

Sponge.

Unforgettable learning



**FOSWAY
GROUP**

Thinking and working differently to create strategic momentum

How L&D becomes a strategic partner

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Introductions



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What to *expect today*

1. The strategic environment for L&D – desires and realities
2. The essential components of a ‘strategic partner’
3. Sponge’s 3E methodology
4. Q&A /open conversation

Thinking and working differently to create strategic momentum

The strategic environment for learning



“Businesses get the learning and
development they deserve...”

Adapted from Warren Buffet’s annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders, 1979

www.berkshirehathaway.com/letters/1979.html

In a world of uncertainty, it's the organisations that adapt fastest and most successfully to change that thrive



63%

of business leaders highlight turbulent times ahead and have a negative outlook for the future

[Global Risks Report,](#)
World Economic Forum (WEF)



45%

of CEOs believe their company will not be economically viable in 10 years if it continues its current path

[PWC's 27th CEO survey](#)

“Beware of the assumption that the way you work is the best way simply because it's the way you've done it before.”

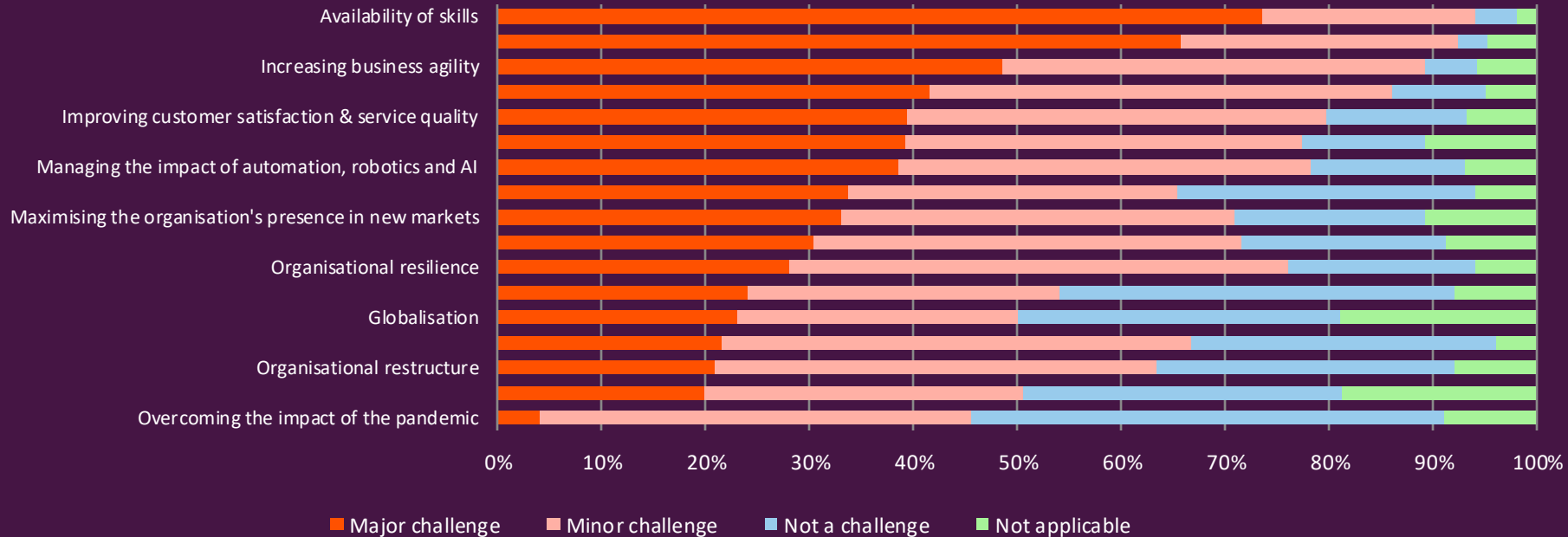
RICK RUBIN

The Creative Act: A Way of Being

Businesses are not looking for *learning solutions*

Fosway HR Realities, 2023

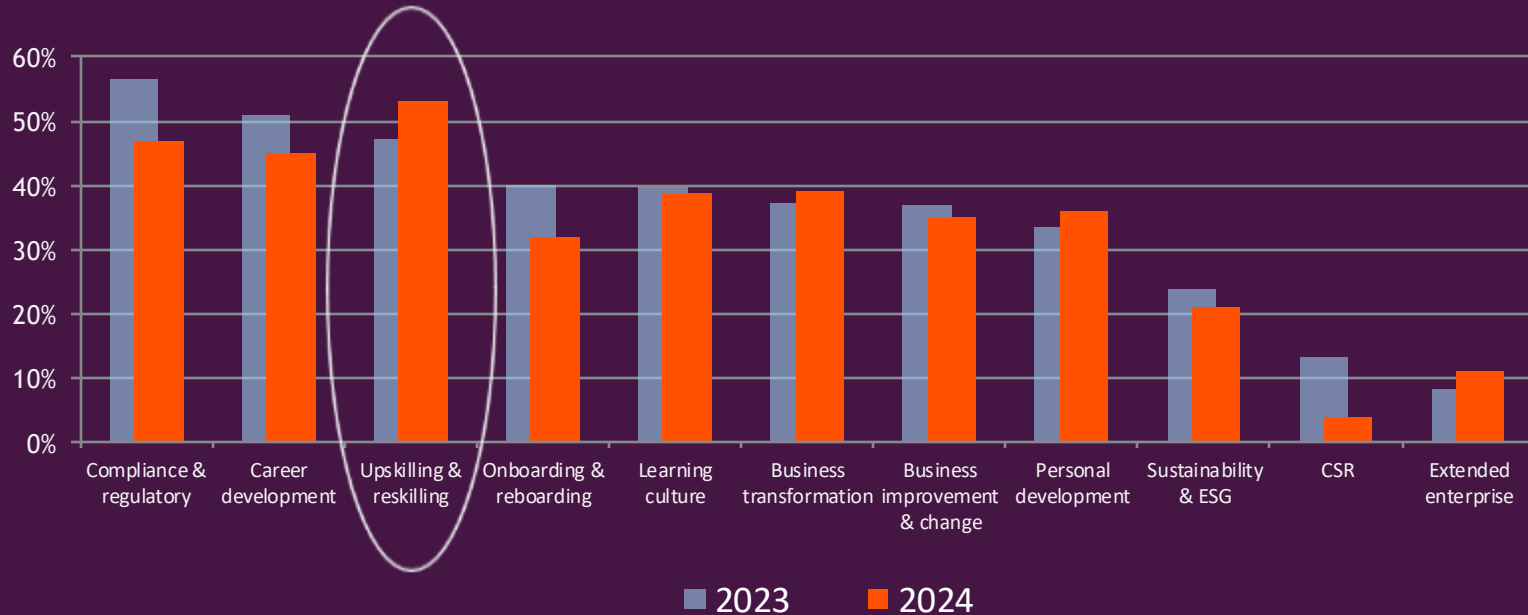
Most significant business challenges?



Learning priorities are shifting... *somewhat*...

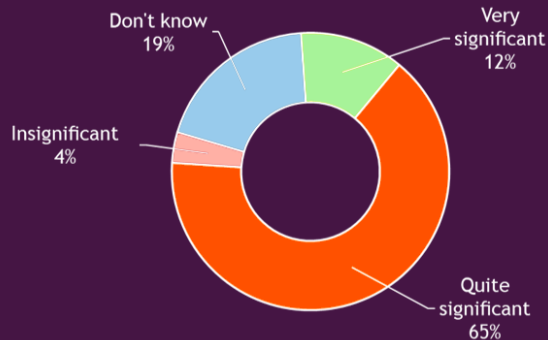
Digital Learning Realities 2024

What are the top priorities for your learning strategy for the year ahead?

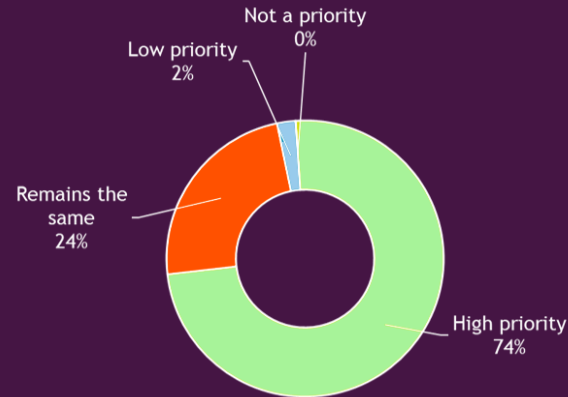


Skills development is a route to *strategic relevance for L&D*

Overall, how significant are skills gaps in your organisation today?

