

# The L&D Leader's Guide

## to Determining the Role and Purpose of Learning and Development

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### Step One: Begin by Considering and Answering the Following Questions:

1. If someone in your organization asked, *"What is the role and purpose of Learning and Development?"*, how would you respond?
2. What are the likely results if there is a lack of clarity around the role and purpose of Learning and Development in your organization?
3. What are the likely results if senior leaders don't reach consensus about the role and purpose of Learning and Development in your organization?

### Step Two: Identify the Role and Purpose of Learning & Development

Below, you'll find 15 questions to help you identify the role and purpose of L&D in your organization. Involve senior leadership in answering these questions and the results will help you:

- Define the scope of your L&D strategy.
- Identify your L&D tactics.
- Prioritize your L&D initiatives.
- Formulate policy for how your L&D function will operate.
- Provide a framework to ensure your business decisions are aligned, informed, consistent, and focused on business outcomes.
- Enable the L&D team to be aligned with and focused on the organizational mission.
- Develop an L&D mission statement (your "true north").

### The Role and Purpose Definition Questions

1. What is the purpose of L&D in our organization?

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2. Why is L&D important to our organization?

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3. Who are our Markets (our Clients, Customers, and Consumers) that we support?

**Clients:** The executive-level decision makers in the organization. They set the business goals, organizational and succession planning, and determine the business strategies and operational plans. These include executives, business unit leaders, HR leaders, operation and sales leaders, etc.

**Customers:** Executives, directors, managers—those who approve their employees' attendance to Learning and Development programs.

**Consumers:** The learners—those who attend learning programs or utilize our services.

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4. What programs, products and services must L&D provide to be relevant to the organizational mission?

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5. When should training be provided?

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6. What do we expect L&D to accomplish for our organization?

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7. How should the learning programs (internal and external programs) be designed?

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8. Is learning considered an investment or an expense?

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9. What responsibility do workshop participants (consumers) have for their own learning?

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10. What responsibility do supervisors and managers (customers) have toward learning?

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11. What responsibility does senior executive leadership (clients) have toward learning?

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12. What responsibility does L&D have to its clients, customers, and consumers?

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13. How should the effectiveness of L&D be measured?

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14. What is the link between learning and performance, and what organizational disciplines need to be in place to ensure a successful learning transfer?

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15. What is the role of the leader (e.g., manager, director, vice president) of L&D?

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### Step Three: Summarize the Role and Purpose of Learning & Development

Based on the answers to the role and purpose definition questions, summarize, in one paragraph, your belief as to the role and purpose of Learning and Development in your organization.

*We believe the role and purpose of Learning and Development is...*

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### Step Four: Write a Learning & Development Mission Statement

A mission statement describes the reason L&D exists in your organization. The Learning & Development mission statement must be aligned with your corporate mission statement. It must also offer a broad-based description of what you do, broken down into three components. It describes your:

- **Product** (the what)
- **Market** (the who)
- **Function** (the why)

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#### About Terrence Donahue

In his role as Corporate Director of Learning at Emerson Electric (FORTUNE 120), Terrence shapes and supports the performance of current and emerging leaders across the world. He supports the leadership development of 67 Business Units under two Business Platforms. He also leads a team of talented Learning & Development professionals focused on the instructional components of Leadership Development while supporting the broader talent management initiatives.

He developed his career by providing training and performance consulting services to Learning and Development professionals across many industries: The Coca-Cola Company, Nike Europe, Chick-fil-A, Citibank Europe, Scandinavian Airlines, Abbott Laboratories, and the OSHA National Training Institute. Over the last 19 years he has personally trained and equipped over 35,000 people on five continents.