between the retail sector scores and the sample average are not significant, except in the area of how they are facilitating experiential learning in the workplace (see Appendix E for details).

Specific challenges arise around the provision of performance support. L&D in the retail sector, like most others in the private sector, can support experiential learning by organising the resources available for individuals to use independently. For example:

- 36% provide job aids online or via mobile devices (59% in top learning companies)
- 28% equip line managers with resources so their teams get the most out of technology-enabled learning (52%)
- 4% have content curation strategies in place to help staff make sense of the resources available to them (39%)

Social and collaborative learning and performance support tools are part of the armoury of the modern L&D team for bringing learning closer to the point of need, but the use of social media tools is not yet part of the culture in some organisations.

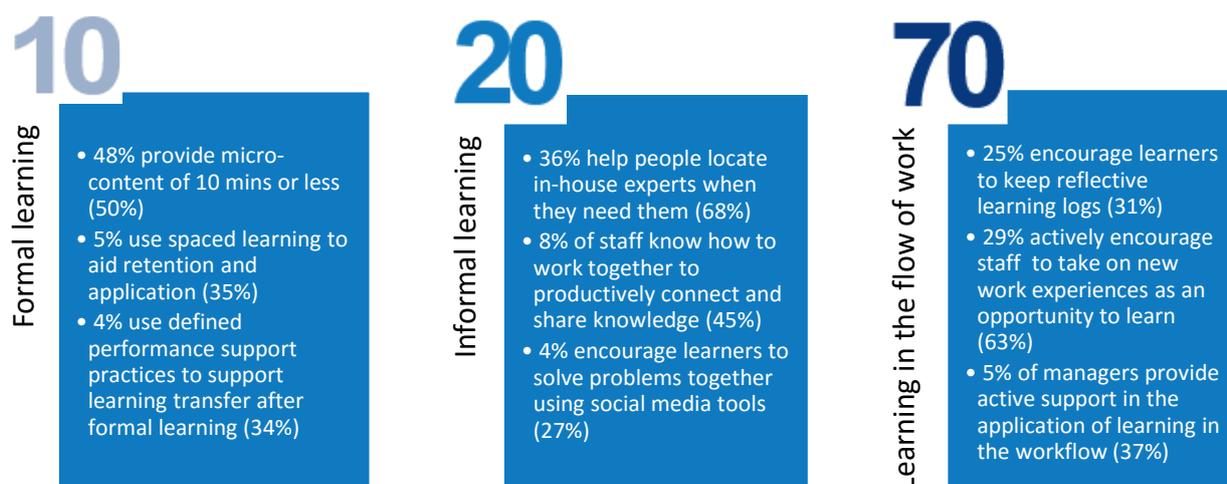
---

*"We have a lot of catching up to do to enable our staff to use technology at home and to promote learning socially at work with peers, also with the utilisation of performance support for transference, repetition and spacing." L&D Manager*

---

<sup>9</sup> In-Focus: 70+20+10=100: The Evidence Behind the Numbers: [www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/2016/702010](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/2016/702010)

Figure 7: Practical approaches to implementation of the 70:20:10 model



*“With increased emphasis on a 70:20:10 approach to learning and development, our Talent Development team will be encouraging and facilitating learning across all three.” **Talent Director***

### 4.3 Embracing new technology

Retail businesses are at an early stage of their journey in learning innovation. The focus is on excellence in courses and content and in their efficient organisation using learning management systems. The sample data shows that there is good awareness of the latest in learning theory, such as neuroscience and of course the power of the many learning technologies now available. However, there is little evidence of systematic application of these technologies beyond an enhancement of the classroom experience. Even where new approaches are being tried, the crucial aspect of the enabling application of new skills in the workplace is weak.

*“E-learning still has a negative compliance stigma attached. Rapid, intuitive curation tools can be implemented to quickly meet development & business needs.” **Organisational Capability Lead***

Looking at the type of learning technologies utilised, retail businesses have reduced their scope in many areas in the last year. This is particularly the case with the technologies requiring L&D staff to assist, with user-generated content (down 18%), and podcasting (down by 73%), blogs (down 45%), virtual classrooms (down 62%). Retail companies continue to lag behind the top learning companies in their utilisation of learning technologies. On a positive note, the use of job aids has increased dramatically (up 56%).

Only **35%** have a Single Sign On (SSO) process

Considering the drive to increase access and flexibility, only 35% of retail businesses have a single sign-on process across their IT systems (half the proportion amongst the top learning companies) and a similar proportion integrates their learning

management system with other IT systems. Although 88% are using an LMS, with the primary purpose of storing, tracking and delivering e-learning courses, the sector is yet to explore other features and benefits such as learning analytics (10% of LMS users) or supporting mobile learning (24%). Top companies are four times more likely to use the LMS to support their virtual classroom environments.

---

*“The use of technology in learning is going to dramatically increase in the next two years, driving more efficiencies and becoming agiler to meet the business needs. We are using more open source tools to keep costs down and avoid access issues.”*  
**L&D Designer**

---

## 4.4 Supporting informal learning

This is a sector very familiar with using hand-held devices – for example in stock control – but L&D are not exploiting the potential or seeing these as devices that can support or enhance learning. L&D can support freeing up the permission to use mobile devices in the work setting, for example through influencing the policies that operate in the work context, although few L&D leaders claim to exert much influence in this regard and only 15% agree that they are aware of how learners are using social media (outside of L&D) to share ideas (31% in top learning companies):

- 32% influence the organisation’s social media policy (27% of top learning companies)
- 13% influence the ‘Bring Your Own Device’ policy (24%)

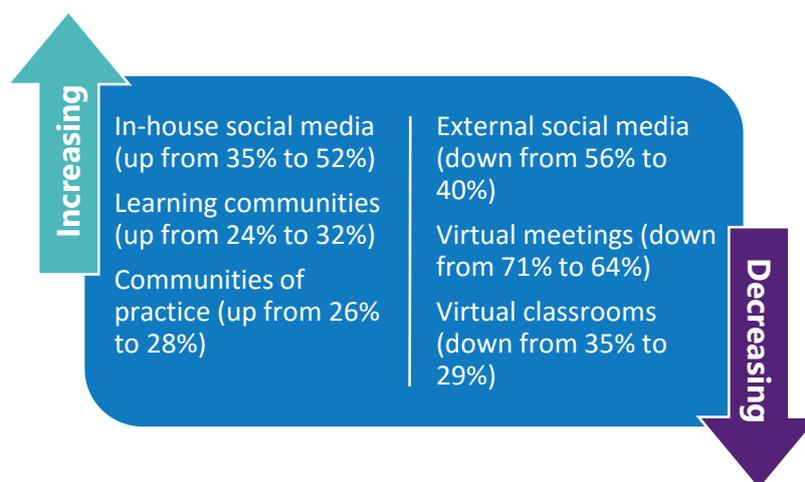
Social media platforms have the potential to help the sector to share good practice and help the application of learning back at work, and L&D leaders in the retail sector are implementing the tools to help.

