

Seizing Learning and Development's Holy Grail:

Connecting Learning Analytics
to Business Success

2023

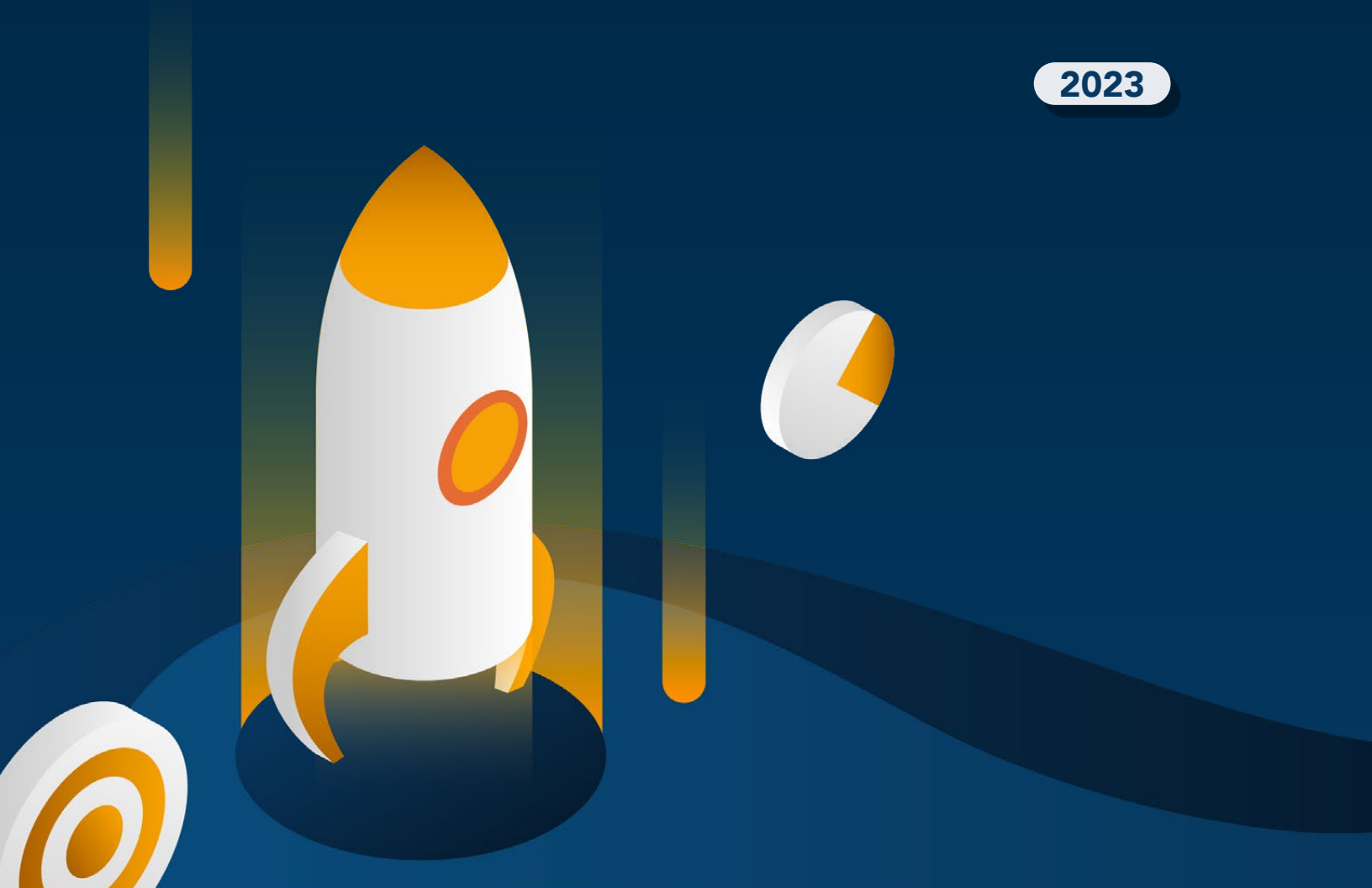


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Introduction

Today's learning organizations have access to plenty of data, but most companies don't have the capability or the understanding of how to best leverage that data. And when it comes to connecting learning analytics to business success, more often than not, learning leaders stop short of the finish line because they can't see their way clear to deliver.

In fact, Brandon Hall Group™ research has shown that **fewer than 1/3 of organizations** have done anything to address their gap in understanding and practice as it relates to Data and Analytics.



