

# A New Strategy For Corporate Learning: Growth In The Flow Of Work - Josh Bersin

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## Executive Summary

This article addresses the challenge corporate learning and development (L&D) teams face in retaining talent and building organizational capability amid rapid industry change. The author, Josh Bersin, argues that corporate training must evolve beyond skills acquisition toward what he terms 'Growth In The Flow Of Work' — a philosophy centred on career development, experience-based learning, and multi-disciplinary capability building. Drawing on a proprietary survey of over 1,000 companies across 100+ practices, Bersin's research identifies four primary drivers of positive business outcomes: career growth programs, leadership development, learning culture, and L&D innovation. The article also cites external data — including Protocol and Pew Research findings on wage gains for job-changers — to contextualise the urgency of the retention problem. Bersin further illustrates the framework through the healthcare industry, where internal mobility and career pathways are positioned as models for other sectors. The article concludes that L&D leaders must move beyond technology adoption toward systemic capability development, talent mobility, and career architecture. Notably, the content functions simultaneously as research summary, opinion commentary, and promotion of the author's corporate membership programme and forthcoming book.

## Key Insights

1. Proprietary research across 1,000+ companies identified career growth programs, leadership development, learning culture, and L&D innovation as the four top drivers of financial, human capital, and innovation outcomes.
2. Skills development alone is argued to have limited organisational value without accompanying experiential learning, mentoring, job mobility, and contextual application — a finding supported by a cited McKinsey study on long-term earnings growth.
3. The healthcare industry is presented as a leading example of embedding career pathways, internal mobility, and adjacent-skills development into organisational culture, despite not being technologically advanced in L&D platforms.

## Practical Takeaways

- Organisations pursuing L&D maturity are described as needing to move beyond LMS and LXP platform deployment toward capability academies, talent intelligence, and integrated career pathway infrastructure.
- The 'Dyad Leadership' model observed in healthcare — pairing technical experts with operational leaders — is presented as a cross-functional teaming approach that operationalises deep skills at

scale.

## Frameworks Mentioned

**T-Shaped Skills** — A career development model in which an individual develops deep expertise in one domain (the vertical bar) while building broader competency across adjacent disciplines (the horizontal bar).

## Critical Analysis

**Strengths:** The article synthesises a large proprietary dataset (1,000+ companies, 100+ practices) and situates findings within broader labour market trends using external citations. The healthcare case study adds qualitative depth. The core argument — that experiential growth matters more than skills training in isolation — is consistent with established learning science. **Limitations:** The proprietary research is available only to paying members, making independent verification impossible. The article does not disclose methodology, sampling approach, or how 'financial results' and 'human capital results' were operationalised. The author has a clear commercial interest — the article promotes a membership programme, a forthcoming book, and the author's consulting brand, which introduces promotional bias. External citations (Protocol, Pew Research, McKinsey) are referenced without formal attribution, making them difficult to locate or validate. The concept 'Growth In The Flow Of Work' is presented as a research-derived insight but is also attributed to a named analyst within the author's own firm, suggesting it is an internally coined term rather than an independently validated construct.

## Organizational Practice

The article describes several observable organisational practices: career pathway development with self-service career tools and internal coaching; capability academies as structured learning units aligned to business functions; talent marketplaces enabling internal mobility and job rotation; 'Dyad Leadership' in healthcare pairing clinical experts with operational managers; and the use of skills taxonomies and talent intelligence platforms to map future workforce needs. Healthcare organisations such as Providence, NY Presbyterian, and Advent Health are cited as examples of embedding career growth into organisational culture.

## Strategic Implications

The article's findings suggest a maturation curve in corporate L&D investment, where technology adoption (LMS, LXP) is increasingly treated as foundational rather than differentiating, and where competitive advantage is framed as emerging from career architecture, internal mobility infrastructure, and cross-functional capability development. The framing of 'growth' as distinct from 'learning' signals a potential repositioning of the L&D function toward broader talent and organisational development responsibilities. The scale of voluntary job movement cited (30%+ annually, 60% crossing industries) points to retention as a primary PMS-adjacent concern driving L&D investment decisions.

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**Validation Status:** passed

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