- 64% use virtual meetings (93% in top learning companies)
- 52% use in-house social media platforms (73%)
- 40% are using external social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter (59%)
- 32% are using learning communities (65%)

Despite the best efforts of those in L&D, they face resistance from management, with only 4% able to agree that managers encourage and make time for social and informal learning. They also face reluctance from other staff to use internal sites, restricting the impact of any resources and discussions shared. The low level of retail businesses investment in learning technologies

despite their professed understanding of the potential benefits means that this potentially powerful lever for performance improvement and change is not being effectively utilised. Instead, there continues to be an over-reliance on face-to-face training and ‘short burst’ solutions.

Figure 8: Change in use of social tools since 2014



On the positive side, is the degree to which this sector is planning to implement more social/collaborative technology in the next two years. Future plans suggest increases in a more integrated approach to talent management – perhaps indicating signs of change in the sector’s learning methods. The impact of digitisation on learning means that increasingly people don’t need to ‘retain’ knowledge, rather they now just need to know where to go and find it as it is needed. This natural move from ‘courses to resources’, need not diminish the value of classroom and its intensive focus, but will mean that the added costs of face-to-face delivery over online provision need to be properly justified.

---

*“There is very little available ‘off the shelf’ e-learning that meets our compliance training needs and the e-learning we have had developed for us by external providers has not been very high quality and has been relatively expensive compared to delivering our own face-to-face training.”*

**Compliance Training Manager**

---

## ***Building on learners' motivation to do their job better***

*Increasing access to learning, offering a range of technology solutions and ensuring staff have the skills to use them are pre-cursors to empowering staff to take ownership of their own learning and development.*



- ✓ If learner access to computers is a problem, consider how to harness the technologies they are already using
- ✓ What tools and resources are available to encourage people to own their own learning?
- ✓ Consider how just-in-time performance support tools can satisfy the greater business need for agility and speed in turning around concepts or ideas through to actionable and measurable improvement on the job
- ✓ Assess the needs and skills of the audience and modify learning content to give it greater appeal. If they are not interested and engaged, they will not learn!

*In the next chapter, we examine how the L&D team are prepared to meet the challenges of working in a collaborative environment, as facilitators of learning rather than as trainers.*

## 5. Equipping the L&D team as agents of change

*L&D teams need to reflect on their own skills in supporting informal and experiential learning to counter the historic reliance on formal training. The shift to digital learning requires a parallel shift in the mindset of all those involved in supporting, designing, promoting and delivering learning.*

### 5.1 What are the priority skills for L&D?

The UKCES 2015 report on the UK retail sector highlighted:

*“A key challenge described by stakeholders is for retailers to keep track of their skills and recruitment needs as the sector continues to change ..... (and L&D) managers need to understand the whole operation of the business, how to diagnose skills needs, ensure individuals are correctly matched to competence profiles, targeting the right people, and ensure training is matched appropriately to existing staff, where skills needs are identified.”*

The report further highlights the critical need for the retail sector to increase its skill base in the use of technology as tools for sales, marketing and administration. The chairman of John Lewis was quoted in February 2016 suggesting that although the workforce is currently increasing, there may be a huge contraction in the workforce in the next decade as technology-driven retailing takes increased hold. This will be accompanied by a radical change in the skill set required of employees – one in which L&D has a key role to play.

For the present and in relation to the Towards Maturity Sector Benchmark’s findings, a further comment from the UKCES report is relevant:

*“The reasons for a lack of improvement amongst staff who have received training are unclear, but could point to a failure to correctly diagnose skills needs, inappropriate training being delivered, the quality of that training being inadequate, and/or delivery methods not being tailored to individuals’ needs.”*

The L&D teams in retail businesses do not currently have all the skills – or the time - required to deliver what they and their businesses need.

The data discussed above shows a huge area for improvement in performance consulting, marketing and stakeholder engagement and in facilitating social and collaborative learning. However, there may be an even greater need which is not covered directly by the TM Benchmark – that of understanding the needs of the changing business from the basis of an expert skills base. The need for a rapid transformation to a soft technologies base in retail may well require a fundamental skill shift amongst L&D staff in order to diagnose, design and deliver effective learning that contributes to business performance.

*“Our business is literally starting its technology journey so we have lots of opportunities. However, at the moment, the priority is for the team to become business partners and think/act as external consultants.” L&D Manager*