And **more than 2/3** have yet to progress beyond basic awareness of that need.

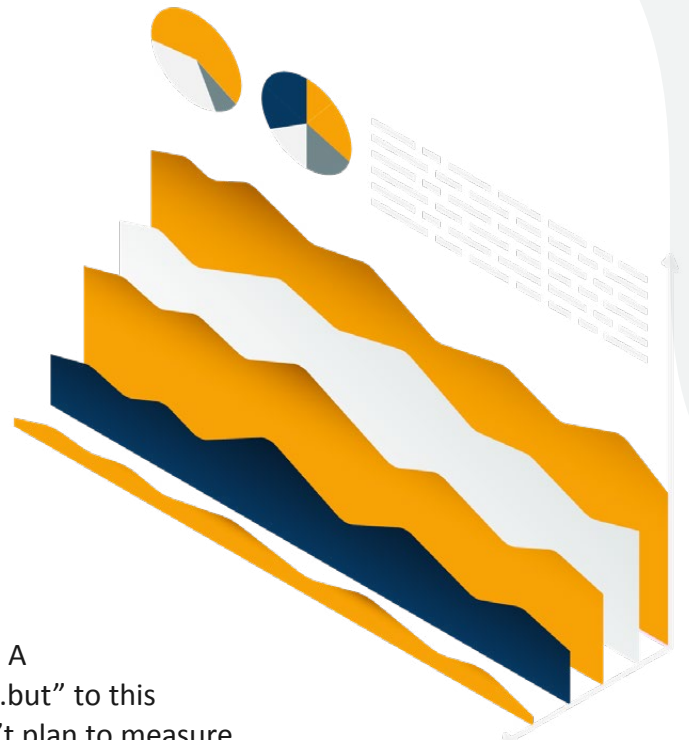
This is further borne out by the fact that **1/3** of these same organizations are making data driven or data informed decisions less frequently than 1 in every 4 decisions.

The struggle to effectively leverage data is certainly not new nor unique to the HR space. However, this deficiency has become a liability and most often shows itself in an unwillingness to claim correlation. In other words, learning professionals routinely, still, hide behind their own self-limiting belief that because training may not be the only input to a performance intervention, we cannot claim impact on any resulting improvement in said performance.

This ebook addresses that fallacy and lays out key considerations in closing the gap between learning data and business success.

