REBUILDING L&D FOR AN AI-DRIVEN WORLD

Insights from the NIIT & St. Charles Consulting Group's 2026 Learning Transformation Benchmark

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

Learning and development is entering a period of structural rebuild—not because L&D has failed, but because the environment it was built for no longer exists.

Artificial intelligence is changing how work gets done but it is the latest acceleration, not the first inflection point. The digitalization of most economies and the pandemic had already reshaped work, the workforce, and the work environment, compressing cycles, decentralizing expertise, and normalizing continuous adaptation. AI now intensifies these shifts. It further compresses the time between learning and action, embeds guidance directly into workflows, and amplifies the impact—good or bad—of decisions made at scale. In this environment, **learning can no longer function primarily as a delivery engine. It must operate as enterprise infrastructure: designed to scale, integrated with talent systems, and credible in executive decision-making.**

This benchmark shows that leaders largely agree on what must change next but far fewer organizations are structurally prepared to deliver on those priorities.

When asked to rank their top priorities for advancing learning and talent over the next 12–24 months, respondents converged on a small set of themes:

53%
ranked AI-enabled learning in the flow of work

44%
ranked evolving L&D into a more strategic business partner

41%
ranked building a skills-based talent strategy

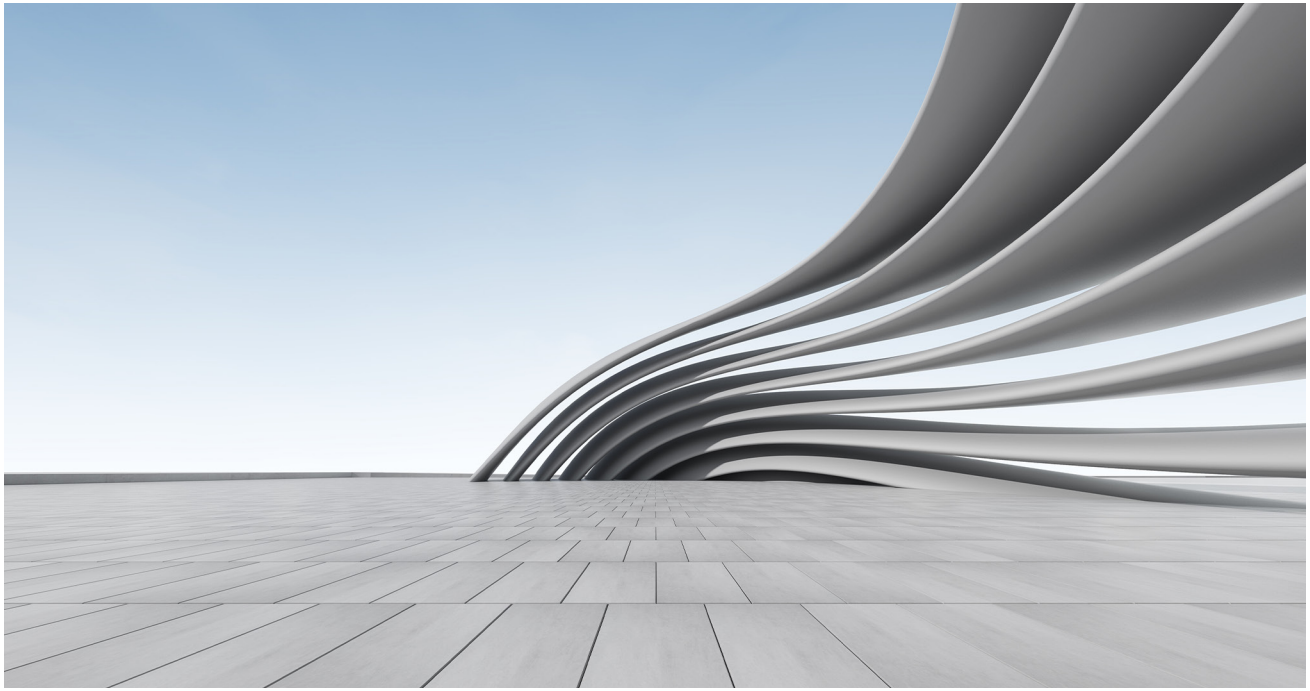
38%
ranked integrating learning with broader HR and talent systems

35%
ranked demonstrating business impact

This level of alignment is notable. The field is no longer debating direction. The pressure has shifted decisively to **execution.**

However, when these priorities are paired with assessments of current readiness, a clear pattern emerges. The **largest execution gaps sit directly beneath the most strategically important priorities,** particularly AI-enabled learning in the flow of work and skills-based strategies. In other words, leaders are placing their biggest bets where their systems are least prepared to deliver at scale.

To understand why, this study moves beyond program-level analysis and instead examines **system readiness**—the extent to which learning, talent, data, and governance components reinforce one another well enough to support enterprise execution.