Figure 9: L&D skill priorities

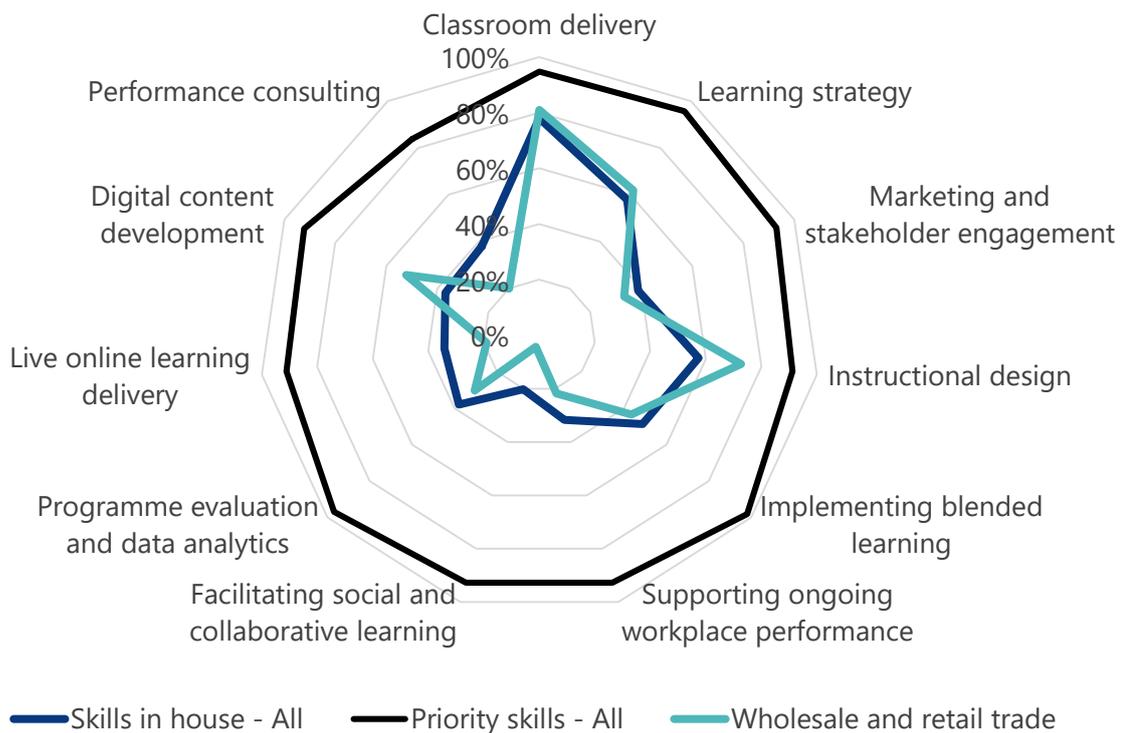


Figure 9 above shows clearly the retail sector’s need to increase its L&D skills in performance consulting – starting with gaining a comprehensive understanding of the workstreams of the business – and in marketing and stakeholder management. Both of these skills are of high priority in top learning companies and are a clear means of ensuring that L&D energy matches the business priorities. There is also currently a lack of focus on the skills of supporting ongoing workplace learning. The heavy emphasis shown by the retail sector on instructional design and digital content delivery suggests a shift towards a more technology-based approach, but the sector has not yet addressed the skills required to leverage social and collaborative learning.

Development opportunities for L&D professionals appear to be constrained in the same way as those of their learners.

*“We lack the skills to bring our ideas alive internally.” L&D Project Manager*

We asked how L&D professionals develop their own skills in the use of learning technologies. Just under half of retail businesses (48%) offer Continuing Professional Development to their L&D staff. There is some encouragement for L&D staff to join external networks (61%) and this has increased since last year (57% in 2014). However, fewer organisations in the sector are using internal networks for L&D staff (35% down from 53% in 2014).

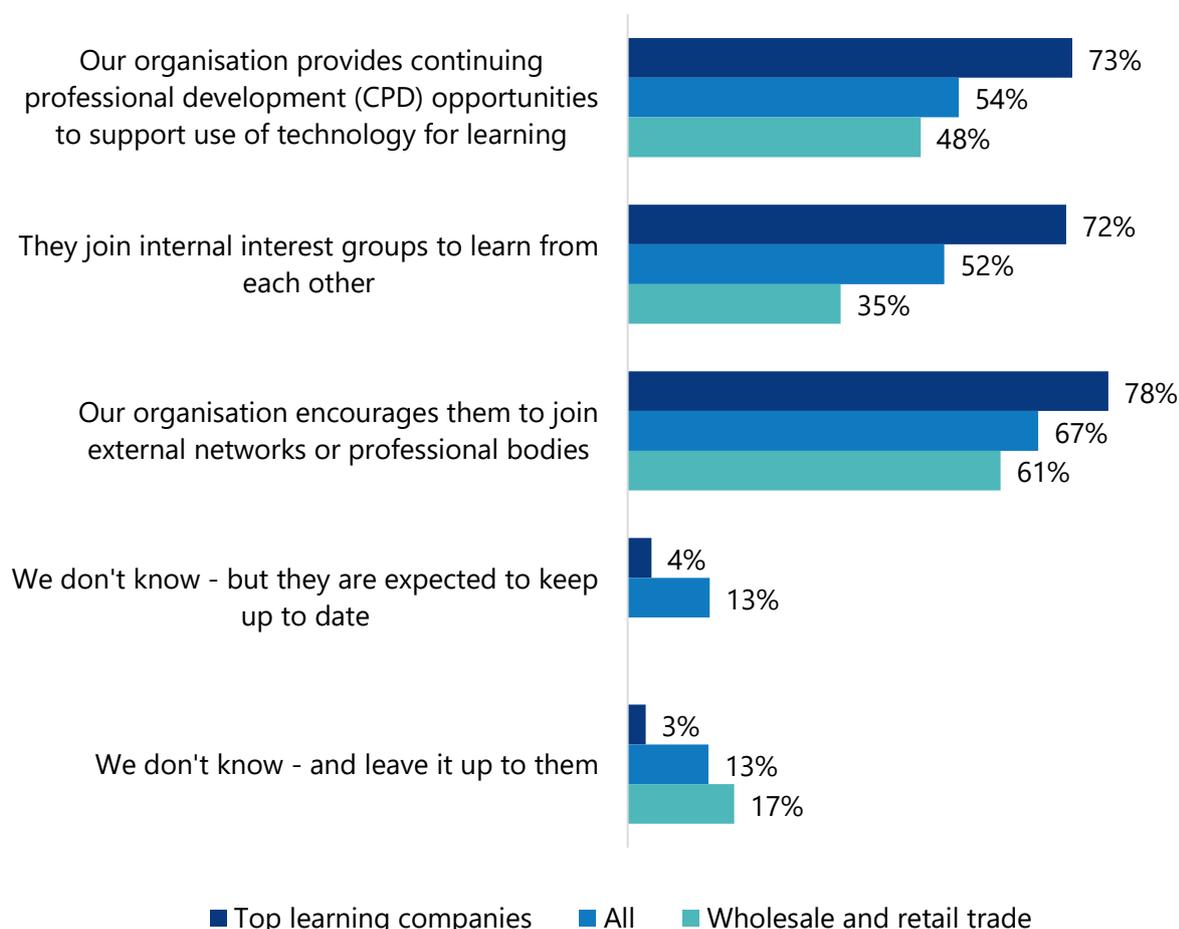
The lack of networking between L&D staff means its benefits are not apparent to those staff and therefore, it is no surprise that there is little emphasis on social and collaborative learning within retail, despite a rapidly changing demography amongst the workforce. It is disturbing that L&D management takes such a hands-off approach to the development of their staff.

