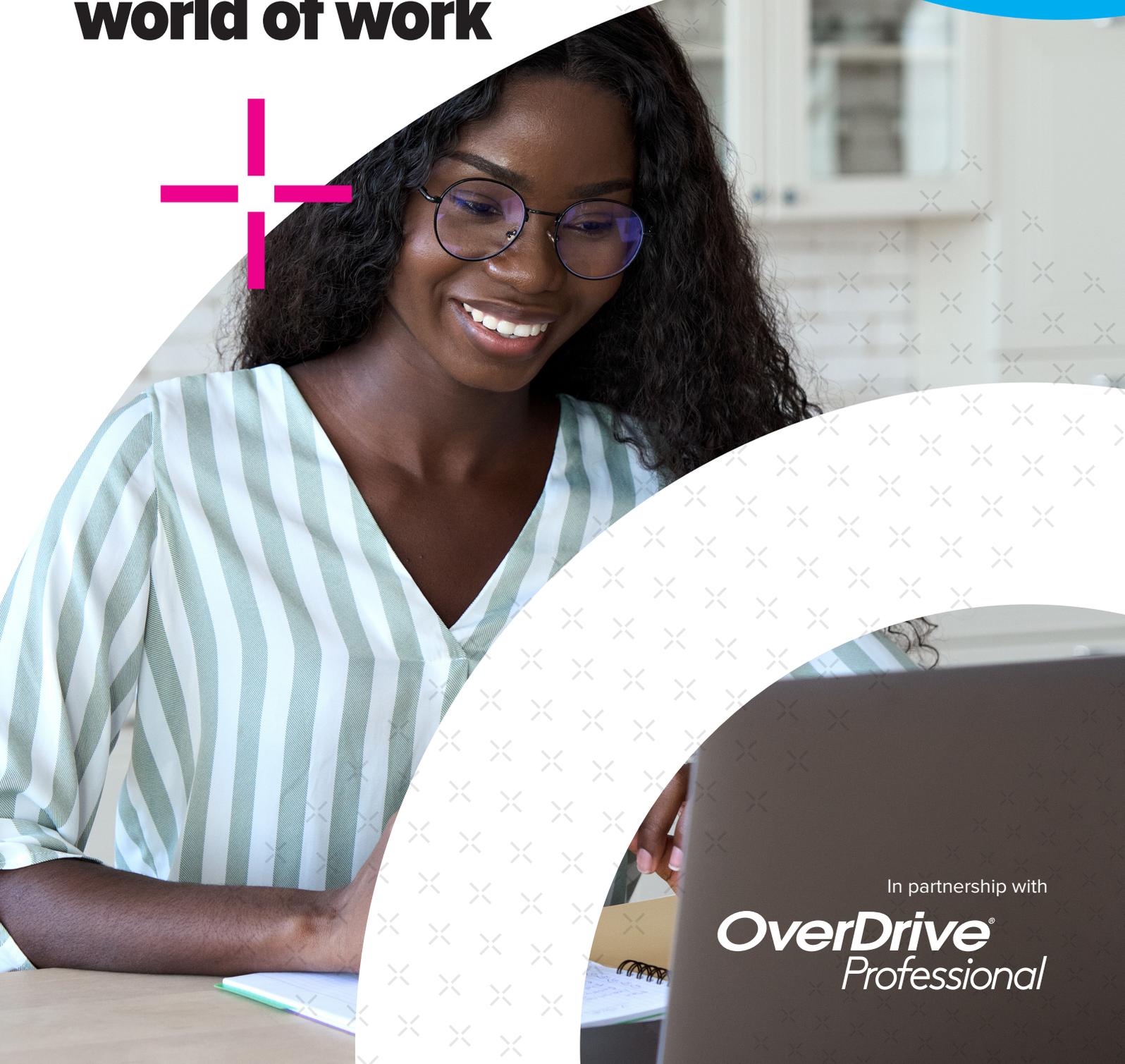


Leveling up digital learning in the new world of work



In partnership with

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Professional

About UNLEASH



UNLEASH is a global information business providing the latest HR, learning and recruitment news & analysis, trends and events on the challenges and opportunities shaping the new working world.

