

Preparing Your Organization for New Technologies

Debbie Richards



PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The Importance of Technology Planning and Integration.....	2
Research and Analysis.....	3
Evaluate the Current Landscape	5
Project Planning.....	5
Project Governance	7
Development.....	8
Implementation and Evaluation.....	9
L&D Function’s Plan for New Technologies.....	10
Conclusion	11
References & Additional Reading	12

Tools & Resources

Researching Technology at Your Organization Worksheet	13
Workplace Technology Adoption Checklist.....	14
Project Kickoff Worksheet	15

Need a trainer’s lifeline? Visit td.org/TDatWork.

Printed in the United States of America.

For help or inquiries about your subscription, please contact Customer Care at 800.628.2783/703.683.8100 (international).

TD at Work (ISSN 2373-5570, Electronic ISSN 2373-5589, ISBN 978-1-957157-23-8, Electronic eISBN 978-1-957157-24-5) is published monthly by the Association for Talent Development, 1640 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. *TD at Work* is available for subscription in print or digitally. ATD national members receive a digital subscription to *TD at Work*, plus archive access, as part of their membership dues. The subscription rate for the Monthly All-Access (12 print and digital issues, plus archive access) is \$129 (ATD national members) and \$179 (national nonmembers). The monthly digital subscription rate for 12 issues is \$109 (nonmembers). Periodicals postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and additional entries. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *TD at Work*, 1640 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Claims for replacement of subscription issues not received must be made within three months of the issue date. Copyright © September 2023 *TD at Work* and ATD. All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems—without the express written permission of the publisher. For permission requests, please go to copyright.com, or contact Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923 (telephone: 978.750.8500, fax: 978.646.8600). ATD Press grants permission for the material on pages 13–15 to be reproduced for personal use.

AUTHOR

Debbie Richards

Debbie Richards is a learning strategist with Immerse. For more than 30 years, she has helped enterprise teams design, develop, and deliver immersive learning programs with measurable impact. Richards is also a director at L&D Cares. She is a past president of the Association for Talent Development Houston Chapter and a past national advisor for chapters. Richards was also awarded the title of Guild Master by the Learning Guild in 2022.

Content Manager, Technology Application

Alexandria Clapp

Editor, *TD at Work*

Patty Gaul

Managing Editor

Rachel Pelovitz

Senior Graphic Designer

Shirley E.M. Raybuck

To be successful in today's work world, organizations must embrace new technological breakthroughs that enable continual improvement, including automated or artificial-intelligence-powered analysis tools.

Such advances enable businesses to increase performance by decreasing time spent on tedious or manual tasks while improving decision making by accessing data sources across every level of operation within an organization.

L&D professionals' efforts to future proof their workforces, improve learning programs, and increase efficiency levels pay dividends. For example, we can provide upskilling opportunities through technology that aligns with organizational objectives or gain strategic business partnerships by contributing to digital transformation journeys. The L&D team should embrace technological advancements as opportunities rather than obstacles.

As Chad Udell and Gary Woodill write in *Shock of the New*, "The reality of today's fast-paced business world is that learning

professionals must continue adapting their approach to align with the goals of their business partners to produce successful outcomes for the enterprise.” That means having a seat at the table when it comes to bringing technology into an organization and implementing it in a timely and efficient manner.

In this issue of *TD at Work*, I will share:

- Organizational facets you should research before your company moves forward
- Questions to ask about the current state of technology
- Stakeholders who can help you prepare for implementation
- A big picture of governance and development for technology projects
- Examples of technology-focused projects, L&D’s role within them, and their benefits

The Importance of Technology Planning and Integration

Businesses investing in cutting-edge tools and equipment often create an impressive image among potential customers, collaborators, and job applicants alike. At the employee level, for example, the right technology ensures that collaboration becomes seamless as team members communicate with ease.

Yet, exploring or adopting new technology always presents obstacles; some individuals welcome it and others oppose it. Successful technology implementation lies not solely on chance or wishful thinking but, rather, in comprehensive strategic planning. An effective plan can make all the difference when introducing new technologies.

Coordinating efforts among all stakeholders will give your organization the greatest opportunity to smoothly adopt new technologies, undergo change management, and better develop or improve knowledge sharing across teams. Simultaneously, the company can integrate technological changes into established organizational practices and teamwork philosophies.