The analysis is anchored in five indices derived from the 2026 Global Learning Transformation Benchmark:

The **Skills & Talent Architecture Index (STAI)** captures an organization's ability to scale learning and talent initiatives consistently across the enterprise, based on progress across governance, design, delivery enablement, technology and data, operations, measurement, and career pathways.

The **Priority–Execution Gap Index (PEGI)** surfaces where strategic priorities outpace current readiness, signaling sequencing risk.

The **Operating Model Trajectory Index (OMTI)** captures how learning decision rights and organizational structures are expected to shift over time.

The **AI Learning Readiness Index (AILRI)** reflects readiness to deliver AI-enabled learning in the flow of work, combining ambition with enabling architecture.

The **Learning–Business Credibility Index (LBCI)** distinguishes measurement activity from decision influence—whether learning evidence is trusted and used by business leaders.

Read together, these indices reveal a consistent story.

Most organizations are not lacking activity or intent. Instead, they exhibit **uneven system readiness.** Design and development capabilities are often relatively strong. Innovation in delivery formats is common. But governance, data integration, measurement credibility, and career pathing lag. This imbalance produces systems that can generate learning but struggle to **scale impact.** The interaction between ambition and readiness explains a frustration many leaders experience but struggle to diagnose:

Organizations are doing more than ever, but it doesn’t feel like we’re getting traction.

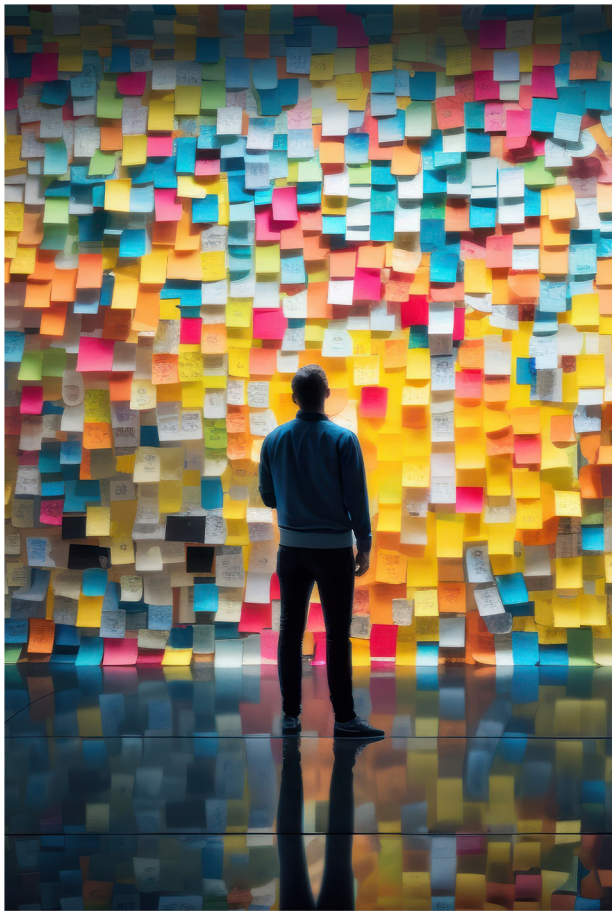
When ambition rises faster than system readiness, organizations fall into a predictable cycle. Pilots launch quickly and show promise in local contexts. Attempts to scale expose integration gaps. Momentum slows, confidence erodes, and initiatives reset. This is not a failure of effort or leadership; it is a structural outcome.

AI raises the stakes of this dynamic. When learning is embedded directly into work, weak standards, unclear governance, and poor measurement surface immediately and at scale. In this environment, low system readiness does not merely slow progress; it **amplifies risk** by scaling inconsistency and poor decisions more rapidly.

The central conclusion of this benchmark is therefore not about tools, platforms, or content volume. It is about **sequencing and structural design.** Organizations that deliberately rebuild learning as enterprise infrastructure, strengthening system readiness before scaling ambition—create the conditions for compounding impact. Those that do not will continue to cycle through initiatives without converting momentum into advantage.

The rebuild is already underway. The question is whether it will be **intentional, coherent, and designed to scale.**

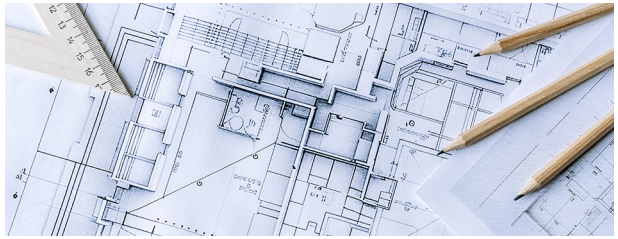
HOW TO READ THIS REPORT 02



This report is designed for leaders who are no longer asking whether learning needs to change, but **why change efforts so often stall despite high intent and investment.**

It is intentionally not a maturity model, a benchmarking league table, or a catalog of best practices. Those tools are useful when the problem is awareness. The problem facing most organizations today is **execution under pressure.**

This benchmark treats learning transformation as a **system problem,** not a program problem. It examines how strategy, architecture, governance, operating models, and measurement interact when expectations rise and scale becomes non-negotiable. This lens is especially important in an AI-driven world, where learning is increasingly embedded in work and decisions scale faster than human oversight.