Having the right people with the right skills in place is just as critical for learning and development as it is for every other function in an organisation. Yet the data would

**38% have audited the skills of L&D staff against those required (62% in top learning companies)**

suggest that this is largely being left to chance. Almost one in six retail organisations report that they don't know how their L&D staff are developing their own skills.

Figure 10: Developing the skills of the L&D team



## 6. Conclusions and call to action

Technology-assisted learning in the retail sector is clearly at an early stage of implementation. Recruitment into L&D of instructional design skills, accompanied by overall increases in budgets over the last two years and projected for a similar period into the future suggest the sector is gearing up for a shift into online learning – a conclusion borne out by the increased reach of online learning solutions into organisations.

However, it is also clear that production of learning solutions is not being matched by parallel effort in a number of dimensions:

- Good communication between L&D and line management to ensure that learning provided matches the business improvement priorities. Diagnostic and performance support skills are weak amongst the sector's L&D staff, which means managers are reluctant to trust L&D as a value-adding partner in improving their business.
- Poor championing of learning application in the workplace by line managers and the lack of skills in performance support reported amongst L&D staff mean that much of the resource being applied to extending the reach of learning is not yielding the potential benefits that technology offers.
- The absence of basic computer skills amongst a high proportion of employees, together with a lack of access to devices for enabling learning is a huge operational problem. IT skills for lower-ranking workers, together with policy reform to make technology enabled learning ubiquitously accessible are urgent priorities if L&D is to become effective in transforming the skill base of a rapidly changing sector.
- The development and re-skilling of L&D staff lack strategy or direction across the sector. In a business context where the landscape is hostile, and changes rapidly and unpredictably at one level, but where the need to transform to an online trading environment is urgent means that L&D staff need to be given every assistance to help them understand the evolving business, make meaningful diagnoses of learning needs and become able to support the application of learning in the workplace.
- The rise of online retail trading habits amongst consumers is itself in a context of intense and commonplace use of social media amongst customers. The almost complete absence of fostering of those same technologies within retail companies and their L&D functions means that their culture and work practices are at variance with the business and social environment within which they trade. Development of social and collaborative skills and learning objects within the sector is an urgent need which must start within the L&D functions themselves, where sharing and collaboration are at a low level.

If these areas are addressed, the difficulties in recruitment experienced by HR leaders in the sector may reduce. The emergence of a collaborative, technology-based way of working and sharing learning will assist in raising the attractiveness of the sector as a career. New skills

applied would lead to the kinds of innovation the sector needs to ensure companies' survival in the medium term. None of this can happen without the championing of learning from top management, leading by example, investing their time and emotional energy to assist L&D in making the contributions its range of technologies potentially provides.

It is clear that where the accurate diagnosis of learning needs is partnered with strong indicators of success, highly effective programmes are being designed and implemented in the sector. The workplace revolution in the sector, that makes extensive use of technology in providing customer support in sales and distribution, provides a brilliant platform for exploiting the power of mobile learning for that high proportion of retail employees without access to fixed devices (PC's, laptops) but who routinely use tablets and other job specific handheld devices to perform their job roles.

### Improve your learning impact

**Tips from Kallidus, for learning managers and learning developers looking to create retail-friendly learning resources and improve the impact of learning:**

- Studies show 50 percent training impact is a result of what happens after the training, so build in activities and resources to support the transfer of learning.
- Work more closely with line and store managers from determining training needs and creating course content to finding easy ways to quantify business benefits and supporting managers in creating the optimum environment for ensuring successful learning transfer.
- Include more digital learning options for store and business managers as well as employees to expose them personally to the newer ways of learning.
- Explore how gamification can be integrated into learning solutions and how scoring or badging can be linked to intended business results.
- Use micro-learning resources that are better suited to retail working and learning patterns and can boost engagement levels when compared to traditional e-learning courses.
- Tap into the potential of mobile learning by leveraging BYOD and any company-provided tablets and phablets to deliver short bursts of micro-learning.
- Learning managers who work closely with their peers in finance will gain a deeper understanding of organisation KPIs and where learning can be more appropriately targeted.
- Make sure learning platforms and resources can support social and informal learning to deliver a more "consumer grade" learning experience.
- Learning teams need to up-skill themselves so that they can confidently embrace social and informal learning and should recruit for future roles requiring a higher degree of learning facilitation and on-the-job performance support skills.

*Contributed by Kallidus*

## Appendix. Data tables

There are five sections of data tables:

- **Drivers:** listing what is driving the use of learning technologies for business and efficiency improvement and the drivers for using mobile learning
- **Benefits:** listing the benefits that are actually being realised from the use of the learning technologies
- **Skills:** looking at the topics of learning content offered within the last 12 months and the probability that these are e-enabled with learning technologies
- **Technologies:** listing usage of each type of technology, tool or development environment
- **Barriers:** listing the factors cited by L&D professionals as barriers to progress.

### *Notes on tables that follow:*

In each section, you will be able to compare average scores across mid-sized businesses, the private sector as a whole, the 2015 sample average and top learning companies.

The **Towards Maturity Benchmark** scores have been established from the responses of 80 top learning companies from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors who participated in the Towards Maturity Benchmark Study in 2015. Top learning companies are defined as those in the top quartile for the Towards Maturity Index.

Retail business scores represent the average from up to 45 organisations within this sector. Shading indicates where the sector exceeds the sample average or report fewer barriers.

See [www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2015benchmark) for more details on the methodology.

