



# Learning at Workspeed in a World of **No Normal**

Building Learning Agility Into  
Operational Learning



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# The World Has Changed

## Digital Transformation Is a Must. Don't Leave Critical Content Behind.

Today's business environment looks very different from just five years ago. Digital transformation and disruption are everywhere. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for digital transformation has increased as fast as the speed of work. In fact, 47% of CIOs say the pandemic has permanently accelerated digital transformation and the adoption of emergent technologies.<sup>1</sup>

However, even as organizations everywhere race to adopt new digital technologies, the people part of digital transformation is often being neglected. Here's an example: During the pandemic, many Quick-Serve Restaurants (QSRs) invested in kiosks, new drive-thru technology, automated kitchen operations, and so forth. However, the operations manuals to train employees, ensure consistency, and drive best practices mostly remained stuck in paper binders.

With today's workforce of digital natives, this lack of digital content not only jeopardizes your efficiency and effectiveness. It also hurts your ability to attract, engage, and retain talent. Without the right technology game plan — one that facilitates learning at workspeed — your employees won't be able to keep up, and they probably won't stick around.

# 89%

Companies that say the pandemic has shown the need for more agile and scalable IT to allow for contingencies.

— Dell Technologies,  
Digital Transformation Study

**“The pandemic is an incredible accelerator of business transformation. While many organizations have been on a journey to digital for years if not decades, *it's now become a digital-or-die move.*”**

— JOSH BERSIN, “BUSINESS RESILIENCE: THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE STUDY,” 2021

1. KPMG. Harvey Nash/KPMG CIO Survey. 2020.



# Learning Is No Longer Just Important

## It's Mission Critical

Operational and learning leaders have three primary reasons to be examining their approach to digital learning and employee training today.



## **Economic Disruption and Business Agility**

Even in the best of times, business agility requires employees who are up to date on the latest products, procedures, processes, policies, and competitive information. Emergencies have shown us how communications, updates, and learning can be critical not only to success, but also to survival.



## **Learning Being Absorbed Into Business Functions**

After the pandemic forced major overnight business changes, the C-suite began paying much more attention to learning and to making it central to operational strategy. As a result, learning and operations teams are being pushed to deliver the type of systems, content, and results that their businesses really need.



## **Expectations of the New Workforce**

As the majority of the workforce today, millennials and Gen Z workers expect their employers to provide a high-fidelity learning experience driven by digital formats, not analog ones. Also, access to learning and career development are now key factors in attracting and retaining top talent.

# Corporate Learning Leaders Are Facing New Realities

## Today's Employees Have Different Needs and Expectations

To deliver development that improves business agility while meeting the needs of leaders and front-line workers, you need to ask an important question: Are my learning and development initiatives designed to deliver real operational results and not just yield compliance metrics, like course completions?

### In today's workplace, the realities of learning are:

- **Greater pressure** to enable business agility and deliver operational results
- **Higher expectations for technology**, access to relevant training, and the overall employee experience
- **Shorter attention spans and time-starved schedules** due to information overload and always-on work hours
- **A new urgency for learning on demand**; employees want to be able to search for the right information on the job, and they want to get that information in a matter of seconds, right when they need it

Business leaders want agility and results. Employees simply will not accept old, hard-to-use processes and technology from their employer — or if they do, they're likely to be disengaged, underperforming, and ready to grab the first opportunity to jump ship.

**“Don't be afraid to step outside of the box and try something new. The average learner we deal with today is not the average learner that we dealt with 20 years ago.”**

**— JASON MORGAN  
SR. MANAGER OF L&D, HIKVISION**



# Traditional Learning Can't Keep Up With the Pace of Today

Yesterday's Methods Became Obsolete — Gradually, Then Suddenly

Too many organizations are still stuck in the traditional corporate learning mode of the past. COVID-19 exposed the reality that these fault lines are even greater than businesses knew before the pandemic. While change can often seem risky, staying put with traditional learning is much riskier. Let's look at each of these seven key challenges to moving learning forward to find out why:

1. Old processes
2. Trapped content
3. Lack of access and visibility
4. Complicated, slow, and disconnected authoring tools
5. Upside-down data
6. Surface-level metrics
7. Old learning technology

## 1. Old Processes

Two of the most common ways to deliver learning and training are still classroom-based training (96%) and online, instructor-led training, or ILT (88%). However, the pandemic blew apart these two modalities — the former became impossible and the latter is shunned by today’s workers.