The survey design reflects this intent. Respondents were asked not only what initiatives they are pursuing, but also:

which outcomes they are prioritizing,

how prepared their organizations are to deliver those outcomes,

and how effectively learning is influencing business decisions.

Forced-ranking questions were used deliberately to surface **tradeoffs**, not aspirations. In transformation contexts, what leaders are forced to choose reveals more than what they are allowed to endorse.

Throughout the report, findings are interpreted through a set of indices derived from the 2026 dataset. These indices are not scores to optimize. They are **diagnostic tools** designed to explain why organizations with similar ambitions experience very different outcomes.

FIVE INDICES: WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

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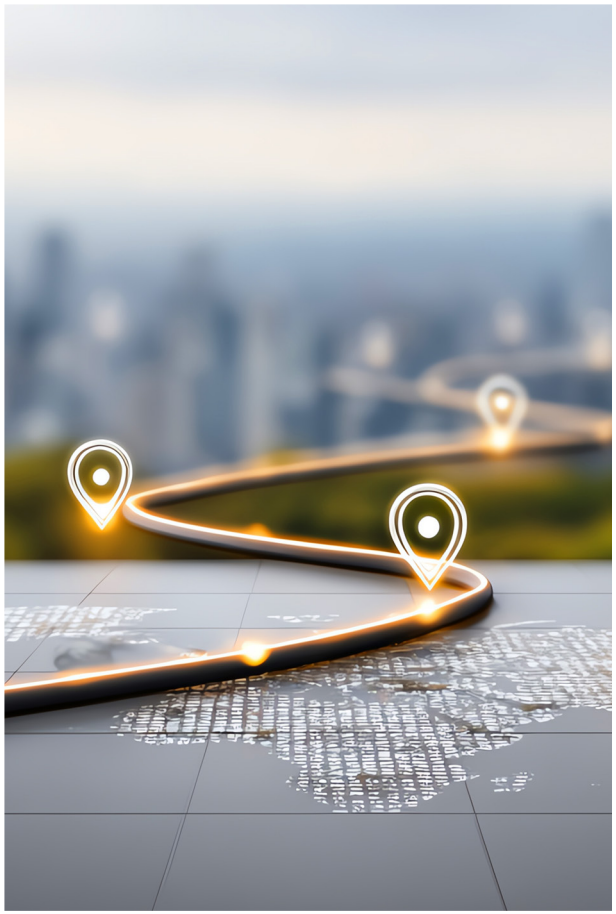


Transformation efforts often fail not because initiatives are wrong, but because **systems are brittle.**

Organizations can deploy modern platforms, launch AI pilots, and redesign curricula and still struggle to scale impact. This happens when components of the learning system evolve independently rather than by design.

The indices in this benchmark exist to surface **system behavior,** not individual activity. They translate multiple signals into interpretable patterns that reveal where scale breaks, where credibility erodes, and where sequencing risk accumulates.

Five indices anchor the analysis:

Skills & Talent Architecture Index (STAI)
Captures an organization's ability to scale learning and talent initiatives consistently across the enterprise. It reflects progress across governance, needs analysis, design and development, delivery enablement, technology and data infrastructure, operations, measurement and analytics, and career pathways.

