

# Unlocking employee potential: How adaptive learning is transforming workplace learning - Training Journal

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## Executive Summary

This article, authored by Camilia Miccolis, Director of UKI and Netherlands at Rise Up, addresses the limitations of traditional workplace training and presents adaptive learning as a more effective alternative. The central argument is that one-size-fits-all training programmes fail to meet the diverse developmental needs of modern employees, and that AI-driven adaptive learning platforms offer a superior approach through personalisation, real-time feedback, and continuous development. Key evidence cited includes a McKinsey statistic that approximately 90% of organisations anticipate workforce knowledge and experience gaps, and data from Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2024 report linking employee engagement to a 78% reduction in absenteeism, a 68% increase in wellbeing, and a 23% boost to profitability. The article concludes that adaptive learning — through mechanisms such as spaced repetition, interactive activities, and mobile accessibility — enables organisations to develop a more agile, skills-first workforce while improving retention and reducing attrition. The piece positions adaptive learning as essential rather than optional for contemporary organisations.

## Key Insights

1. Approximately 90% of organisations, according to McKinsey, anticipate knowledge and experience gaps in their workforce that cannot be addressed through traditional static training or unsustainable hiring rates.
2. Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2024 report associates engaged workers with a 78% reduction in absenteeism, a 68% increase in wellbeing, and a 23% boost to profitability, which the author connects to the case for personalised learning.
3. Adaptive learning employs techniques such as spaced repetition and interactive simulations — approaches the article claims improve long-term knowledge retention compared to periodic, passive assessments used in traditional training.

## Practical Takeaways

- Organisations experiencing training disengagement or low retention rates may find value in exploring adaptive learning platforms that deliver content based on individual progress, role requirements, and career ambitions rather than uniform course structures.
- Mobile-accessible, on-the-job learning modules that address knowledge gaps as they emerge represent a delivery model described as improving uptake and retention compared to scheduled, classroom-style training.

## Critical Analysis

**Strengths:** The article references two credible external sources — McKinsey and Gallup's 2024 report — which provide a factual basis for the problem framing around workforce skill gaps and engagement. The description of adaptive learning mechanisms such as spaced repetition and real-time feedback aligns with established cognitive science principles. **Limitations:** The article is authored by a senior commercial director at Rise Up, an adaptive learning platform vendor, creating a direct conflict of interest that is not disclosed within the text. No independent research specifically validating the effectiveness of adaptive learning in enterprise settings is cited. Claims about adaptive learning outcomes are asserted rather than evidenced. The Gallup engagement statistics are used loosely — they measure engagement broadly, not the specific impact of adaptive learning. The tone is promotional and the conclusion that adaptive learning is now 'essential' is a commercial position, not a research finding. The article does not address implementation challenges, cost considerations, or contexts where adaptive learning may be less effective.

## Organizational Practice

The article describes organisations moving toward skills-first talent models that prioritise individual abilities over job titles or formal qualifications. It describes adaptive learning platforms that deliver personalised training modules via mobile devices, use AI and analytics to track learner progress, apply spaced repetition techniques, and provide real-time feedback — replacing scheduled group webinars and standardised training programmes.

## Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader industry narrative positioning AI-driven personalisation as the dominant direction for corporate learning and development. If the engagement and retention figures cited from Gallup are accepted as proxies for learning effectiveness, the business case for investment in adaptive learning infrastructure becomes more prominent in PMS conversations. The skills-first framing also suggests a potential shift in how performance management systems define and measure employee capability — moving away from role-based assessments toward individual competency tracking, which has implications for how performance data is collected and interpreted.

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**Validation Status:** passed

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