

2022

MICROLEARNING AND ANALYTICS



Empowering Managers
to Effectively Coach
and Develop Employees

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Introduction

Managers are the linchpin for improving employee engagement, development and performance. Managers who can coach and develop their team members are more important than ever as everyone adapts to the evolving hybrid work environment.

You know the adage, “Workers don’t leave organizations, they leave managers.” It can work the other way around. Workers will stay longer and perform better if they trust their managers and believe they have their best interests at heart.

Brandon Hall Group research¹ shows that organizations whose managers have a strong commitment to their employees’ development are at least 2.5 times more likely to see year-over-year increases in the areas listed in the graphic.



Talent retention



Employees’ sense of belonging



Engagement



Employees feeling valued



Employees’ sense of wellbeing



Employees feeling heard

¹ Brandon Hall Group Career Development Study

However, a manager's attention is split between many responsibilities and they often struggle to develop their team members through coaching, feedback and other methods.

Coaching is critical and growing in importance as more organizations realize that development must be personalized to employees' performance goals and career aspirations and occur in the flow of work, not by formal learning that takes employees away from their jobs.

Most Important Manager Competencies to Improve



Important = Rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, Great Leaders: How Do We Develop More?



Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, Learning for the Hybrid Workforce

This eBook provides an innovative solution to arm coaches with the tools they need to be better coaches: microlearning and the insightful analytics it produces. Microlearning fits the fast-paced and flexible environment of hybrid work and provides valuable data that can help managers target their coaching and feedback for maximum impact.

Today's Workforce Wants Feedback and Development

The biggest concern for employers, according to Brandon Hall Group research², is retaining talent. That requires providing experiences that drive engagement and build a sense of belonging and feeling valued. Managers who consistently provide their team members with coaching, feedback and development opportunities connect those dots.

The pandemic amplified the need for development as many employees took on new job roles and responsibilities and adjusted to a remote work environment. Many college

graduates entering the workforce did so in a virtual setting, so building close relationships with managers and colleagues added to the challenges of starting their careers.

During the pandemic, most organizations excelled at providing employees with the right work tools and flexibility but struggled to connect with them in ways that drive engagement, belonging and development. Less than four in ten organizations said their managers provide consistent feedback and coaching and revise development plans as needed.⁴

How Organizations Engage Talent in Hybrid Work Environment

78%

Employees, regardless of location, have the tools they need to do their best work

75%

Employees, regardless of location, understand what is expected of them

58%

Employees have significant flexibility in how, where and when they work

40%

Employees regularly (at least once a month) receive recognition or praise for meaningful contributions

38%

Managers hold check-in meetings at least biweekly to provide feedback and coaching on performance goals

36%

Individual development plans are revised as often as needed

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, Reimagining Talent Management for Hybrid Work

² Brandon Hall Group Study, HCM Outlook 2022

³ Brandon Hall Group Study, Reimagining Talent Management for Hybrid Work

Managers Are Stretched Thin

Managers are at the center of business, often caught in the middle between two sets of responsibilities – driving business results and connecting with and developing employees. While those two actions are not contradictory, they can feel that way to managers who are expected to hit critical financial metrics, stay within budget, and meet productivity goals.

Because of the pressure they feel, many managers believe they do not have time to learn or focus on their own development.

Top Challenges in Developing Leadership Skills

- 69%** Little or no time in the day to learn and improve myself
- 68%** Making myself a priority
- 43%** Length of learning courses to be completed
- 42%** Unaware of available training

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study,
How Do We Improve Leader Training?

Between organizations that struggle to offer needed training in coaching and other management skills and managers reluctant to take the time to learn, there often is a significant gap between the coaching, feedback and collaboration managers can provide and what employees want and need.

Coaching involves helping team members think critically about what they do and how they act by asking questions. In an environment of constant change, it is a critically important method for developing employees. Feedback — both positive and constructively critical — is important, too. But without coaching, feedback can feel too much like top-down management when collaboration and agility are most needed.

Interviews that Brandon Hall Group has conducted with more than 20 employers reveal three frequent situations:



Managers rarely or never provide coaching or feedback.



Managers confuse coaching and feedback and mostly deliver feedback without asking coaching questions to help employees solve challenges themselves.



Managers coach, but take a one-size-fits-all approach with broad questions like, "What are your strengths?" or "What can you do better?" or "What should your next steps be?"

Current State of Coaching

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the current quality and effectiveness of coaching in your organization.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, How Can We Develop Great Coaches and Mentors

75%

Less Effective
to Average

(1, 2, or 3 on a 5-point scale)

25%

Effective/
Highly Effective

(4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)

1 Not at all effective

Excellent 5

To be effective, coaching must be personalized and focused on specific issues or challenges an employee is having. Ideally, both the coach and employee have had training on how to coach and be coached, respectfully.



A collaborative relationship between manager or expert and employees that can be formal and ultra-specific or ongoing in the flow of business

The objective is to improve employees' performance in a current job and/or prepare for their next role

Success is measured by reaching a specific outcome in:

- Performance improvement
- Acquiring new behaviors by developing skills and competencies

Coaching objectives are set in collaboration with the employee

The coach drives the process and assesses/evaluates the progress of the employee

Source: Brandon Hall Group

Microlearning: The Answer for Managers and Their Team Members

Microlearning, with its short bursts of content on-demand, meets the unique demands of today's rapidly changing business landscape – for managers and their team members.

Managers can consume microlearning to improve their coaching and feedback skills (and other needs) and team members can learn in the flow of work on topics that meet their specific needs and interests.