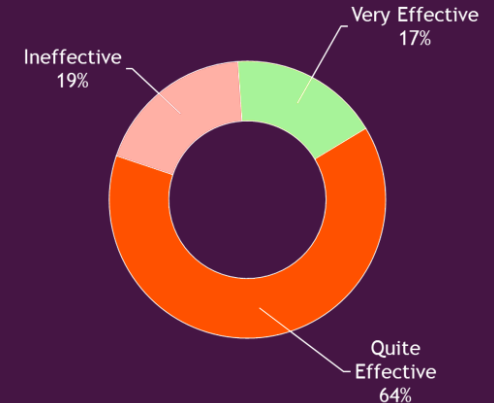


How much of a priority is building skills becoming to the future success of your organisation?

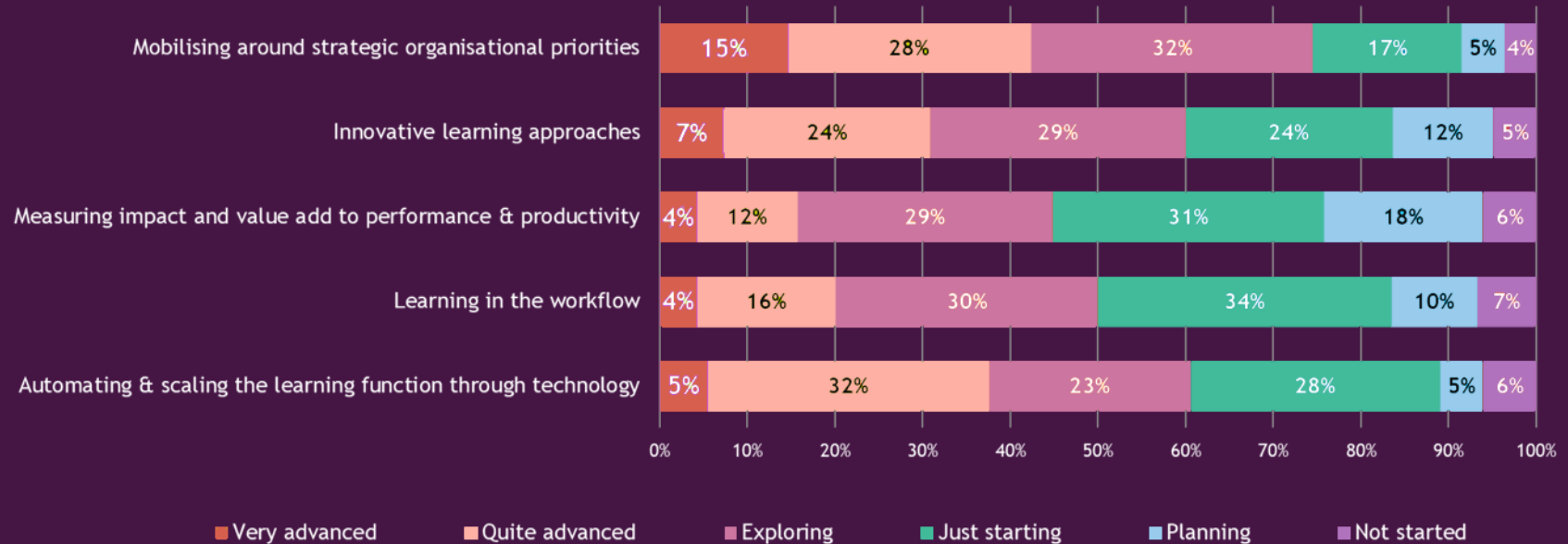


How effective is your learning strategy at delivering the following?

Upskilling and reskilling



How advanced is your L&D function in executing the following?

