

25 Professional Development Activities, Ideas, & Games - Paycor

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Executive Summary

This article addresses the challenge of employee retention through professional development by arguing that structured learning activities are essential for keeping talented employees engaged and preventing turnover. Paycor presents 25 specific professional development activities organized into individual, team-based, and interactive categories, ranging from skills-based workshops and mentoring programs to hackathons and gamified learning experiences. The content cites statistics showing that organizations with strong learning cultures are 92% more likely to develop innovative products and 52% more productive than competitors, while 61% of employees consider learning opportunities important for staying in their roles. The article concludes by positioning Paycor's HCM software as the solution for managing and tracking these development initiatives, emphasizing the need for integrated talent management systems to execute effective professional development programs.

Key Insights

1. Organizations with strong learning cultures demonstrate 92% higher innovation rates and 52% higher productivity compared to competitors
2. 61% of employees cite learning opportunities as a key factor in their decision to remain with their current employer
3. Cross-functional projects and peer learning approaches can simultaneously address skill development and organizational silos

Practical Takeaways

- Professional development activities should combine formal learning with immediate practical application to maximize effectiveness
- Team-based development activities like hackathons and problem-solving challenges can generate business solutions while building collaborative skills

Frameworks Mentioned

360-Degree Review — Multi-angle feedback approach gathering input from supervisors, peers, and direct reports to provide comprehensive performance insights

Critical Analysis

The article provides a comprehensive and well-organized list of professional development activities with practical descriptions. However, it suffers from clear vendor bias, as it's published by Paycor to promote their HCM software. The statistics cited appear credible but lack detailed sourcing beyond general attribution to Harvard Business Review and other sources. The content transitions from genuinely helpful guidance to sales promotion in the final sections, undermining its objectivity. While the 25 activities listed are valuable and actionable, readers should be aware that the article's ultimate purpose is lead generation rather than neutral professional guidance.

Organizational Practice

The article describes organizations implementing structured professional development programs including skills-based workshops, cross-functional projects, mentoring programs, job shadowing, leadership development programs, external conference attendance, certification courses, executive coaching, and gamified learning experiences. These practices are presented as methods to improve retention, succession planning, productivity, and employee engagement.

Strategic Implications

The article's findings suggest a shift toward more structured and diverse professional development approaches, with organizations increasingly viewing learning programs as strategic retention tools rather than administrative requirements. The emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, cross-functional collaboration, and integrated technology platforms indicates trends toward more collaborative and technology-enabled development strategies.

Validation Status: passed