## 2. Trapped Content

Too much of every organization’s most unique, mission-critical content and knowledge is still trapped in paper documents, binders, clunky LMS courses, emails, PDFs, PowerPoints, and other storage systems.

Especially with 80% of the workforce now being deskless,<sup>2</sup> this content needs to be accessible anywhere, anytime, on any device if you hope to enable on-the-go learning and development. Today, only 6% of learning content is designed for native mobile learning.

## 3. Lack of Access and Visibility

More than half of all content, especially operational content that people use for learning and knowledge, is not in your LMS. Most learning today happens shoulder to shoulder, on the job, with peers, and through printed operations manuals, or other documents, recordings, and files.

You need a way to modernize, digitize, and centralize all of this content, so you can track results easily and optimize continuously.

# 88%

Percentage of learners who learn more by finding information on their own.

## 4. Complicated, Slow, Disconnected Authoring Tools

Many learning and content authoring tools were designed as stand-alone systems that produce standard digital learning content. These tools are powerful but often complex and technical, requiring special training and expertise. This means these authoring tools are good for creating learning content with a longer shelf life, but they can’t keep up with operational training and knowledge that changes rapidly and requires continuous updates.

Today, it’s more critical than ever to be able to “democratize” the creation of learning content by leveraging the knowledge of subject matter experts and enabling them to easily author learning content without specialized knowledge of authoring tools.

2. “[The Deskless Workforce: A Massive Opportunity For Entrepreneurs.](#)” Venture Beat. 2018.

## 5. Upside-down Data

In the traditional learning world, data is upside down. What we mean by this is traditional learning systems only measure what the content author decides to “report back” to the learning system, usually via a standard like SCORM or xAPI. As a result, the business is often left attempting to measure learning impact with simplistic data (e.g., “course completions” or questionable “time spent in content” metrics). These metrics may well serve basic corporate compliance needs, but there is a big difference between achieving corporate compliance and delivering impactful learning. Yes, it can be helpful to add measurements like learner progress bookmarks and course grades, and to include post-course questionnaires and learner satisfaction surveys. But even those measurements will hardly help the learning organization move the needle for operational leaders. They want to measure increased productivity, reduced costs, improvements to customer satisfaction, and more.

## 6. Surface-level Metrics

What is needed today are deeper insights into what content was actually consumed — or ignored — by your workers as they execute on a daily basis in their roles. Imagine correlating the pixel-level consumption of data with business metrics to better understand which content is being leveraged in different parts of the organization. Imagine the greater possibility of achieving — or falling short of — business goals with this level of metrics. It’s this level of insight that is required to keep up with the pace of work today. The first step toward this goal is to move to content distribution models that make sure the business has *deep and universal visibility* into content consumption regardless of who authored the content.

In every organization, learning comes alive in the field. What are your key business metrics? Are some locations or geographies out-performing others? Is the content that you thought was going to be mission-critical actually being ignored in favor of assets perceived as more valuable? Can you show how learning consumption contributed to improvements in capabilities, performance, team effectiveness, or business results?

Once you have better data visibility, what questions will you ask?

## 7. Growing Dissatisfaction With Old Learning Technology

With these challenges in mind, it’s no surprise that employees and business leaders are dissatisfied with learning technology. The average Net Promoter Score for traditional learning technology is a dismal -57, and only 34% of learning leaders believe traditional learning technologies can adapt to the needs of today’s workplace. Modern learning platforms, with their superior learner experience, flexibility, and overall ease of use, receive much higher NPS scores — some close to +40.

**In a recent poll conducted by InKling, these were the top word cloud adjectives used to describe the LMS:**

- **Outdated**
- **Clunky**
- **Inflexible**
- **Frustrating**

# Get on the Fast Track for Operational Excellence

## The Right Approach for a Work Environment That Is Anything but Normal

Very simply, the underlying problem with traditional learning systems and formal learning is that neither are built for the way work gets done today. There’s a lot of talk about the “New Normal,” but what businesses really need is to be ready for “No Normal.” In the No Normal landscape, traditional hard and soft skill learning, long-term training in leadership, team development, and compliance still have their places. However, these formal approaches are delivering only about 30% of learning’s value. The other 70% comes from equipping the workforce with the operational knowledge needed to get work done where it happens.