Forms of Microlearning



Quick text —
Messages, blogs,
etc



Infographics —
Visual summaries of
data and information



Video —
Easily created
and consumed on
mobile devices



Assessments —
Delivering tests,
quizzes and other
assessments helps
keep knowledge fresh
and reinforced



**Game-based
learning** —
A quick game that
rewards knowledge
or behavior



Scenarios/simulations —
An activity that makes the
learning real and provides
opportunities to practice



eLearning —
Even eLearning courses
that contain multiple of
the above elements can be
microlearning if they are
succinct and specific enough

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study, Exploring the Learner Experience



It takes the right tools to effectively create and deliver microlearning.

Traditional authoring tools and LMS platforms often do not have the capabilities for developing good microlearning and getting it to learners in ways that make sense. Look for tools that have microlearning-specific features and functionalities.

One example is the microlearning technology from Qstream, where employees receive quick, scenario-based questions that improve knowledge retention. In addition, managers can reap the benefits of the data generated on the platform. The microlearning dashboard displays engagement, proficiency and completion rates – with the ability to drill down by topic and question. The data identifies knowledge, skill and behavior gaps to guide managers on where to focus individual coaching conversations.

This is a win-win for managers and employees – learning in the flow of work and data that empowers managers to quickly understand how to focus their coaching and feedback to address the needs of each employee.

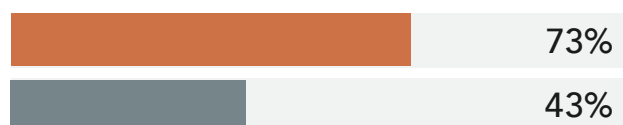
When rolled up at the team, group or business unit levels and overlaid with proficiency metrics, the microlearning data from the Qstream platform also presents executives with a clear correlation between the learning topics that most impact business results. This provides a valuable ROI measure of learning effectiveness that previously was not possible with productivity or activity metrics alone.

What makes microlearning so useful is not that it is shorter or smaller than other types of learning. It is much more than that. If delivered in spaced intervals, microlearning reinforces concepts through explanation snippets and assessments to retain knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

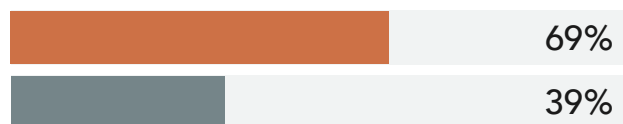
Brandon Hall Group research⁴ found that companies that use microlearning were far more likely to say that their overall learning approach is having a strong positive impact on a wide variety of outcomes.

How Effectively Does Your Learning Approach Positively Impact These Outcomes?

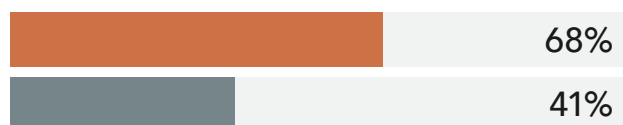
Individual performance



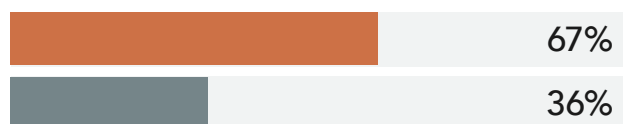
Time to productivity/effectiveness



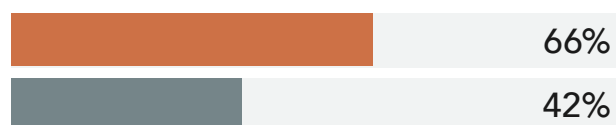
Employee engagement



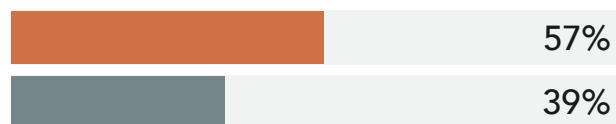
Rate of knowledge transfer



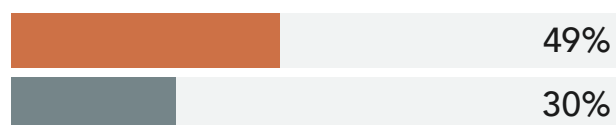
Team effectiveness



Business process improvement



Employee retention rates



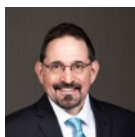
● With microlearning ● With no microlearning

Source: Brandon Hall Group Study,
Exploring the Learner Experience

As you can see, microlearning can have a big impact on performance, productivity, engagement and employee retention – all critical metrics that the learning function has had difficulty delivering. The added benefit – when using strong leading-edge microlearning technology – is the ability to leverage real-time microlearning analytics to arm managers with targeted topics to further personalize their employees' development through coaching and feedback.

⁴ Brandon Hall Group Study, Exploring the Learner Experience Study

Authors and Contributors



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

**SOME WAYS
WE CAN HELP**



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.



SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations across the world.

About Qstream

Qstream is a leading enterprise microlearning solution proven by science and in practice to boost learner performance at scale through knowledge reinforcement, engagement and analytics. Since 2008, Qstream has been on a mission to make people in the workplace better at what they do. Today, over 600 global organizations rely on Qstream to build high-performance teams by delivering a precision microlearning experience that reinforces job-critical knowledge and skills in minutes a day. Resulting in 93% average learner engagement levels and 17% average proficiency improvements, Qstream gives companies the tools they need to get a real-time view of performance readiness and take action where it is needed most.

Qstream has offices in Boston, United States and Dublin, Ireland servicing a customer base across the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia, and Australia.