The following retail businesses have agreed to the use of their names in our reports:

ALDI	East of England Co-op	Marks and Spencer plc
Asda	Farmfoods Ltd	Pret A Manger
ASOS	Forever New	Specsavers
BSH Home Appliances Ltd	GateGroup	Tesco PLC
Burberry	Hotter	The Body Shop International
Coca-Cola HBC Hungary Ltd.	House of Fraser	Waitrose
Cotswold Outdoor	John Lewis Partnership	Whittard
Dixons Carphone	Manor	

## Appendix A. What is driving change?

To assess key business drivers and benefits, participants were asked: “What are the benefits your organisation is achieving relating to the business and its people?” Responses were: “This is not relevant to us”; “This is a benefit we want but have not yet achieved”; “This is a benefit we want and have achieved.”

Table 5: Drivers for, and benefits of learning technologies

Driver/Benefit	Retail Sector Average		Sample Average		Top Learning Companies	
	% seeking benefit	% achieving benefit	% seeking benefit	% achieving benefit	% seeking benefit	% achieving benefit
<b>Drivers and benefits relating to business goals</b>						
Prove compliance with new regulations and legal requirements	77%	63%	88%	73%	91%	<b>88%</b>
Speed up the implementation of new processes or new products	94%	38%	91%	39%	94%	<b>66%</b>
Increase on the job productivity	100%	13%	94%	31%	97%	<b>53%</b>
Improve customer satisfaction	94%	14%	90%	38%	95%	<b>59%</b>
Help implement new IT systems	84%	27%	82%	41%	87%	<b>66%</b>
Inform customers/suppliers of new products/services	61%	53%	60%	41%	70%	<b>65%</b>
Respond faster to business change	90%	21%	94%	23%	98%	<b>38%</b>
Improve talent strategies to keep the best people	90%	25%	94%	20%	95%	<b>34%</b>
Improve employee engagement with learning	90%	25%	94%	21%	98%	<b>42%</b>
Improve organisational performance	84%	8%	85%	27%	100%	<b>46%</b>
Manage risk more successfully	65%	20%	76%	26%	96%	<b>42%</b>
Improve compliant behaviours	65%	20%	78%	40%	93%	<b>59%</b>
Drive business innovation	74%	9%	80%	31%	96%	<b>48%</b>
Increase ability to attract talent	71%	18%	76%	19%	94%	<b>32%</b>
<b>Drivers and benefits relating to staff and their motivation</b>						
Improve induction/onboarding process	100%	39%	95%	41%	95%	<b>69%</b>
Increase learning access and flexibility	100%	45%	98%	41%	99%	<b>65%</b>
Increase ability to adapt programme to individual need/context	97%	20%	94%	19%	97%	<b>35%</b>
Develop a better qualified workforce	90%	29%	91%	34%	94%	<b>51%</b>
Speed up and improve the application of learning in workplace	100%	19%	96%	18%	99%	<b>42%</b>
Reduce time to competence	65%	15%	94%	24%	97%	<b>42%</b>
Increase sharing of good practice	100%	19%	96%	22%	98%	<b>44%</b>
Push updated information to employees at the point of need	97%	30%	93%	24%	99%	<b>44%</b>

Driver/Benefit	Retail Sector Average		Sample Average		Top Learning Companies	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
	seeking benefit	achieving benefit	seeking benefit	achieving benefit	seeking benefit	achieving benefit
Improve staff motivation	94%	28%	91%	22%	98%	<b>35%</b>
Increase self-directed learning	90%	14%	83%	22%	100%	<b>34%</b>
Integrate learning into the workflow	84%	19%	80%	16%	97%	<b>29%</b>
Improve performance management	77%	13%	82%	21%	97%	<b>32%</b>
<b>Drivers and benefits related to the efficiency of the training process</b>						
Improve management and administration of learning at work	100%	26%	95%	30%	97%	<b>51%</b>
Improve the way we gather and analyse data on learning impact	100%	16%	96%	17%	99%	<b>38%</b>
Improve the quality of learning delivered	100%	39%	98%	41%	98%	<b>63%</b>
Achieve greater consistency of learning	100%	29%	96%	32%	98%	<b>56%</b>
Increase volume of learning	94%	38%	91%	41%	91%	<b>65%</b>
Reduce training costs	90%	25%	88%	36%	90%	<b>53%</b>
Reduce time away from the job	94%	24%	89%	31%	93%	<b>46%</b>
Deliver greater value for money	94%	31%	94%	30%	96%	<b>45%</b>
Improve effectiveness of face-to-face learning	87%	37%	90%	38%	98%	<b>58%</b>
Extend learning to remote workers	84%	23%	83%	35%	90%	<b>61%</b>
<b>Drivers and benefits relating to mobile learning</b>						
Learners can use own mobile devices	87%	31%	81%	27%	89%	<b>44%</b>
Accessing support at the point of need	93%	15%	87%	11%	93%	<b>19%</b>
Improve communications between learners and tutors	80%	20%	76%	11%	87%	<b>19%</b>
Facilitate continuous learning	90%	13%	86%	17%	94%	<b>26%</b>
<b>Drivers and benefits relating to social and collaborative learning</b>						
Improve generation and sharing of user generated content	83%	12%	84%	12%	90%	<b>32%</b>
Improve application of learning back in the workplace	97%	7%	92%	13%	96%	<b>34%</b>
Encourage reflection	90%	7%	87%	12%	90%	<b>31%</b>
Develop external networks	67%	15%	74%	16%	80%	<b>24%</b>
Build networks inside the organisation	97%	21%	91%	28%	97%	<b>46%</b>
Promote organised training initiatives	93%	18%	89%	31%	91%	<b>51%</b>
Improve support for personal professional development	93%	14%	89%	21%	94%	<b>43%</b>
Allow learners to message/communicate in real time	83%	24%	82%	32%	90%	<b>51%</b>

## Appendix B. What skills are being offered and e-enabled?

A full discussion of the Towards Maturity Benchmark Research linked to skills and talent can be found in Section 2.3 in the 2015-16 Industry Benchmark report: *Embracing Change*.