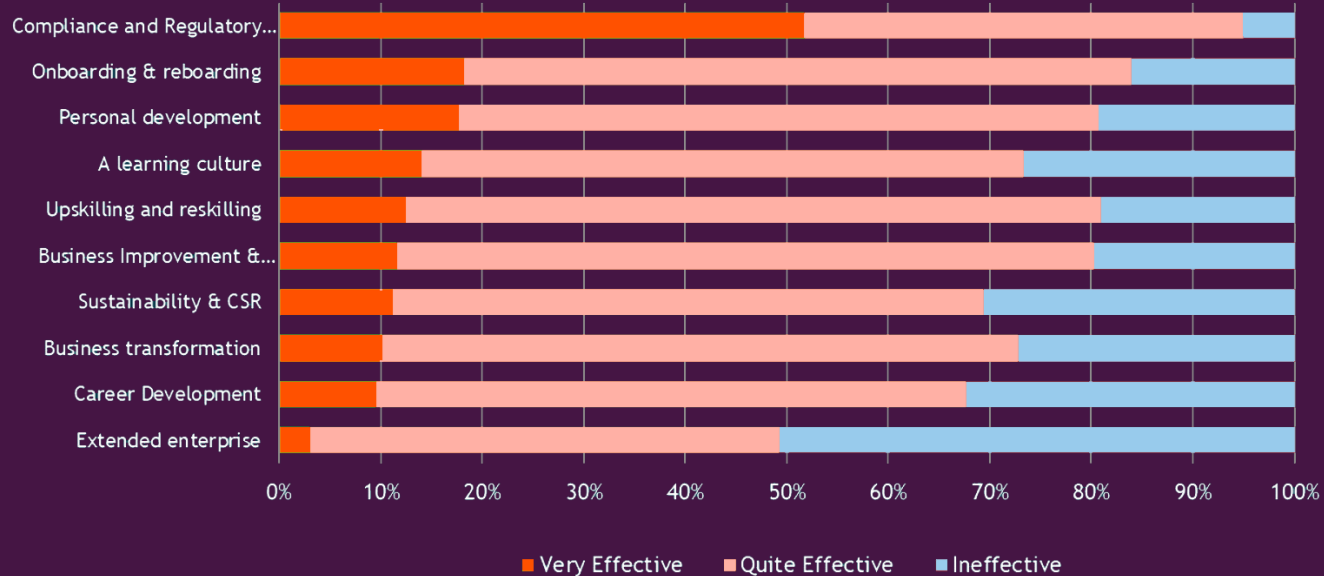



SURVEY QUESTION #1

How advanced is your L&D function in mobilising
around strategic organisational priorities?

But confidence in delivering compliance objectives dwarfs other needs

How effective is your learning strategy at delivering the following?





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SURVEY QUESTION #2

Do you believe your organisation is
unlocking the full value and potential of
learning and development?

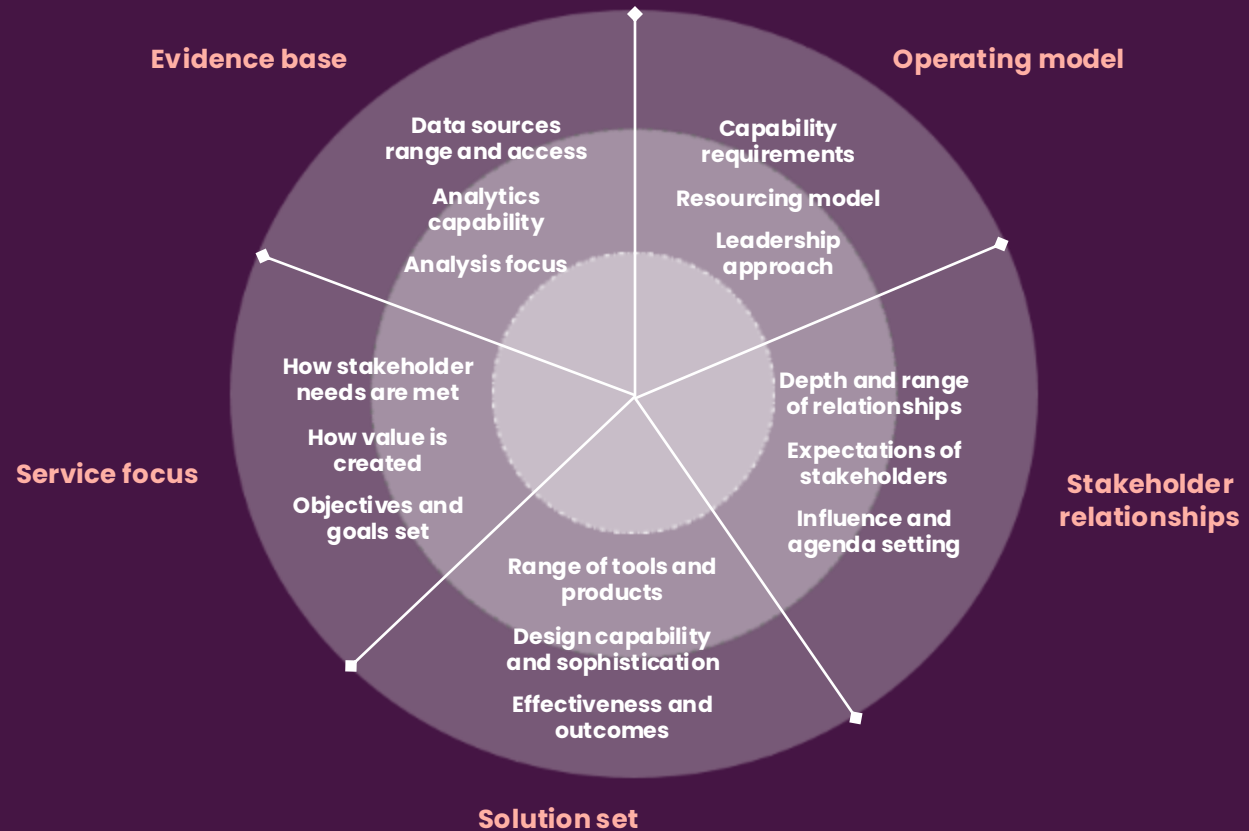
Thinking and working differently to create strategic momentum