Since 2011, UNLEASH has served as a strategic transformation engine for the most powerful network of human resources leaders. They represent a range of organisations from the world's leading employers from the Fortune 2000, public sector organizations to innovative start-ups and everything in between. Built to inspire, connect and empower leaders to navigate the fast-changing world of work and exponential technologies.

We love our community. They are a diverse group of innovators laser focused on the future of work, who are passionate about people and getting the most out of technology. They reimagine work and new ways of working that improve the lives of 10's of millions of people each year.

Ultimately, we provide a platform to share ideas that work, network and do business. UNLEASH's mission is to be the world's #1 destination and marketplace for human resources, recruitment and learning leaders globally.

unleash.ai

About OverDrive



OverDrive Professional is the leading digital reading platform for corporate libraries worldwide, offering the industry's largest catalog of ebooks and audiobooks. As a 100% digital company, OverDrive combines technology with content to support professional development objectives for companies of all shapes and sizes. Titles are available anytime, anywhere on every major device.

<https://company.overdrive.com/corporate-libraries/>



From transactional to transformational...

As organizations adjust to the new “never normal”¹ it is worth pausing for a moment to take stock. So much of the last two years have been about keeping the lights on and grappling with challenges as they arise in crisis mode. But now, HR has the undeniable opportunity to enable real change for learners around the world.

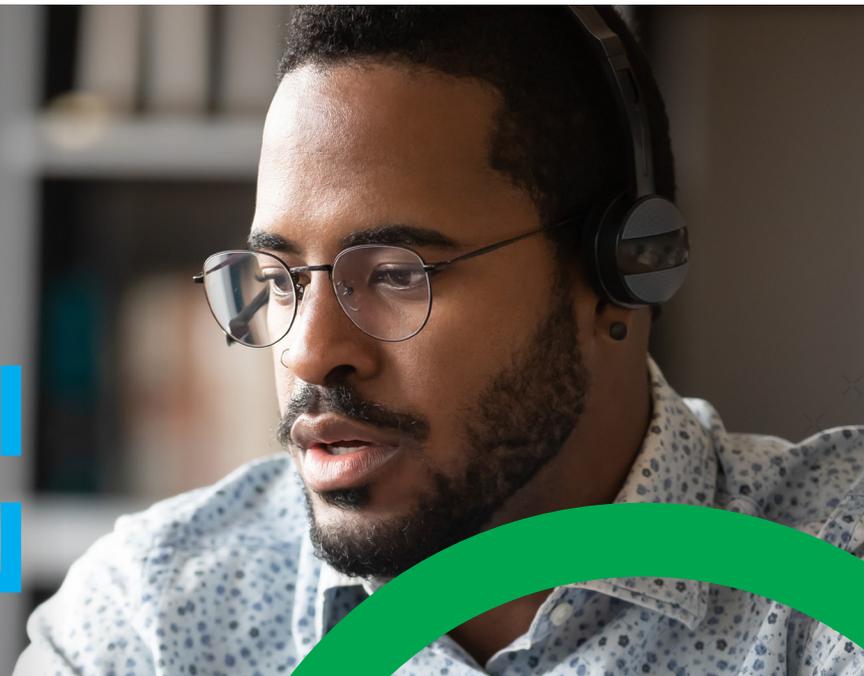
During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that at least half of workers globally did some of their work from home².

Suddenly, digital learning was no longer a “nice to have” but rather a business critical resource. From online courses to audio resources, ebooks and beyond, digital learning stepped up; powering people and performance through uncertain times and mobilizing workforces in changing roles. From COVID-19 protocols and setting up an at-home desk correctly, to reskilling and upskilling into different jobs, the role digital learning has had to play has never been more important.

- Spend on digital learning content increased by nearly 50% in the early months of the pandemic
- 82% of learning leaders reported that demand for digital learning from senior stakeholders increased
- Nearly a quarter of organizations (21%) implemented a new digital learning solution or expanded their number of licenses immediately following the start of the pandemic³

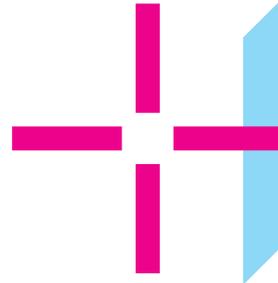
So, where do we go from here? How do we keep digital learning a priority as we adapt to synchronous and asynchronous learning in the new hybrid workplace?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that at least half of workers globally did some of their work from home².