Table 6: Percentage offering each skill

Skills topic	Retail Average		Sample Average		Top Learning Organisations	
	% offered	e-rating	% offered	e-rating	% offered	e-rating
Leadership and management skills	96%	0.53	95%	0.69	96%	<b>0.84</b>
Induction / Onboarding	100%	0.60	97%	0.41	97%	<b>0.60</b>
Health and safety	96%	0.65	88%	0.45	88%	<b>0.68</b>
IT user skills	80%	0.69	87%	0.69	91%	<b>0.84</b>
Team working / Working with others	79%	0.44	89%	0.41	94%	<b>0.60</b>
Communication / Interpersonal skills	84%	0.47	91%	0.45	94%	<b>0.68</b>
Industry-specific regulatory skills	83%	0.68	90%	0.63	94%	<b>0.77</b>
Customer handling/service	92%	0.46	79%	0.44	81%	<b>0.60</b>
Sales and marketing	75%	0.47	68%	0.44	78%	<b>0.60</b>
Company / Role specific skills	92%	0.51	87%	0.48	88%	<b>0.70</b>
Foreign language skills	38%	0.50	38%	0.45	46%	<b>0.56</b>
Basic skills (literacy, numeracy, etc.)	33%	0.46	45%	0.43	59%	<b>0.52</b>
IT professional skills	67%	0.64	73%	0.59	81%	<b>0.75</b>
Problem solving / Critical thinking	74%	0.42	71%	0.40	80%	<b>0.57</b>
L&D professional skills	70%	0.43	69%	0.41	76%	<b>0.54</b>
Internal systems and processes	88%	0.61	88%	0.57	96%	<b>0.76</b>
Project/service management	76%	0.44	82%	0.42	90%	<b>0.63</b>
Innovation / Creativity	67%	0.39	63%	0.36	79%	<b>0.51</b>
Learning and study skills	67%	0.43	51%	0.40	67%	<b>0.55</b>

Percentage that have offered each skill in the previous 12 months

'e-ratings' represents the proportion of each skill offered that is e-enabled.

## Appendix C. What technologies support modernisation?

A full discussion of the Towards Maturity Benchmark Research linked to technology can be found in Sections 2.2 and 5.2 in the 2015 Towards Maturity Benchmark report: *Embracing Change*.

*Table 7: Uptake of learning technologies*

Technology	Retail Average	Private Sector Average	2015 Sample Average	Top Learning Companies
<b>Technologies supporting the development and distribution of content</b>				
e-learning objects - 'off-the-shelf'	44%	67%	68%	<b>75%</b>
e-learning objects – custom made externally	68%	62%	61%	<b>71%</b>
e-learning objects – custom made in-house	80%	76%	76%	<b>93%</b>
All e-learning objects	96%	89%	90%	<b>98%</b>
User Generated Content	12%	32%	32%	<b>50%</b>
Best practice video – internal	68%	64%	61%	<b>89%</b>
Best practice video – external	46%	44%	44%	<b>66%</b>
All video	76%	70%	68%	<b>91%</b>
Podcasting	8%	27%	26%	<b>37%</b>
Online books	32%	49%	48%	<b>69%</b>
Open education resources /digital materials offered free at the point of use	48%	60%	62%	<b>82%</b>
Information repositories/learning portals - paid for services	40%	60%	56%	<b>77%</b>
Blogs by tutors or learners	16%	29%	30%	<b>47%</b>
In-house wikis	24%	31%	30%	<b>36%</b>
Job aids (e.g. pdf checklists, infographics)	68%	75%	74%	<b>88%</b>
<b>Technologies supporting management and administration</b>				
Surveys and questionnaires	68%	83%	81%	<b>92%</b>
Online assessment	56%	74%	72%	<b>90%</b>
Skills diagnostic tools (including simulations)	32%	36%	35%	<b>62%</b>
Online evaluation of business impact	24%	35%	32%	<b>50%</b>
Competency management systems	16%	35%	34%	<b>54%</b>
e-Portfolios	4%	14%	18%	<b>30%</b>
<b>Technologies supporting collaboration</b>				
Virtual worlds (e.g. SecondLife)	9%	5%	5%	<b>12%</b>

Technology	Retail Average	Private Sector Average	2015 Sample Average	Top Learning Companies
Virtual meetings (e.g. WebEx, LiveMeeting)	88%	82%	79%	<b>93%</b>
VOIP conferencing (e.g. Skype, Google+)	48%	59%	60%	<b>74%</b>
Virtual classroom (live)	63%	50%	45%	<b>72%</b>
All live online	88%	87%	86%	<b>97%</b>
Immersive learning environments	36%	32%	31%	<b>54%</b>
Communities of practice	64%	51%	50%	<b>68%</b>
External social networking/peer-to-peer sites	52%	42%	44%	<b>59%</b>
In-house social media (e.g. Yammer, Ning)	68%	54%	49%	<b>73%</b>
Learning communities (e.g. action learning)	64%	46%	46%	<b>65%</b>
Feeds/curation/social bookmarking	28%	12%	12%	<b>20%</b>
<b>Technology tools and development environments</b>				
Internal/Enterprise-wide information services	64%	78%	76%	<b>87%</b>
Electronic Performance Support Systems	38%	38%	36%	<b>53%</b>
Cloud-based content (e.g. Google Docs)	32%	50%	49%	<b>62%</b>
Software as a Service	20%	27%	25%	<b>34%</b>
Rapid application development tools	80%	64%	63%	<b>78%</b>
Open source e-learning development tools	44%	28%	35%	<b>50%</b>
Web 2.0 widgets for personalising learning	28%	13%	13%	<b>24%</b>
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	42%	28%	28%	<b>40%</b>
Learning Record Store (e.g. Tin Can / xAPI)	33%	22%	21%	<b>39%</b>
Achievement goals, Badges, Points systems	38%	20%	19%	<b>29%</b>
Single Sign On (SSO) process	70%	49%	47%	<b>62%</b>

*Percentage using each technology*

## Appendix D. What are the barriers to progress?

*Note: Percentages in the following table refer to the proportion of the 2015 respondents that cited the factor as a barrier to development. Lower percentages indicate this factor is less of a barrier.*