The essential components of a strategic partner

The background consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of pink and orange. A large, light pink shape is on the left, a darker pink shape is on the right, and a bright orange shape is at the top. The text is centered in the white space between these shapes.

“The signal of true strategic partnership is the ability to influence business decision making.”

Five elements of corporate learning service value



Some key characteristics of *solid partnerships*



Co-creation and shared planning



Listening and understanding



Innovation and stimulus
/provocation



Shared risk



Communication – simple, clear
and consistent



Insight from evidence and
experience



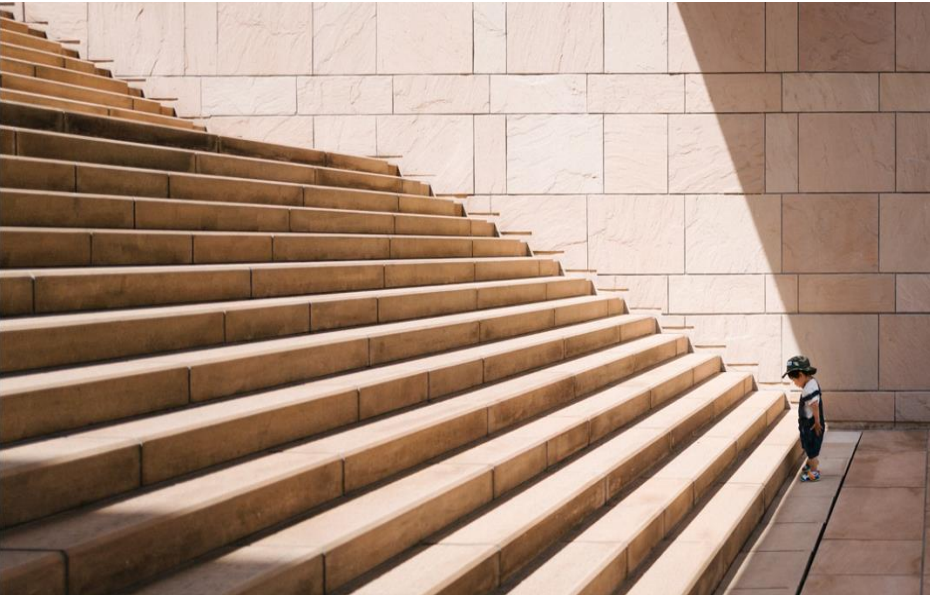
Feedback – formal and informal



Clear expectations