Current State of Learning Measurement

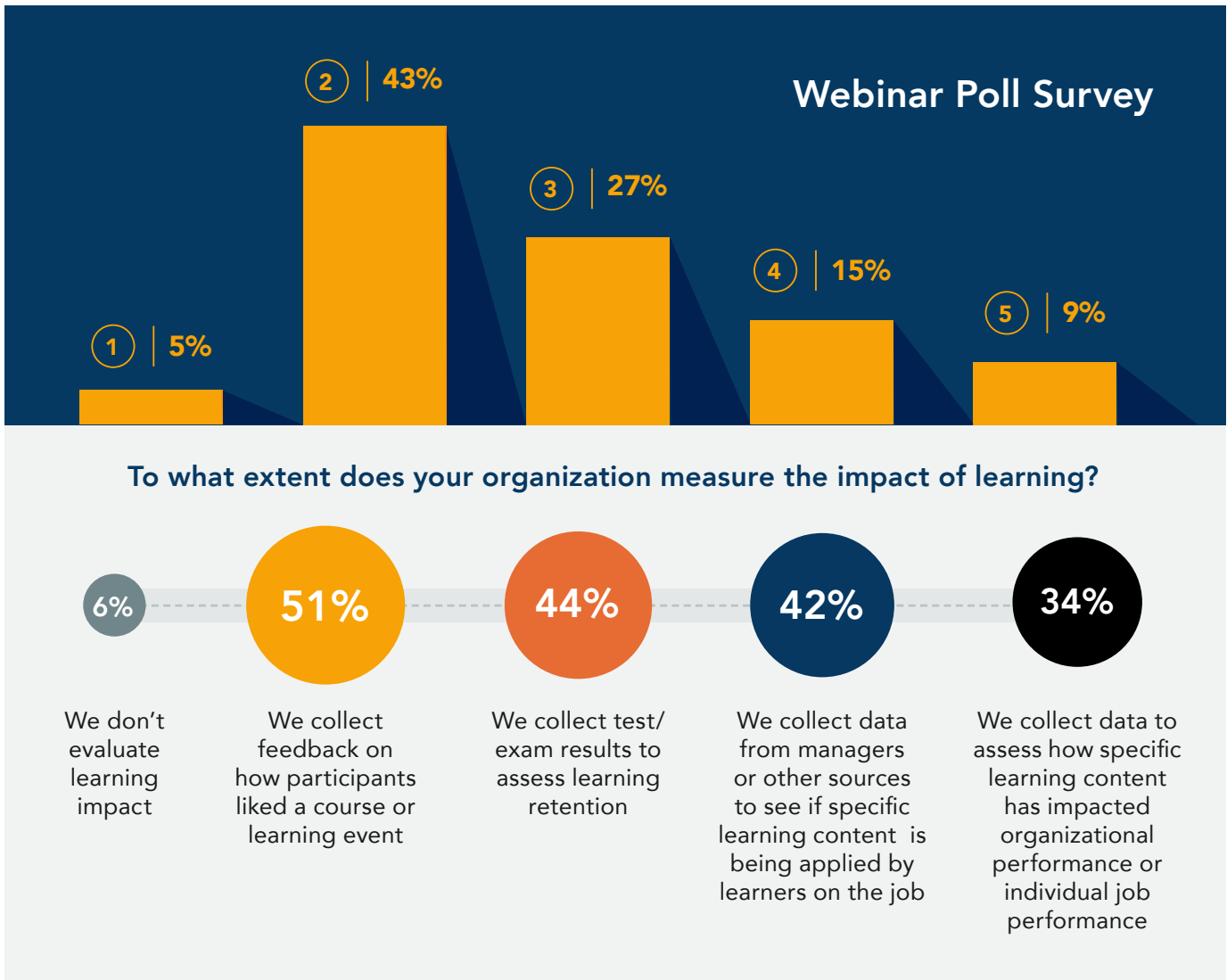
Learning Measurement in organizations today can probably best be summed up as sporadic, improving, but still not there. **Brandon Hall Group research findings can help us understand the current landscape of learning measurement more clearly.** The following data is from the *2023 Learning and Development Benchmarking Survey* and *Think Like a CEO: How Learning Impacts Business Success*.



Starting at the beginning, do you even have a true organization wide learning strategy for measurement? A resounding 72% answer “No”, “I don’t know”, or “Yes...but” to this question. This is a critical first step because if you don’t plan to measure your learning outcomes, then measurement becomes an afterthought, and it is close to impossible to connect those dots effectively.

Learning professionals are generally very comfortable collecting lower-level data. We tend to wear our “smile sheet” feedback and completion data as badges of honor. Depending on the topic, we may even have test or quiz results we can point to for comprehension results. We are far less comfortable going deeper into whether or not training has actually had a positive impact on an individual’s performance and even less on the business as a whole.

Consider the data from a recent Webinar where we asked this question of our audience and how it compares to survey data collected earlier in the year.



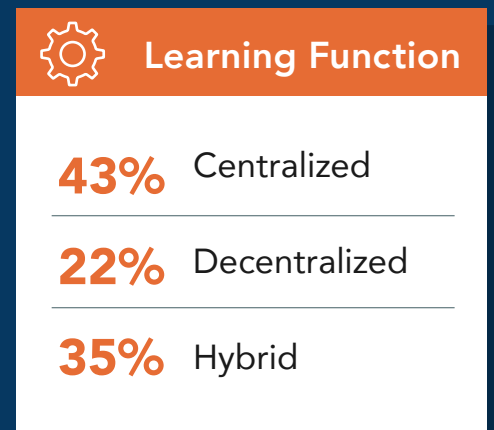
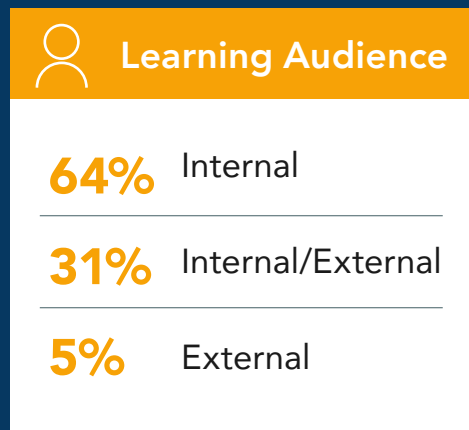
Source: 2023 Brandon Hall Group™, Connecting Learning Analytics to Business Success

Why is it that after decades of formal training in business during which time an entire industry has developed in support of these efforts, learning professionals still struggle to speak this language effectively? The answer may surprise you.