At its core, strategic planning involves setting specific objectives that support overall organizational goals; identifying potential risks before launch day; setting timelines that meet business requirements; keeping all involved

parties informed through communication plans; and dealing with any roadblocks or changes during technological transitions.

L&D’s Role

As L&D professionals, we specialize in ensuring all parties understand how the company operates so nobody gets left behind. We also serve as an answer hub, confirming that everyone feels secure about taking steps forward together, regardless of any setbacks. By using L&D as their guide, employees can easily adapt to new technologies and prepare to face today’s rapidly evolving business world.

Consider a business that wants to position itself for success with future technology implementations. Committing early and often to robust L&D efforts sets the stage for future successes, including via developing team members’ skills, leveraging change management processes, driving widespread adoption of solutions, optimizing return on investment, and building a culture of continuous learning and innovation in your organization.

Overlooking L&D in organizational technology implementation can create multiple issues, including skills gaps, resistance to change, reduced productivity levels, missed opportunities for the company and the team, higher costs, and poor employee morale. To ensure a smooth transition journey that maximizes benefits while cultivating a positive organizational culture, investing in L&D initiatives is essential.

In Practice

Two hotly discussed technologies are AI and immersive reality, both of which provide a host of opportunities despite having their own unique challenges. Let’s examine L&D’s role in practice.

AI Implementation

To optimize the use of AI technologies in your organization, L&D must work alongside the leadership team to develop an appropriate plan that fits within the overall business strategy. Organizations should begin by identifying specific areas where AI applications would produce positive outcomes, whether in process automation or improving customer experiences; choices will differ

among companies, but once identified they will help guide implementation phases.

AI deployment requires altering existing workflows, which may create resistance. To ensure success with AI integration, develop a comprehensive L&D strategy, to include training or other resources necessary for transitioning effortlessly into a new way of working.

Further, successful AI implementation relies heavily on effective leadership. To that end, offer leadership development programs focusing on AI strategy while taking ethical considerations and change management into account.

Coordinating efforts among all stakeholders will give the organization the greatest opportunity to smoothly adopt new technologies.

Virtual Reality and Immersive Learning

Companies are exploring VR technology and immersive learning as an innovative and transformational means of working and learning, with L&D experts playing an increasingly vital role in assisting organizations with preparation. For example, workshops or training sessions designed to educate teams on VR technology can increase employee participation when integrating it into daily operations. Also, inform employees about the benefits they could experience by adopting an emerging technology, such as VR.

Additionally, gaining new capabilities with VR devices requires personnel with the appropriate skills. Developing such competencies through L&D expertise is of the utmost importance.

Crafting customized content tailored to organizational goals and staff member needs is integral to helping ensure employees successfully transition when adopting new processes or technologies in the workplace environment. L&D may, for example, leverage VR technology as part of onboarding programs to enable employers to

offer detailed virtual office tours, team introductions, and an outline of organizational values. That helps new hires make an effective transition to the company.

Research and Analysis

Conduct thorough research and analysis so the chosen technology seamlessly integrates into the organization. Strive to understand the company's unique goals and challenges so leaders can make well-informed decisions about which technology will best serve their needs. By doing the research up front, L&D ensures that any chosen technology meets business requirements while supporting better work processes.

Careful research and analysis will help you confidently make evidence-based choices about integration into existing operations. Additionally, strategic planning enables the organization to be prepared for any obstacles while exploiting all feasible ways technology can improve business outcomes.

Your research efforts will enable you to anticipate potential risks or threats around the new technological solutions, such as opposition to the change or other large organizational initiatives that could take resources away from the project.

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask,” Albert Einstein said. “For once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.”

Tools and Technologies

Every company has unique goals and challenges that technology should help address effectively. Analyzing requirements enables you to identify specific issues or opportunities that new technologies can solve.

For example, if you are part of an organization that seeks better communication capabilities or faster response times to improve customer service levels, ask: What technologies are on the market and operate with our current systems, can scale for anticipated organizational growth, and are easy for employees to adopt?

In addition to understanding the available tools on the market, research the company's current tools and