Leaders and learners alike have a need for operational learning that actually equips workers with the mission-critical knowledge they need, right when they need it.

Formal Learning	Operational Learning
30% of learning value	70% of learning value
Companies competing on scale, quality, and network	Business results driven by engaging and interactive mobile learning
Detached learning as an event	Learning embedded in the flow of work
Static L&D anchored in classroom, ILT, and traditional learning approaches	Operational and learning leaders collaborating closely
<b>Typical learning programs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Team development</li> <li>• Compliance/regulatory</li> <li>• Soft skills</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> <li>• Sales skills</li> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• HR legal</li> </ul>	<b>Mission-critical capabilities, unique to your company, delivered in the flow of work:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard operating procedures and processes</li> <li>• Field maintenance information</li> <li>• Rollouts of new products and initiatives</li> <li>• Ecosystem training (partners, dealers, and resellers)</li> <li>• Product information</li> <li>• Sales enablement (market, competitors, and product info)</li> </ul>

# Shift Toward Knowledge at Work

## Operational Learning Goes Beyond Skills

You can't talk about corporate learning today without talking about skills — the skills shortage, the skills gap, upskilling, reskilling, and on and on. In fact, the entire traditional formal learning model is designed around skills acquisition.

### The Formal Learning Model

Skills are critically important, but they are often technical, self-taught, and constantly changing. There are hundreds of skills taxonomies, and they are best learned through video, online/in-classroom courses, and testing.

**TEACH → STUDY → TEST**

What's lost in all of the talk about skills, however, is the difference between skills and capabilities — the knowledge needed to get the job done. Unlike skills, capabilities are not easily automated and are often unique to your company and industry.

The Operational Learning Model is all about developing real-world capabilities taught on the job, shoulder to shoulder, and in-person. In other words, knowledge and capabilities are best assessed and acquired through actual job performance.

### The Operational Learning Model

Capabilities equip workers with the ability to perform a job. They're defined around the actual job activities and job outcomes, and they combine the skills, knowledge, and experiences an employee needs to succeed.

**FIND → LEARN → DO**

In any organization, there's a place for skills and capabilities. The challenge is that without an operational learning platform, this type of learning is often poorly tracked manually on a paper checklist, if it's tracked at all. An operational learning platform with a centralized digital knowledge library is different from an LMS, and without one, you and your learners can't operate at workspeed.

**joshbersin**

“What is a capability? Put simply, it's a combination of skills, knowledge, and experiences employees need to succeed. And these capabilities are often unique, exclusive, and proprietary to your company.”

— JOSH BERSIN, “BUSINESS RESILIENCE: THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE STUDY,” 2021



## INTRODUCING INKLING

# The Digital Learning Platform for Operational Learning

Delivering Knowledge on the Job Improves the People Part of Digital Transformation

Inkling is designed to be the centralized digital learning platform for operational learning. With Inkling, you can bring relevant training and communication to life for workers on the job. This is real-time learning that engages learners and is available anywhere, anytime with mobile access. With Inkling, you can deliver mission-critical learning in the flow of work that yields real business impact.

# Inkling: The Modern Digital Platform for Operational Learning

A secure, scalable, reliable cloud platform that can support the complexity of large enterprises, including multiple divisions, brands, languages, audience segments, and decentralized, extended enterprise learning.