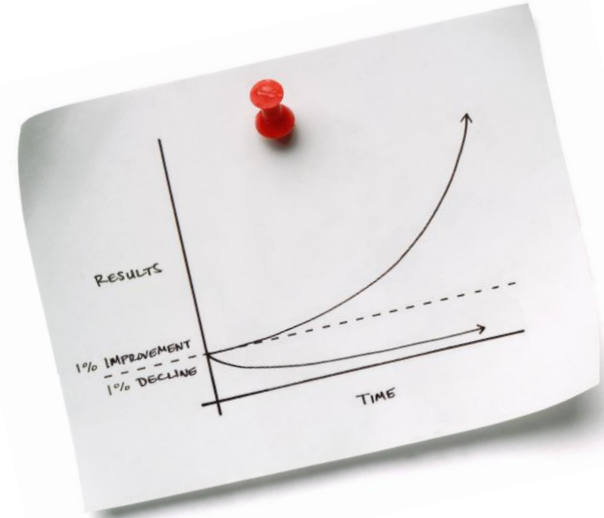
Sponge's "3E" methodology

We need to rethink what it means to be *strategic* in the reality of our jobs and organisations



What if being more strategic came down to our daily habits?

Daily (strategic) habits
= powerful results.



1% better every day

1% worse every day for one year. $0.99^{365} = 00.03$

1% better every day for one year. $1.01^{365} = 37.78$

You've been thinking strategically this whole time

Where are we now?

Where do we want to go?

What are the things we know
are working?

What are we unsure about?

What's our best 'bet' for success?

What's the best way of getting there?

(And how do we know that?)

(And how can we learn more
about it?)

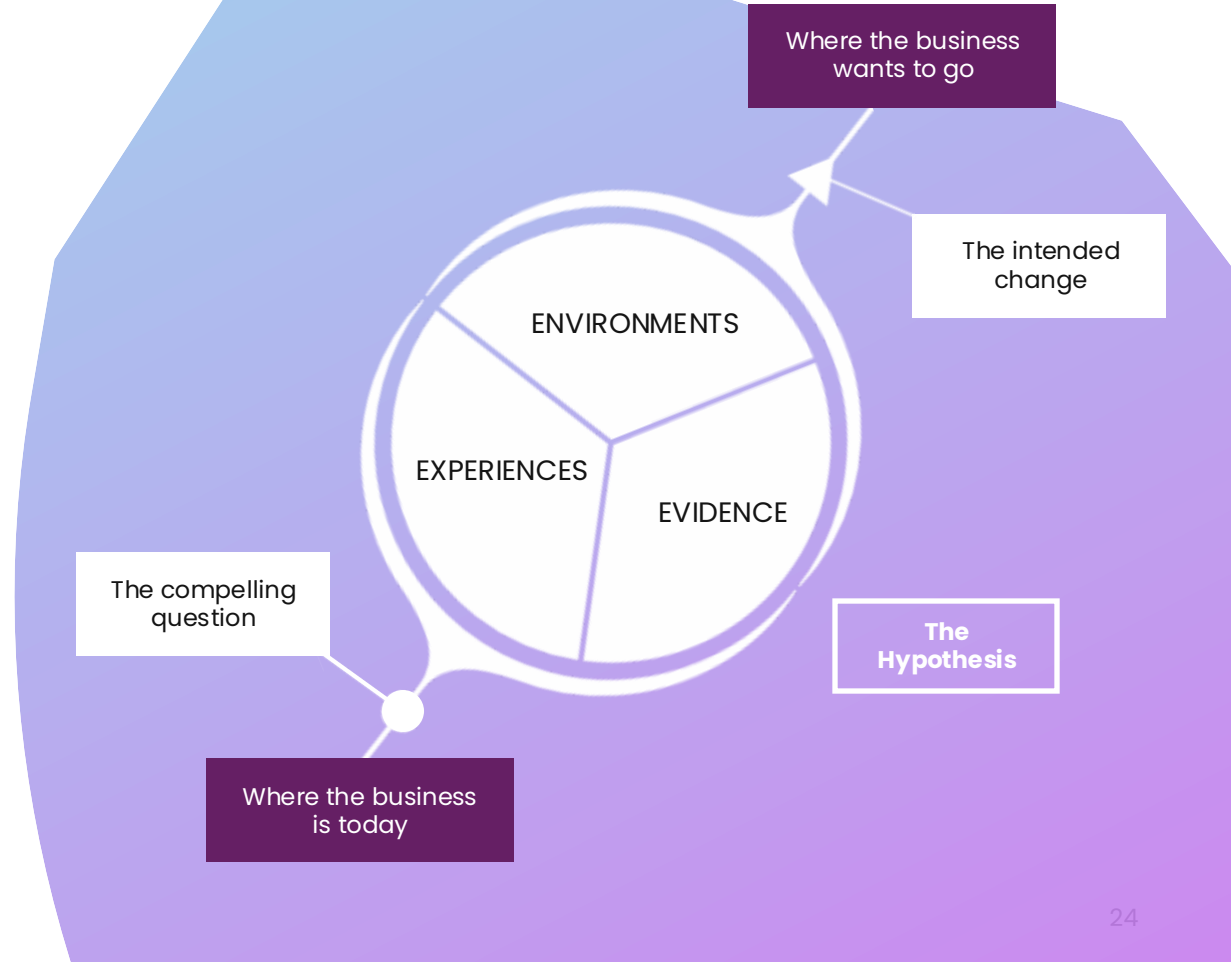
How can we make stronger
connections between what we do
to the business?