Why Measuring Performance Impact Is So Challenging

We all know the world is more complex and uncertain than it has ever been before. The pace of change has threatened to overwhelm all of us in recent years. One look at the state of learning functions and learning audiences adds to the understanding of that complexity.

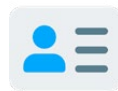
State of Learning Organizations



Anytime you ask a question along the lines of “What prevents you from...” or “What gets in the way of...” to a learning leader, there are answers you can anticipate receiving. I call them the big three:



Budget



Staffing

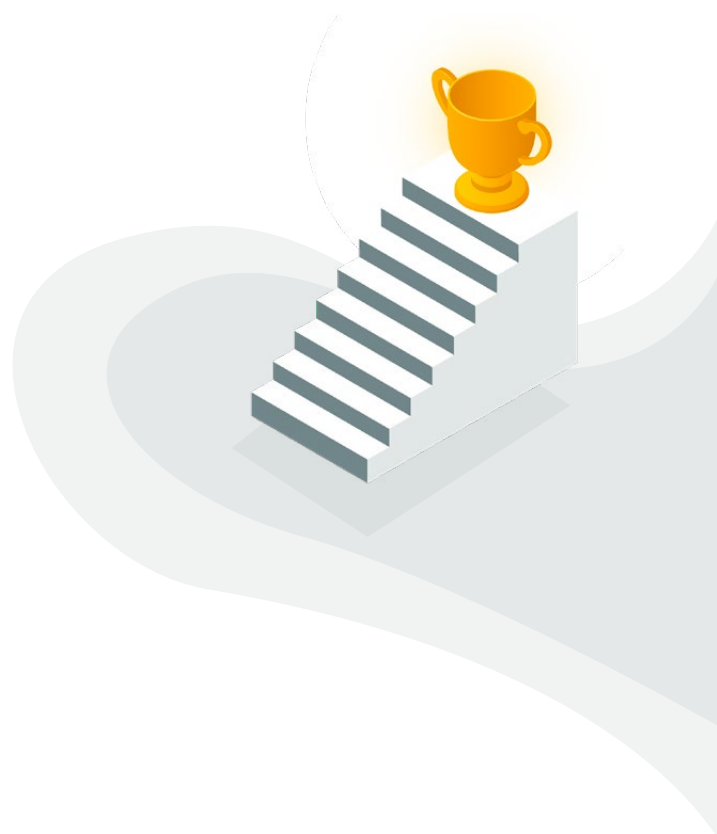


Technology

To be sure, the big three are right at the top of the list when we asked this question. But some of the other challenges at or near the top are somewhat surprising.

27%

of respondents on a recent survey indicated that learning measurement is not a priority to their organization's leadership. I find that surprising because what executive leader doesn't want to understand what they are getting for the money they are spending on learning infrastructure and activity?



Another surprising finding is that many learning teams find themselves at a disadvantage because they don't have access to the data they need. Further research is needed to determine if that's because they aren't permitted that access or they don't know what data they have or what data to ask for and whether or not the data is even available. The fact remains, access to data is a significant barrier to success and one I would venture a learning leader cannot overcome on their own.

Which is why being able to "speak the business" has been a critical competency for CLO's and their teams for decades now. Like any good trainer, beginning with the end in mind helps address these challenges head on.

How to Begin the Journey

Step 1

Know What You Need to Measure and Why








When we talk about measuring the business impact of learning, you have to start with the learning use case because impact will be different depending on the context and purpose of the learning. Is the learning being developed for internal or external learners? Is the training "required" or are we solving a particular business problem? Are we "upskilling" our workforce, or fixing a broken process?

All of those will impact your approach to measurement.

Start with defining the purpose of the training and then list all the business metrics that may be relevant to that use case.

Use cases and Business KPIs

 Sales Enablement	 Customer Education	 Talent Development	 Employee Onboarding	 Partner Enablement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to productivity based on training • Correlation between training and sales cycle length • Correlation between training and sales effectiveness • Quota attainment and potential gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent in new feature training vs new feature adoption • Training completion % of account vs time to go live • Engagement vs NPS • Renewal by engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to proficiency • Knowledge and skill retention • Impact of talent development on performance metrics • Correlation between learning, performance, and business outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to productivity based on training • Training activities that stand out • Training gaps • Correlation between onboarding and team performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to productivity based on training • Correlation between partner training and partner readiness • Correlation between training and partner performance • Partner quota attainment

Source: Docebo

Step 2

Collect and Monitor Data

Once you have looked at the business outcomes that are the best reflection of the training outcome, begin collecting data. At this point you're primarily concerned with detailed and comprehensive reports. But also think about the performance data you will need.