*Table 8: Barriers to technology-enabled learning and development*

Barrier	Retail Average	Private Sector Average	2015 Sample Average	Top Learning Companies
Not seen as a management priority	50%	46%	48%	<b>33%</b>
L&D staff lack knowledge of potential of technology	46%	48%	50%	<b>41%</b>
Lack of skills amongst L&D staff	58%	54%	56%	<b>37%</b>
Lack of skills amongst employees to manage own learning	71%	59%	63%	<b>48%</b>
Reluctance by classroom training staff to adopt new technology	29%	28%	30%	<b>24%</b>
Reluctance by users to learn with technology	58%	40%	47%	<b>40%</b>
Reluctance by senior managers to learn online	54%	48%	48%	<b>44%</b>
Reluctance by line managers to encourage new ways	75%	55%	55%	<b>49%</b>
Cost of set-up, development and maintenance	63%	63%	63%	<b>58%</b>
Lack of attractive, high-quality e-learning that supports	50%	44%	41%	<b>34%</b>
Poor past experience of e-learning	38%	50%	48%	<b>46%</b>
e-learning too generic for our needs	38%	46%	48%	<b>38%</b>
Unreliable ICT infrastructure/low bandwidth	50%	57%	60%	<b>58%</b>
Insufficient staff access to computers	58%	21%	21%	<b>12%</b>
Learner ICT skills	50%	26%	33%	<b>19%</b>
Lack of support from IT department	46%	30%	33%	<b>20%</b>
Pace of technological change	46%	41%	41%	<b>43%</b>

## Appendix E. Implementation Practice Benchmarks

The **Towards Maturity Index (TMI)** provides a benchmark measurement of e-learning implementation practice across the six workstreams of good practice within the Towards Maturity Model. The TMI is calculated from answers to all of the statements in the implementation section of the Towards Maturity Benchmark (individuals can compare their own organisation’s practice using the Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre under My Review, Accelerating Performance).

Towards Maturity Model work stream <sup>10</sup>	Top performing organisations, mature in their use of learning technologies, are increasingly likely to:
	<p><b>Align implementation with strategic and tactical needs of the organisation.</b>  <b>Strategic alignment</b> supports long-term organisational goals with clearly defined vision (endorsed by business leaders) which is flexible enough to shift with changing business priorities. <b>Business alignment</b> ensures relevance, delivering short-term results.</p>
	<p><b>Provide staff with the confidence, motivation and opportunity to learn in a way that suits them best.</b> They consider <b>choices</b> for their staff (in terms of control, access and information available to them) as well as addressing issues of <b>motivation</b> (such as recognition, career development and supporting work-life balance).</p>
	<p><b>Maximise opportunities to integrate learning into the wider working context.</b> They consider <b>technical environment</b> (IT relationships and infrastructure), <b>work culture</b> (line management and workplace performance culture) and talent <b>management</b> (proactively supporting the wider talent strategy).</p>
	<p><b>Build the skills and confidence of the L&amp;D professionals who are supporting workplace learning and performance.</b> This includes understanding current skills and attitudes (<b>L&amp;D essentials</b>), <b>designing learning</b>, <b>transferring learning</b>, <b>supporting performance</b> and <b>facilitating collaboration</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Focus on change management and marketing activities to engage influential stakeholders.</b> <b>Implementing change</b> effectively within the business includes <b>involving leaders</b> for top-down support, <b>engaging trainers</b> providing critical integration with the classroom and <b>empowering individuals</b> to create engaged and confident learners.</p>
	<p><b>Understand and highlight business impact</b> by <b>gathering feedback</b>, <b>measuring effectiveness</b> in terms of business metrics and <b>communicating benefits</b> back to key stakeholders.</p>

<sup>10</sup> For a more in-depth article on the Towards Maturity model – see *Impact*, the journal of applied research in workplace e-learning at: <http://www.towardsmaturity.org/article/2010/01/15/impact-journal-applied-research-workplace-e-learn/>



The Towards Maturity Index is a single benchmark of implementation maturity across the Towards Maturity Model. Improving the TM Index will help organisations improve adoption and overall performance.