¹ [Peter Hinssen wants you to embrace the never normal, PCMA](#)
² [Future of work after COVID-19, McKinsey](#)
³ www.fosway.com/research/next-gen-learning/covid19-research/

Leveling up: The time is now



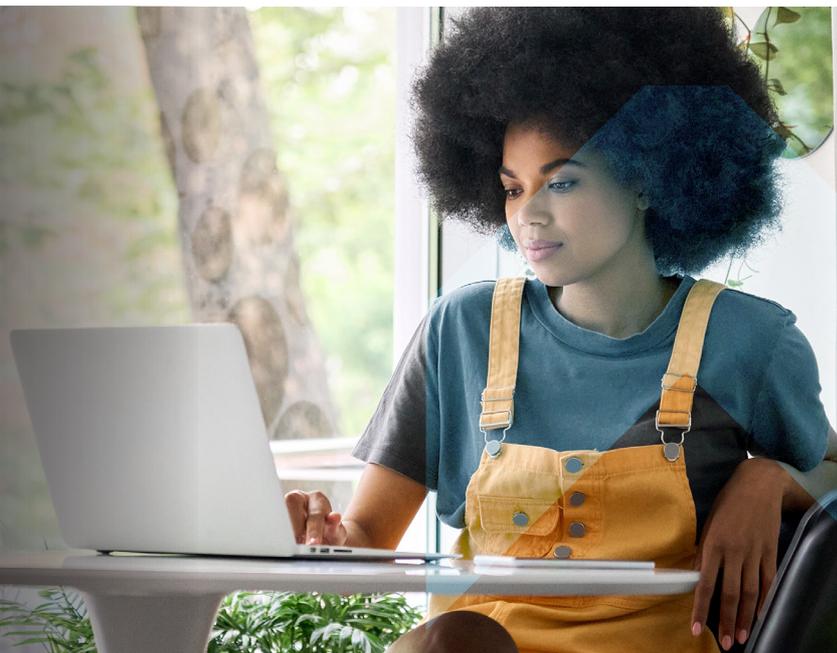
Numbers vary from place to place, but new research shows as few as 4% of companies could be returning their people to their place of work full time⁴. Which means working and learning remotely and across hybrid models are approaches that are here to stay. Digital will remain a pivotally important foundation for organizations – but finding the rhythm and balance across work and home that suits everyone is still something of an experiment.

Even with some returning to in-office work, there remain critical challenges that every organization is trying to tackle. The most pressing of these is the “Great Resignation” or “Great Reshuffle” – the trend in which employees have voluntarily resigned from their jobs en masse, beginning in early 2021⁵.

Talent is in short supply. In fact, skills shortages have been cited as 2022’s “biggest threat”⁶ and 87% of organizations believe they have a skills gap⁷. With this, learning and development (L&D) has a hugely strategic role to play. Organizations are working to figure out what their ‘build’ strategies look like when it comes to new skills – because ‘buying’ it in (i.e. hiring enough new talent) is currently not a sustainable solution.

Scaling the demand for upskilling and reskilling would have been a significant challenge in a pre-pandemic world. Now, faced with hybrid and fully remote teams, digital learning has become the only show in town. Digital provides a consistent learning experience across large populations quickly and efficiently. Because learners can study at their own pace and access content on a self-service model, digital learning has shown to require less time than traditional forms of learning. Harnessing this properly puts L&D in the driving seat for working with the rest of their organization to solve for skills shortages and enable an ongoing business agility that has been missing in the past⁸.

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⁴ Just 4% of employers are making people return to the office full time, Forbes

⁵ The Great Resignation, Wikipedia

⁶ The skills shortage is 2022’s biggest threat, Fortune

⁷ Mind the (skills) gap, McKinsey

⁸ Why elearning is the future of corporate training, eLearning Industry

Digital learning is now a core component of EVP and total rewards

Research shows that the appeal of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) has shifted dramatically in the last two years. It is no longer just about the money. CSR policies, DE&I strategies, pet benefits and yes, upskilling opportunities are all forming part of the corporate attempt to overhaul the EVP.