What is the best hypothesis of things
we need to do to add value to where
we want to be?



What is “3E” Learning Strategy?

- A mental “napkin” exercise
- A calibration tool (optimising)
- A diagnostic tool (pain points, opportunities)
- A reality check
- An ROI calculator
- A way to document and evidence your emergent strategic needs



Step 1:

Capture the big picture.

Step 2:

Draft the compelling question.

Step 3:

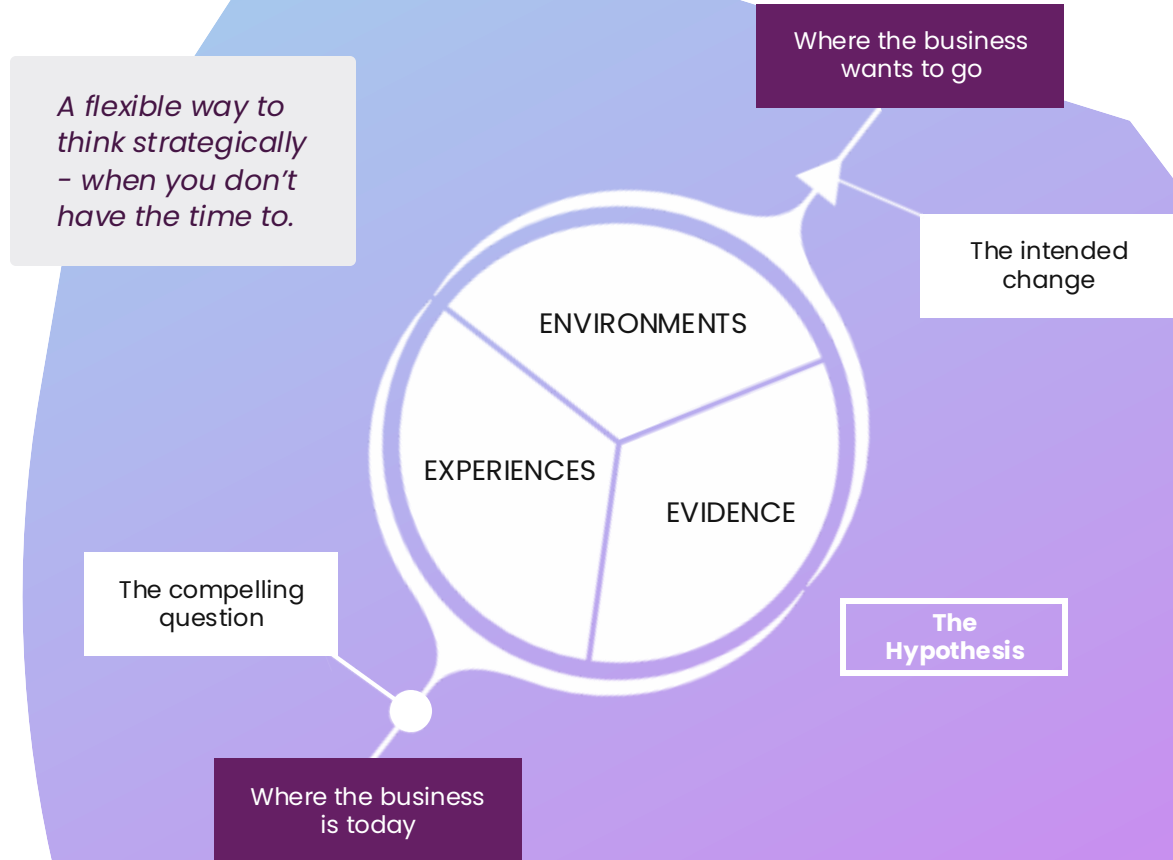
Craft your 3E hypothesis.