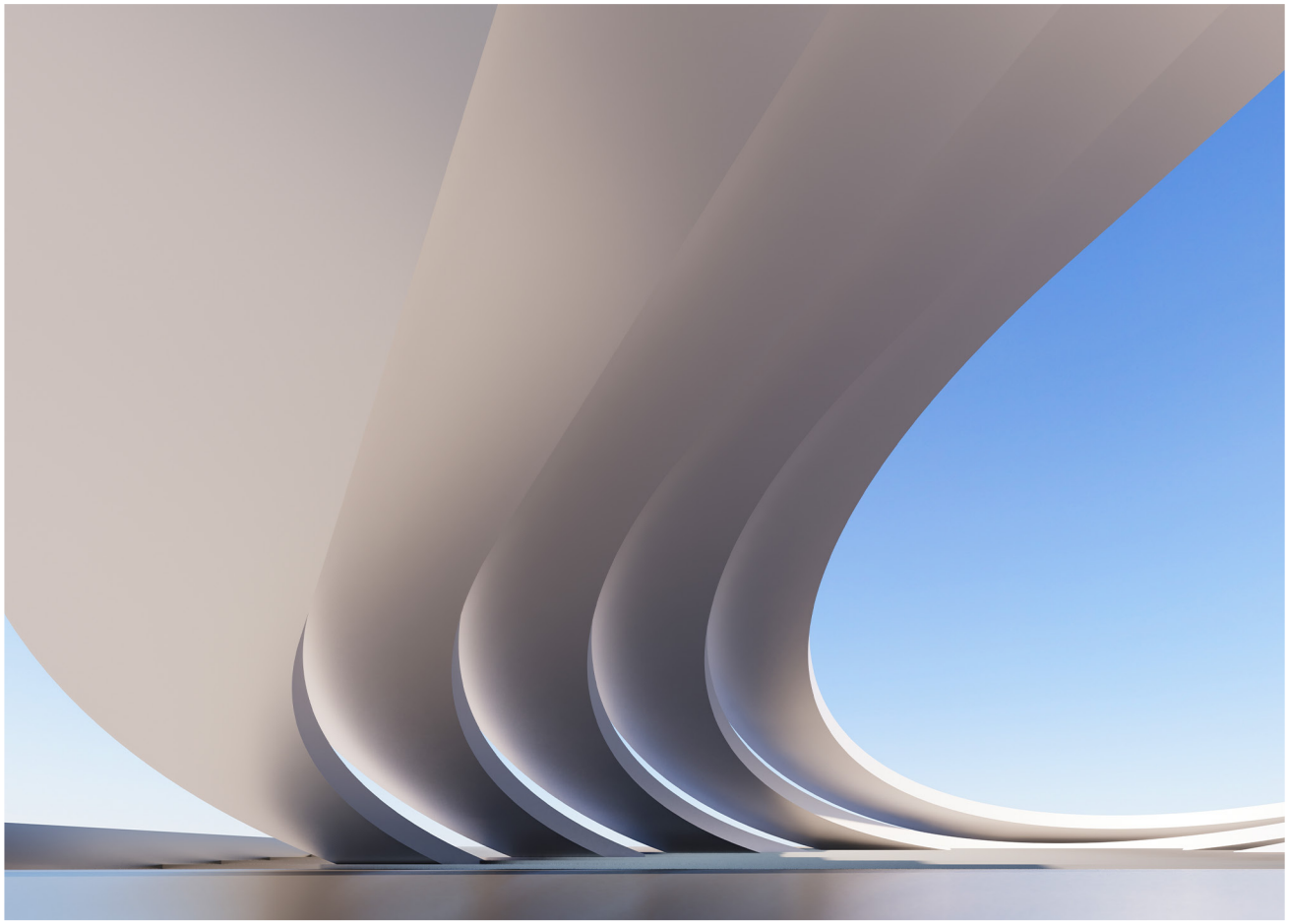
AI Learning Readiness Index (AILRI)
Reflects readiness to deliver AI-enabled learning in the flow of work, combining ambition with enabling architecture and measurement.

Priority–Execution Gap Index (PEGI)
Surfaces where leaders' most important priorities outpace current readiness, signaling execution and sequencing risk.

Learning–Business Credibility Index (LBCI)
Distinguishes measurement activity from decision influence whether learning evidence is trusted and used by business leaders.

Operating Model Trajectory Index (OMTI)
Captures how learning decision rights and organizational structure are expected to shift over time.

FIVE INDICES: WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER



The power of these indices lies not in any single score, but in **how they interact.**

High ambition paired with low readiness signals scaling risk.

Strong architecture without credibility signals underutilized potential.

Measurement without decision influence signals wasted effort.

Throughout the report, divergence between indices is treated as a warning signal; alignment is treated as a source of resilience.

> We move fast, but every time we try to scale, we hit the same walls — integration, standards, ownership. That's when momentum slows.
>
> **BERRY LUMPKINS,**
> Former L&D Leader, Renewable Energy Sector

WHAT LEADERS ARE PRIORITIZING AND WHERE PRESSURE IS RISING

04

Across industries and regions, leaders show strong alignment on what must change next.

When respondents were asked to rank their **top three priorities** for advancing learning and talent over the next 12–24 months, five themes dominated:

53%
ranked AI-enabled learning in the flow of work

44%
ranked evolving L&D into a more strategic business partner

41%
ranked building a skills-based talent strategy

38%
ranked integrating learning with broader HR and talent systems

35%
ranked demonstrating business impact

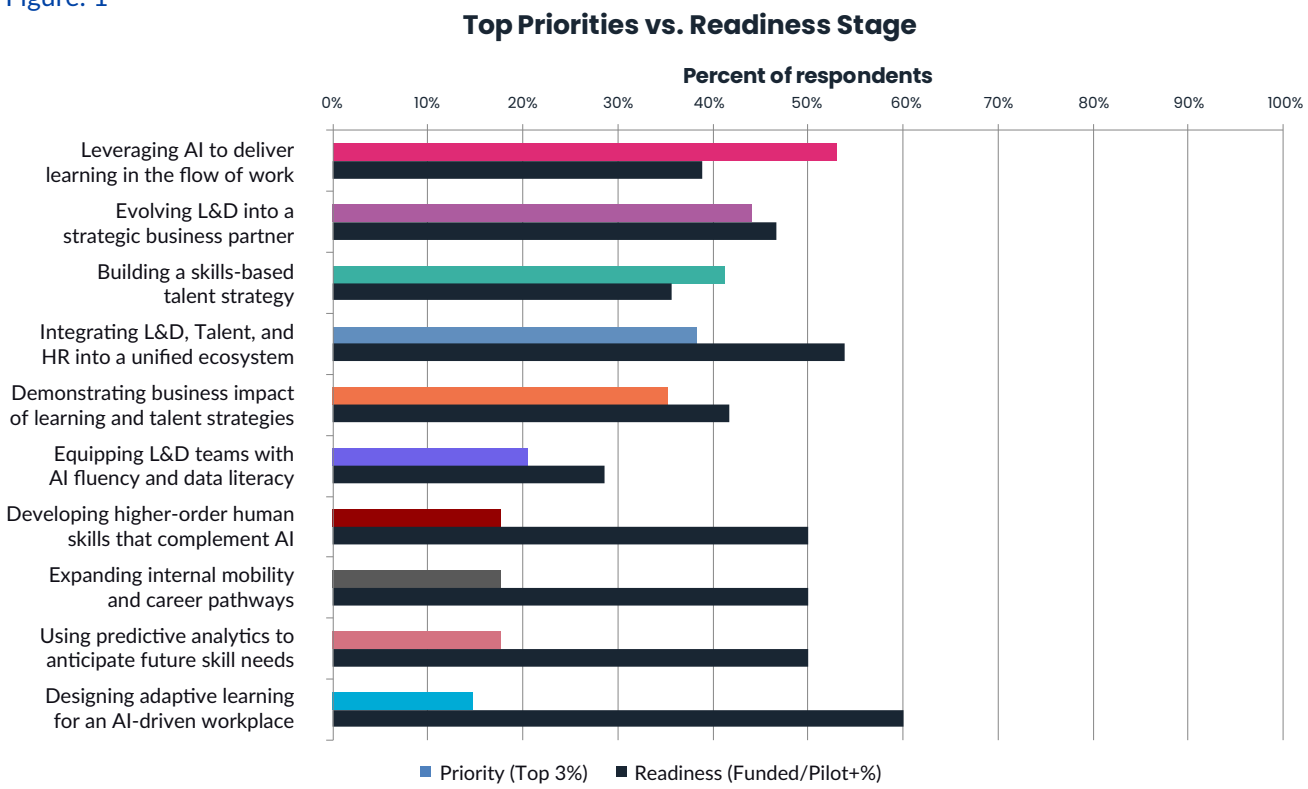
This convergence is notable. In many benchmarks, priorities fragment by role, industry, or geography. Here, the direction of travel is clear. The field is no longer debating what matters.

The pressure has shifted to **execution**.

That pressure becomes visible when priorities are paired with readiness. For each ranked priority, respondents assessed their organization's current ability to deliver. The resulting **Priority–Execution Gap Index (PEGI)** reveals a consistent pattern: the **largest gaps sit directly beneath the most strategically important priorities,** particularly AI-enabled learning in the flow of work and skills-based strategies.

> Design is the easy part. The challenge is everything that has to sit around it — governance, data, how it connects to careers.
>
> **CHARLES DONNELL,**
> Senior Director, Learning Innovation,
> Fortune 100 CPG

Figure: 1



In plain terms:

Leaders are placing their biggest bets where their systems are least prepared,

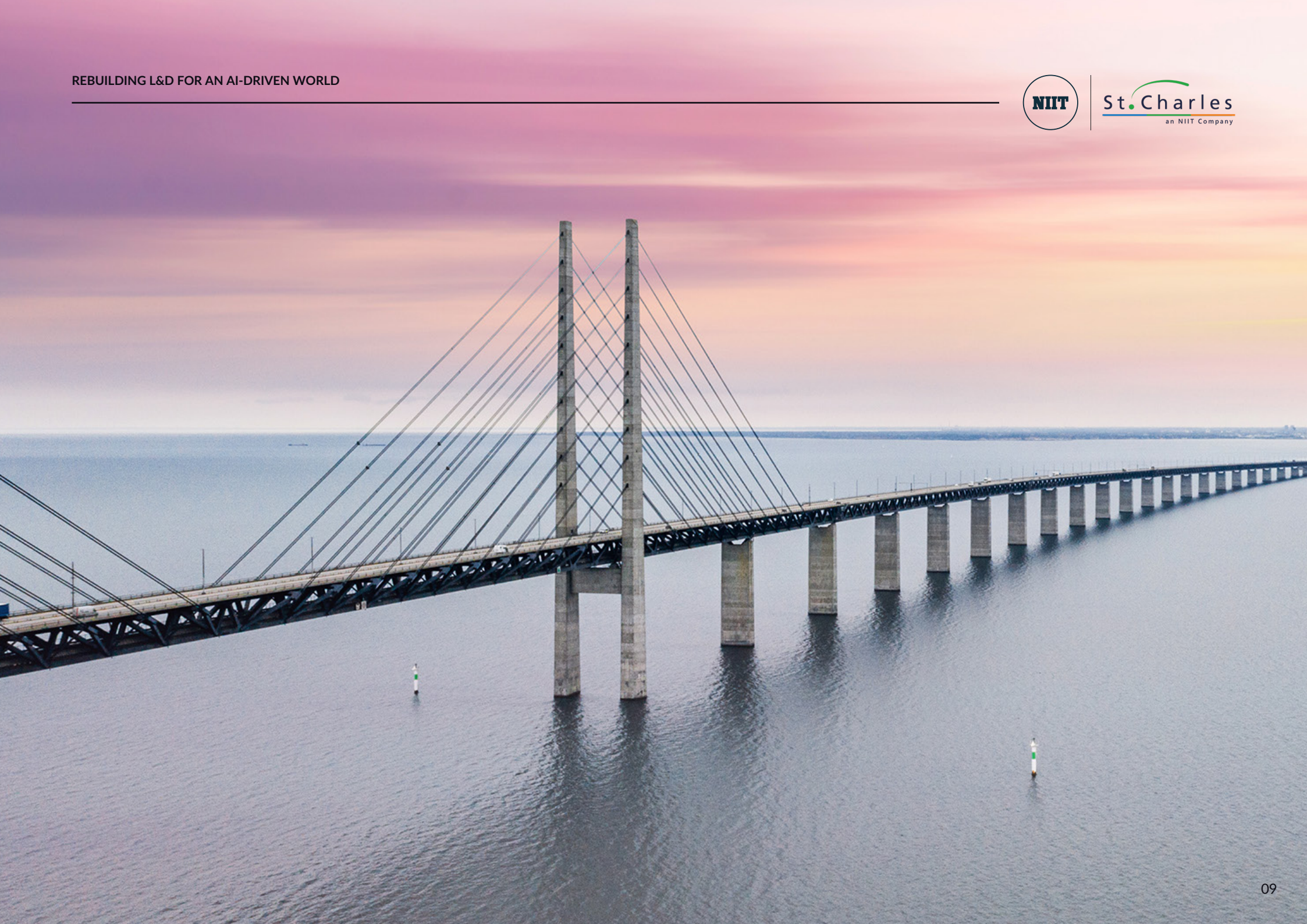
And expectations are rising faster than foundational capabilities.

This dynamic is not irrational. AI has changed the cost of delay. Leaders understand that learning must move closer to work, that skills must become legible, and that workforce decisions must be better informed. These pressures elevate priorities quickly.

What has not kept pace is **system readiness**—the focus of the sections that follow.

AI forces the question earlier. You can't hide weak governance when guidance is embedded directly into work.

SIMON BROWN,
Global L&D Leader, Partner, Talent, EY



SYSTEM READINESS IS THE BINDING CONSTRAINT

05

The tension between ambition and execution becomes most visible when the **Priority–Execution Gap Index (PEGI)** is read alongside the **Skills & Talent Architecture Index (STAI).**

PEGI surfaces where pressure is building—the distance between what leaders prioritize most and how prepared their organizations are to deliver. STAI explains *why that pressure does or does not translate into results.* Together, they form the central diagnostic of this benchmark.

Across the dataset, PEGI is highest in areas tied to strategic transformation: AI-enabled learning in the flow of work and skills-based talent strategies. These are precisely the areas where leaders believe learning must evolve to remain relevant. Yet these priorities also depend most heavily on **cross-system integration**—shared skills definitions, data interoperability, governance clarity, and measurement discipline.

STAI reveals that most organizations are not uniformly weak. Instead, they are **structurally uneven.**

Skills & Talent Architecture Component	Average Readiness Score
Design & Development	3.8
Delivery Enablement	3.5
Operations & Administration	2.7
Needs Analysis & Prioritization	2.6
Technology & Data Infrastructure	2.4
Measurement & Analytics	2.2
Governance & Decision Rights	2.1
Career Pathways & Mobility	2.0

Progress is strongest in components that are:

- Locally owned,
- Functionally bounded,
- And historically core to L&D—particularly design and development.

Progress lags in components that require:

- Cross-functional coordination,
- Shared data standards,
- And enterprise-level governance—particularly measurement and analytics, career pathways, and integrated talent architecture.