With the skills shortage, organizations simply must work harder to provide total rewards. In fact, total rewards strategies have become much more strategically important as talent acquisition teams battle to attract and hire the people they need in probably the toughest labor market any of us have ever seen⁸.

Opportunities to grow and learn are in demand as a key part of an organization's EVP and a reason to join – or go elsewhere if the offering is not strong enough. It's another truly strategic driver for digital learning to level up.



“The EVP for the post-pandemic workforce must orient toward employees as people, not workers; provide an exceptional life, not work, experience; and focus on the feelings, not just the features that match employee needs.”⁹

Gartner

⁹ [How to succeed in a tough talent environment, UNLEASH](#)

Beyond the blend

Here however, we need to insert a warning. Caveat emptor = buyer beware. Simply purchasing a library of enticing digital learning courses is – unfortunately – not enough. We live in a consumer economy where we are used to being served up content either at the point of need, or in a way that opens up new doors without us even realizing we needed them. Whether it's new music on Spotify, a new boxset on Netflix or a new gadget on Amazon, we luxuriate in tailored, personalized experiences that smooth our path in life at every step.

This type of approach has to be how digital learning steps up to meet its newfound strategic demands. Whichever digital content and resources you invest in, it needs to be able to plug and play on your current learning and professional development platform. Your people need to be able to access it on any device at any time. Mobile access is no longer a nice to have but the price of entry for corporate solutions.

Digital learning content needs to be able to be built into tailored learning pathways that suit individual development requirements. It **needs** to be searchable and therefore surfaced at specific moments of need. Without this, there is a risk the content lies dormant, waiting for somebody to find it and love it. Even the best digital learning content has no use if it's not easily discovered.

People need to know what learning and upskilling opportunities – whether that be hard or soft skills – are available and have them surfaced at the point of need. Whether that's having them in the flow of work or including them in a personalized learning pathway.

The scope of digital libraries to power learning and professional development and internal talent mobility is huge. From promoting corporate culture to complimenting other initiatives like learning management systems with additional content and subject matter, their potential impact on specific L&D outcomes is tremendous.

When we refer to digital learning libraries, we mean a wealth of courses and resources that can be accessed as a whole – often created and managed by a single expert supplier – that span a range of content and topics identified as important by your organization. Now, we know the need to support talent mobility has never been greater. For most organizations, churn and retention rates are now C-level reporting stats with everything that's happened in the last two years. L&D has an important strategic opportunity to actively impact and influence these numbers now like never before. What can look like a transactional tick in the box solution on one level, has the power to be truly transformative if harnessed the right way.

Much of this architecture depends on your learning systems rather than the content itself. But the time for truly blended learning, which thoughtfully curates digital journeys that support people as they learn continuously, is now.

The imperative has never been plainer. This is a unique opportunity for digital learning to level up and for the sake of the growth of our learners and the future performance of our organizations, we must take it.



Your digital learning checklist

The checklist below provides an important opportunity to reflect on the lens through which you're viewing your digital learning. If there are too many 'NOs' in your answers, then chances are you aren't levelling up your digital learning and you have huge opportunities to leverage it further.

ARE YOU LEVELLING UP?	YES	NO
Is your L&D offering a featured or important part of your organization's EVP?		
Does your organization offer flexible access to learning to suit hybrid/flexible working?		
Are you actively encouraging time to learn during working hours?		
Is your digital learning offering easily accessible on devices anytime, anywhere?		
Is digital learning linked to rewards/promotion/performance management?		
Are new skills gained via digital learning trackable for internal mobility purposes?		
Does your digital learning form part of pathways or journeys that can be tailored or personalized to a learner's unique development needs?		
Does your current digital learning library cover all the skills and subject areas your organization really needs to grow?		
Is digital learning embedded in the flow of work in your organization?		
Have you got room for improvement when it comes to levelling up your digital learning?		

Visit <https://company.overdrive.com/corporate-libraries/> to learn how to leverage digital learning for your organization.



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