Step 4:

Analyse. Strategize. Iterate.



“3E” Learning Strategy



Ingredients of a great compelling question.

1. It reframes the challenge.
2. It uses the language of “How” (design thinking).
3. It is mapped to a business imperative.
4. It doesn’t contain the words “training” or “learning.”
5. It is *compelling* (people are energised around solving it and it is an invitation for collaboration).



Examples of compelling questions.

"How do we support our People Leaders to ensure all employees have a consistent experience – helping us become the best place to work in the industry?"

How do we enable rapid and successful integration of our employees into the world of R&D?

"How do we make our sustainability mission relatable, actionable, and aligned across our global teams?"

"How do we upskill our creators to increase profitability and reduce current drop off rates?"

"How do we unlock the potential of our frontline workers to create brand ambassadors that elevate customer experience?"

Changing the narrative through the Compelling Question

Design a content approach to create an empowered and capable organisation with a clear understanding of key sustainability topics, the sustainability strategy, and the role key groups and individuals play in achieving our goals.

How do we make our sustainability mission relatable, understandable, actionable, and aligned across the business?

The 3E Equation



Example

- “Brand campaign”
- In-person kick off
- Gamified “Customer for a day” blended XP
- Post-learning soft-skill course enrichment
- Manager exclusive training
- Cross-sell incentives

- Email
- Mobile app
- LXP
- Retail stores
- Rewards platform

- Pilot group
- A/B testing
- ESS results
- Part-time employee retention
- Organisational pride
- Sales results



How do we create better brand ambassadors to elevate our in-store experience and lift retail sales?

Why?

- The medium is the message.
- Highly shareable.
- Others can see their role/opportunity in here.

You are not the only person trying to impact this

The Client's 3E Equation

- In-person kick off
- Gamified Carbon Awareness Module
- Exclusive Leadership training
- Bitesize micro-modules
- Diagnostic Modules
- Social Learning
- Sustainability Events

- Email
- Virtual Event
- LXP / LMS
- Informative reports
- Community
- Coaching

- Initiatives
- Decision Making
- Project creation
- Employee attraction / retention
- Organisational pride
- Sustainability results
- Information creation



“How do we make our sustainability mission relatable, understandable, actionable and aligned across the business?”

x% increase in requests for further learning

x% of conversations & sustainability related decision making

x% of sustainability goals delivered

What is the urgency of answering this question?

Do I have the right technology to support the experiences and evidence I require?

Are we missing a comms layer?

How do we get the right experience to respond to this challenge?

Is my team set up in the right way to deliver on this hypothesis?

Who else in the business can help answer this question?



+



+



+



=

Strategy

Do we need a consistent data strategy?

Do I need help getting the question right?

Do I have a talent/skills gap? Capacity gap?

Is this better to be "centralised?"

What are the hallmarks of a great digital learning experience?

What is the right blend of awareness and upskilling needed to further our sustainability strategy?

“Businesses get the learning and
development they deserve...”

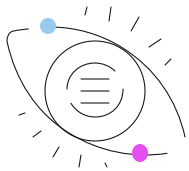
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Takeaways

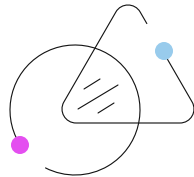
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Our task is to redefine expectations of business decision makers.



2

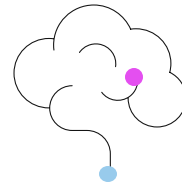
To sustain relevance, we need to shift our thinking from learning as a delivery function to a service for and with the business.



3

Strategic habits build strategic momentum.

(and all you need is momentum.)



4

Invest in getting the question(s) right.

(Good strategy starts with asking the right questions.)



5

Be in constant negotiation of your 3Es.

(It's not there until it all snaps into place.)