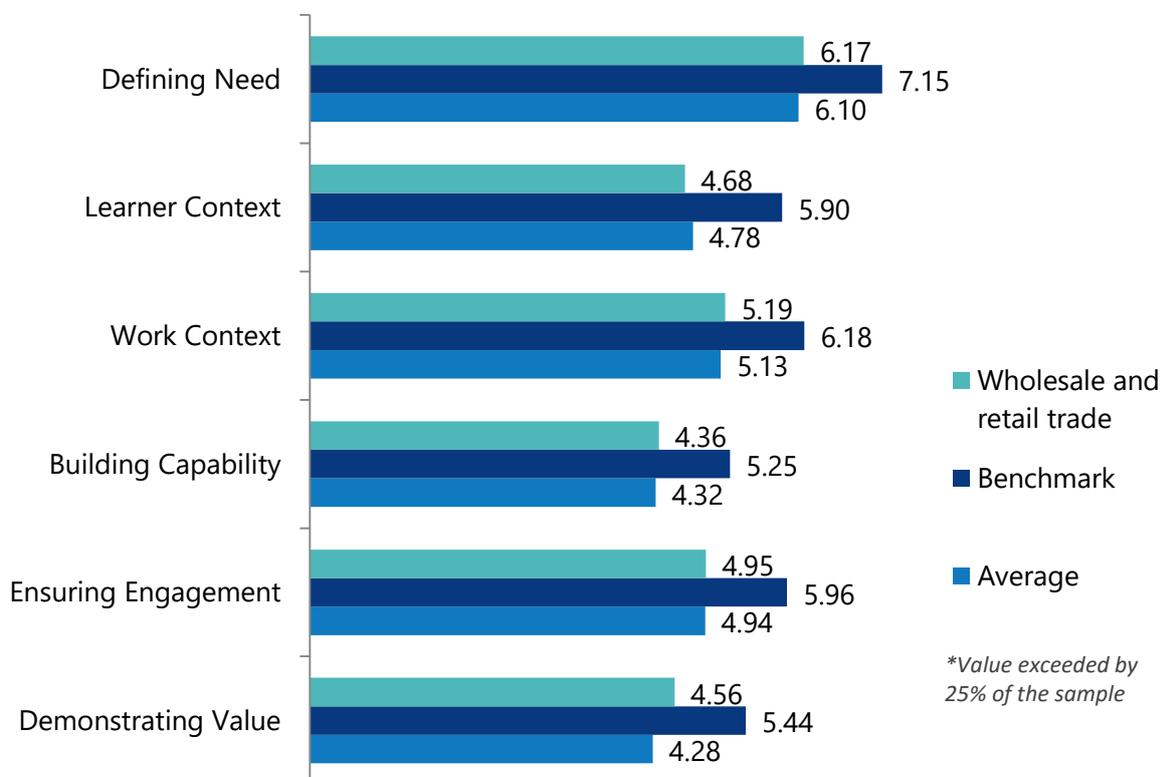
### The Towards Maturity Index

Retail businesses 2014	Retail businesses 2015	Sample Average	TM Benchmark <sup>11</sup>
48.36	<b>48.39</b>	47.37	58.57

High values for the Towards Maturity Index are independently correlated with high values for the Key Performance Indicators.

The Towards Maturity Benchmark is set at the level exceeded by the top 25% of the TMI sample each year.

Figure 11: Towards Maturity Workstreams



<sup>11</sup> Value exceeded by one-quarter of respondents to the 2015-16 study.

Table 9: Towards Maturity Action Areas

Workstream	Action area	Retail 2014	Retail 2015	2015 Average	TM * Benchmark
Defining Need	Strategic alignment	5.81	6.21	6.14	<b>7.29</b>
	Business alignment	5.93	6.19	6.24	<b>7.17</b>
Learner Context	Individual choices	5.37	5.32	5.41	<b>6.80</b>
	Individual motivation	3.85	4.05	4.33	<b>5.40</b>
Work Context	Technical environment	4.61	5.31	5.19	<b>6.40</b>
	Talent management	4.16	5.10	5.21	<b>6.33</b>
	Work culture	5.37	5.37	5.49	<b>6.60</b>
Building Capability	L&D Essentials	4.28	5.88	5.36	<b>6.50</b>
	Designing learning	4.50	5.32	5.19	<b>6.40</b>
	Transferring learning	3.29	3.23	3.38	<b>4.20</b>
	Supporting performance	4.45	3.98	4.29	<b>5.40</b>
	Facilitating collaboration	3.69	3.54	3.83	<b>4.80</b>
Ensuring Engagement	Empowering individuals	4.24	4.97	5.07	<b>6.12</b>
	Engaging trainers	3.68	4.28	4.79	<b>6.20</b>
	Involving leaders	4.70	4.97	5.05	<b>6.17</b>
	Implementing change	4.78	5.82	5.37	<b>6.40</b>
Demonstrating Value	Gathering feedback	4.47	4.21	4.24	<b>5.40</b>
	Measuring effectiveness	3.50	4.62	4.16	<b>5.21</b>
	Communicating benefit	3.63	6.21	4.80	<b>6.20</b>

\*Value exceeded by 25% of the sample

Figure 12: Degree to which 70:20:10 is being implemented in retail businesses



## About Kallidus

Kallidus is an award-winning supplier of integrated SaaS learning, performance, 360 and talent management technologies, bespoke e-learning content and best-in-class curated e-learning content packages.



Dedicated to customer excellence, Kallidus provides trusted learning and talent solutions and consultancy services to private and public sector organisations, including some of the world's best-known brands like McDonald's, O2, Transport for London and Eurostar, to help achieve business transformation and drive long-term performance success.

To find out more about the solutions Kallidus develops in partnership with its customers visit [www.kallidus.com/customers/case-studies](http://www.kallidus.com/customers/case-studies) or explore Kallidus' customer video testimonials at [www.kallidus.com/resources/videos](http://www.kallidus.com/resources/videos)

For further information, visit [www.kallidus.com](http://www.kallidus.com) or follow [@Kallidus](https://twitter.com/Kallidus) on Twitter.

## About Towards Maturity



*Towards Maturity is an independent benchmarking practice that provides authoritative research and expert advisory services to help assess and improve the effectiveness and consistency of L&D performance within organisations. The Towards Maturity portfolio includes:*

### **The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study™**

[www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmark)

The Towards Maturity Benchmark Study is an internationally recognised longitudinal study on the effective implementation of learning innovation based on the input of 4,500 organisations and 23,000 learners over 13 years. Towards Maturity continuously surveys and studies how people learn at work. This data is used to help L&D leaders assess and improve the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their learning provision. Previous research papers and sector specific reports are available through the [Towards Maturity Shop](#).

### **Towards Maturity Benchmark Centre™**

[www.towardsmaturity.org/mybenchmark](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/mybenchmark)

A dedicated centre to complete your Benchmark and apply everything we know about good practice to gain personal, practical time-saving advice in one place. Follow the online three-step continuous improvement process and Benchmark your current approach with your peers.

### **Towards Maturity Strategic Review™**

[www.towardsmaturity.org/strategicreview](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/strategicreview)

The Towards Maturity Strategic Review is a deeper analysis and comparison of your Benchmark against those who are already utilising learning innovation to deliver bottom line results and success. It helps you analyse and interpret your personal benchmark report to establish a baseline and identify the next action steps for performance improvement leading to good practice within your organisation.

### **Towards Maturity Learning Landscape™**

[www.towardsmaturity.org/learner](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/learner)

The Towards Maturity Learning Landscape provides critical insights to help you understand the behaviours of your staff so you can design learning solutions that can be embedded more effectively into the workflow. It supports new learning technology strategies whilst mitigating risk when introducing new programmes or models of learning.



### **Towards Maturity Sector Benchmark Groups**

[www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmarkgroups](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/benchmarkgroups)

Join senior L&D leaders in your sector three times a year to use the Towards Maturity Benchmark to support performance improvement, prioritise action planning and accelerate progress. Attendance supports faster business results, strategic and tactical insights and an invaluable opportunity to network.

Visit [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org) for more information.

Follow on Twitter: [@towardsmaturity](https://twitter.com/towardsmaturity)

Email: [benchmark@towardsmaturity.org](mailto:benchmark@towardsmaturity.org)

Tel: +44 (0)208 542 2331