If your audience consists of individuals for whom there is current data, collect the current state at the beginning of the learning process. If the audience is new folks, make sure you have historical data for others joining in the recent past as a comparison point.

This step is also where you need to address data access, availability and collection issues so you know what data you need and where it is coming from. Think through what key relationships you need to develop, whose help might you need to solve any collections or access issues?



Step 3

Monitor and Analyze Learning Performance

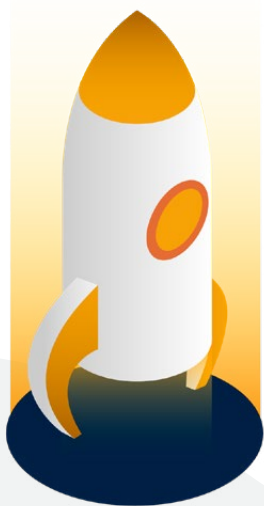
In this step we move from collecting data and reading reports to putting multiple pieces of data together to create key metrics to tell the story. This is the next evolution from simply reporting out the numbers. This is organizing those numbers in a way that shows what's happening as a result of the work of learning.



Step 4

Explain the Business Impact of Learning

Once you have clean data and you are consistently pulling meaningful metrics to show the results of learning, you are ready to show real business impact by proving and improving the impact on business results. Showing corresponding moves in key business performance indicators reflected in the audience of learners is critical. Then showing how that performance relates to what was expected, asked for, or intended and then showing how that moves over time with future iterations. That continuous improvement based on data moves your learning practice from just another expense to strategic partner to the business in driving customer value and profitability.



Final Thoughts

Modern learning leaders can no longer afford to downplay the importance of analytics in the role learning plays in business. The way work is done, the way learning is completed, the way workers prefer to consume content will continue evolving at a breakneck pace. You must become skilled at data-based storytelling and decision making.

Keep these things in mind:



Align with the business. If you can't connect the work your team is producing to the results the business cares about, then you probably shouldn't be doing it. Effective learning design starts from the business outcome, not the performance gap. Learn to speak "board room" and not "classroom" to your executive leadership.



Focus on Leading Indicators. If you are starting from the framework of business outcomes, this happens organically. If you don't have the expertise in house to collect, manage, and analyze your data (and most organizations don't), you must hire it in or find a consulting partner to help you build it.



One evaluation strategy for each main use case. Measurement is rarely one size fits all. You must know, for each learning context you operate within, what is important to know and build your analytics plan around that scenario.



Ensure Accountability. You must build mechanisms for sharing insights, recommended actions, and anticipated results from those actions with the various stakeholders in the business. You must remind business unit managers and Subject Matter Experts what the purpose of learning is and how its success will be measured. Leveraging a learning governance team is incredibly helpful on this point.

If you've read this far, the worst thing you can do is resign yourself to feeling overwhelmed and inadequate and return your head to the sand. Very few organizations have figured this out to the point that it is core to how they work. Everyone is on a journey. You must start yours and know that each of the phases laid out in this eBook can be multi-month or multi-year journeys. Just take the first step with your next learning initiative. Build measurement strategies and analytics into your goals. Hold yourself accountable for becoming a true business partner who delivers business results through learning.

Authors and Contributors



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Laurent Balagué co-wrote this report. He is Product Manager at Docebo. Laurent is the former CEO and founder of Formetris, which was acquired by Docebo in 2020. Laurent has been working in the Learning Industry for 18 years, and has helped hundreds of companies around the world to improve learning performance, through pragmatic and ambitious evaluation strategies.



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Rachel Cooke (rachel.cooke@brandonhall.com) contributed to this report. She is COO at Brandon Hall Group. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 15 years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 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.

Excellence Awards

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

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.

SOME WAYS
WE CAN HELP

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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 around the world.

About Docebo

Make Learning Your Competitive Advantage

Docebo is redefining the way enterprises leverage technology to create and manage content, deliver training, and understand the business impact of their learning experiences. With Docebo's customized, end-to-end solutions, enterprises around the world are equipped to tackle any learning challenge and create a true learning culture within their organization.

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For more information, please visit docebo.com