## **Inkling Connect**

A flexible Integration-as-a-Service (IaaS) platform that provides standard connections and APIs to all LMS, LXP, and many operational and communications systems, making operational learning and knowledge easy to access

## **Inkling Advanced Analytics**

The ability to report on standard learning metrics and to combine learning metrics with other business performance data, to easily measure the impact of learning on operations with reports and sophisticated dashboards

## **Inkling Habitat**

Intuitive, integrated, and collaborative learning and knowledge content authoring that can be easily distributed, edited, and reused in multiple places in the Inkling platform

## **Inkling Knowledge**

An intuitive, visual, and mobile-first experience that supports the “find, learn, do” model of learning with easy-to-use libraries, lightning-fast Google-like search, intuitive navigation of modern and engaging content like videos, timelines, flashcards, animations, interactive graphics, and more

## **InkForms**

Microlearning and operational forms and checklists with embedded learning to support your employees on the job, to not only complete their duties, but provide easy-to-access refresher learning on all tasks

## **Inkling Learning Pathways**

Structured learning with multiple gated or ungated steps using Inkling content or standards-based content, links, or any other type of third-party content, plus the ability to assign and track learning by team or across the enterprise



# The Value of Learning at Workspeed

When you deliver **unique mission-critical knowledge** in the moment of need on the job, that's **10x more valuable** to the business than the generic content. Employees learn:

- How to do their job
- How to sell your products
- How to serve your customers
- Changes to procedures
- Time-sensitive communications

# Learning on the Job for Improved Performance on the Job

## Fast, Simple, Modern, and Powerful

It's time to align your learning programs, content, systems, and delivery to truly keep up with the needs of your business, drive better employee engagement, and drive high performance and business impact.

Inkling's operational learning platform is:



### Fast

#### Available, Adaptable, Immediate

Fast for End Users — Find what they need, learn, do

Fast for Authors — Updates instantly



### Modern

#### Connected & Engaging

Mobile-first Design

Modern Content

Fits Into Your Ecosystem



### Simple

#### Access Anywhere, Anytime, Any Device

Search, Bookmarks, Notes, Favorites —

Find learning in seconds

Learning Paths — Guided experiences



### Powerful

#### In-depth Analytics & Business Outcomes

Moves learning away from HR and close to your business operations

Ties learning effectiveness directly to business results



# Operational Excellence in Action

## How Inkling Has Transformed Top Companies

How does operational learning drive real business impact? Let's explore how Inkling equipped three innovators to activate mission-critical knowledge and drive business results.

### Accelerated New Product Delivery, Increased Business Agility, and Boosted Sales



*Orangetheory adapted to the disruption of the pandemic with Inkling:*

- Rolled out virtual at-home workouts in **72 hours**
- Reimagined L&D so the company and the team could come out of this event even stronger
- Set the company up for a robust rebound with brilliant digital content developed in their in-house studio

[Learn more](#)



*Taco Bell drove customer satisfaction on new menu items:*

- Improved core onboarding and compliance training
- Equipped workers with **mission-critical knowledge** around new limited-time offer menus every four to six weeks
- **5% increase in customer satisfaction** and a reduction in lost labor costs

[Learn more](#)



## Reduced Costs, Improved Customer Satisfaction, and Decreased Time Spent Completing Training and Creating Content

*An international pharma company was able to pivot to grow revenue during the pandemic.*

- Shifted from in-person training to digital/remote in a very short time period
- Enabled employees with rapid authoring
- Accelerated customer training after diagnostic equipment was installed at the customer site
- Sped up the first official test processed by the new diagnostic equipment

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*A global media communications company increased call-center productivity.*

- **60% reduction** in time spent creating content
- Went from 75 hours of content creation for every hour of training delivered to **30 hours**
- Built sales and customer service capabilities by increasing mission-critical product and service knowledge — translating to a **117% increase** in sales rates and a **32% increase** in save and reactivation rates



# Don't Overlook the People Part of Digital Transformation

## Achieve Operational Excellence With Inkling

Digital transformation is essential today, but it's important you don't leave your people behind. Operational learning helps your people keep pace with change as they learn, at workspeed. Inkling is the digital learning platform for enterprise operational learning — simple, fast, modern, and powerful. With Inkling, you can equip your sales teams, new hires, front-line workers, and partners with the capabilities they need to drive your business forward.

Designed for today's learners and today's work, Inkling equips you to quickly create beautiful, engaging content, build structured learning paths, and deliver personalized experiences while generating meaningful insights and business impact. We empower increased customer satisfaction, revenue, and productivity and improved customer service, quality, and consistency.

>> **At Inkling, we're passionate about equipping your people with learning at workspeed. If you're ready to shift your organization into high gear, let's talk!**

[Contact Inkling Today](#)