This unevenness matters more than absolute capability. A system does not fail because one component is immature; it fails because **components do not reinforce one another at scale.**

When PEGI is high and STAI is fragmented, organizations experience a familiar but often misdiagnosed cycle:

- Strategic priorities rise quickly,
- Pilots launch and show promise,
- Attempts to scale expose integration gaps,
- Momentum slows, and confidence erodes.

This pattern is frequently attributed to change resistance or insufficient resourcing. The data suggests a different explanation: **the system was never designed to absorb that level of pressure.**

In an AI-driven environment, this constraint becomes binding. AI compresses feedback loops and embeds learning directly into work. Weak governance, inconsistent standards, and poor data integration surface immediately—and multiply as scale increases. Under these conditions, system readiness determines whether ambition compounds into advantage or fractures into risk.

AI READINESS AND SCALING RISK

06

AI readiness is often framed as a question of technology adoption. The benchmark data suggests this framing is incomplete.

The **AI Learning Readiness Index (AILRI)** combines ambition for AI-enabled learning with enabling conditions—technology, data, measurement, and integration into workflows. On its own, AILRI reflects intent and experimentation. When read alongside STAI, it reveals **scaling risk.**

Across the benchmark, interest in AI-enabled learning is high. A majority of respondents report that AI in the flow of work is either a top priority or an emerging strategic focus. This reflects real shifts in how work is performed and how performance support and guidance can be delivered.

However, the interaction between AILRI and STAI shows that **AI ambition often runs ahead of system readiness.**

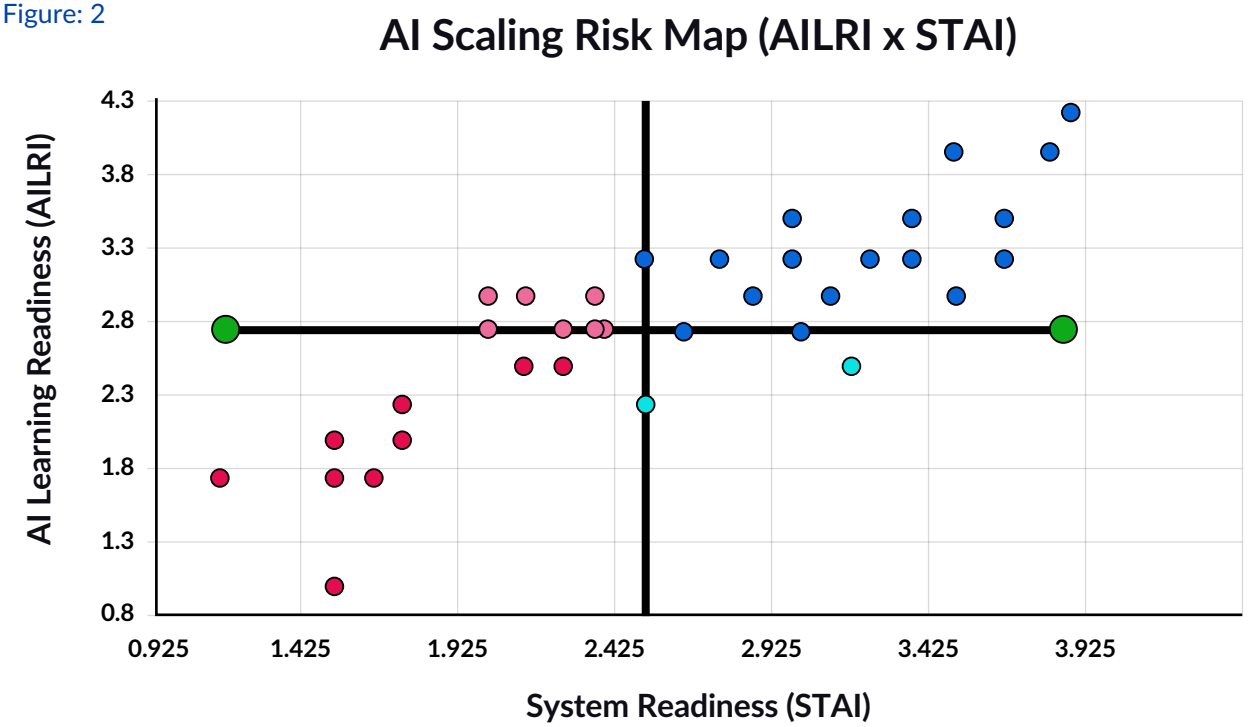
> AI didn't create our problems. It just made the gaps visible faster.
>
> **JOHN CHENIARA,**
> Global L&D Leader, Life Sciences Company

Organizations with high AILRI but low or uneven STAI tend to exhibit:

- rapid experimentation,
- localized success stories,
- and difficulty generalizing results.

> We can make it work in one function. The challenge is making it work the same way everywhere.
>
> **BROMWYN TINKER-KELLY,**
> **VP, Global Talent Management,**
> **Professional Services Firm**

Figure: 2

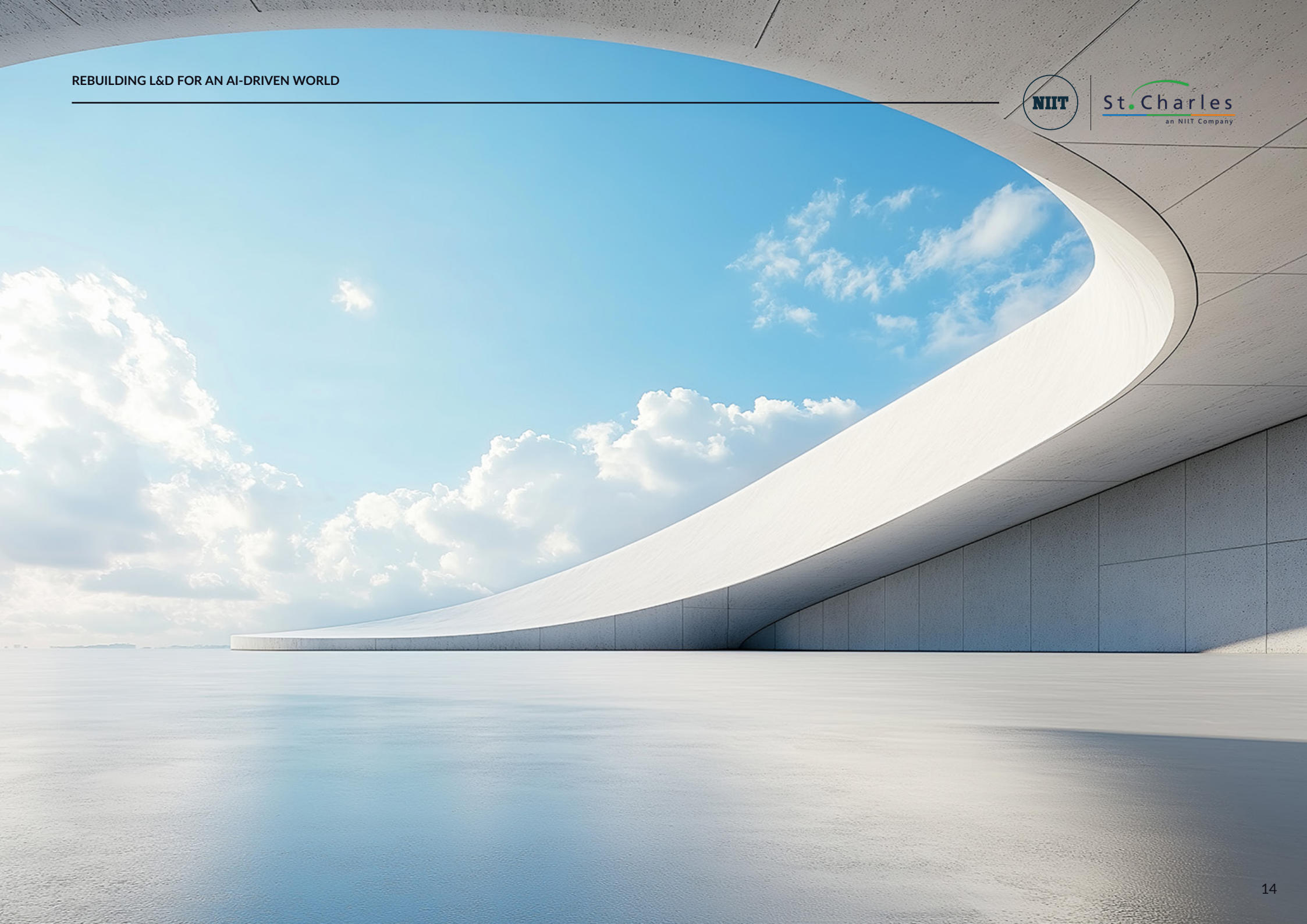


In these environments, AI-enabled learning increases exposure rather than advantage. Models behave differently across contexts. Content and guidance are not consistently governed. Measurement struggles to distinguish signal from noise. Trust erodes as inconsistencies surface.

By contrast, organizations with stronger STAI experience AI differently. Shared skills frameworks provide context. Governance clarifies where automation is appropriate. Measurement infrastructure allows leaders to see patterns rather than anecdotes. AI becomes a **multiplier**, not a destabilizer.

The implication is not that organizations should delay AI experimentation. It is that **AI raises the cost of weak systems.**

Where learning systems are loosely coupled, AI accelerates fragmentation. Where systems are deliberately designed, AI accelerates coherence. Readiness determines which outcome prevails.



MEASUREMENT VS. CREDIBILITY

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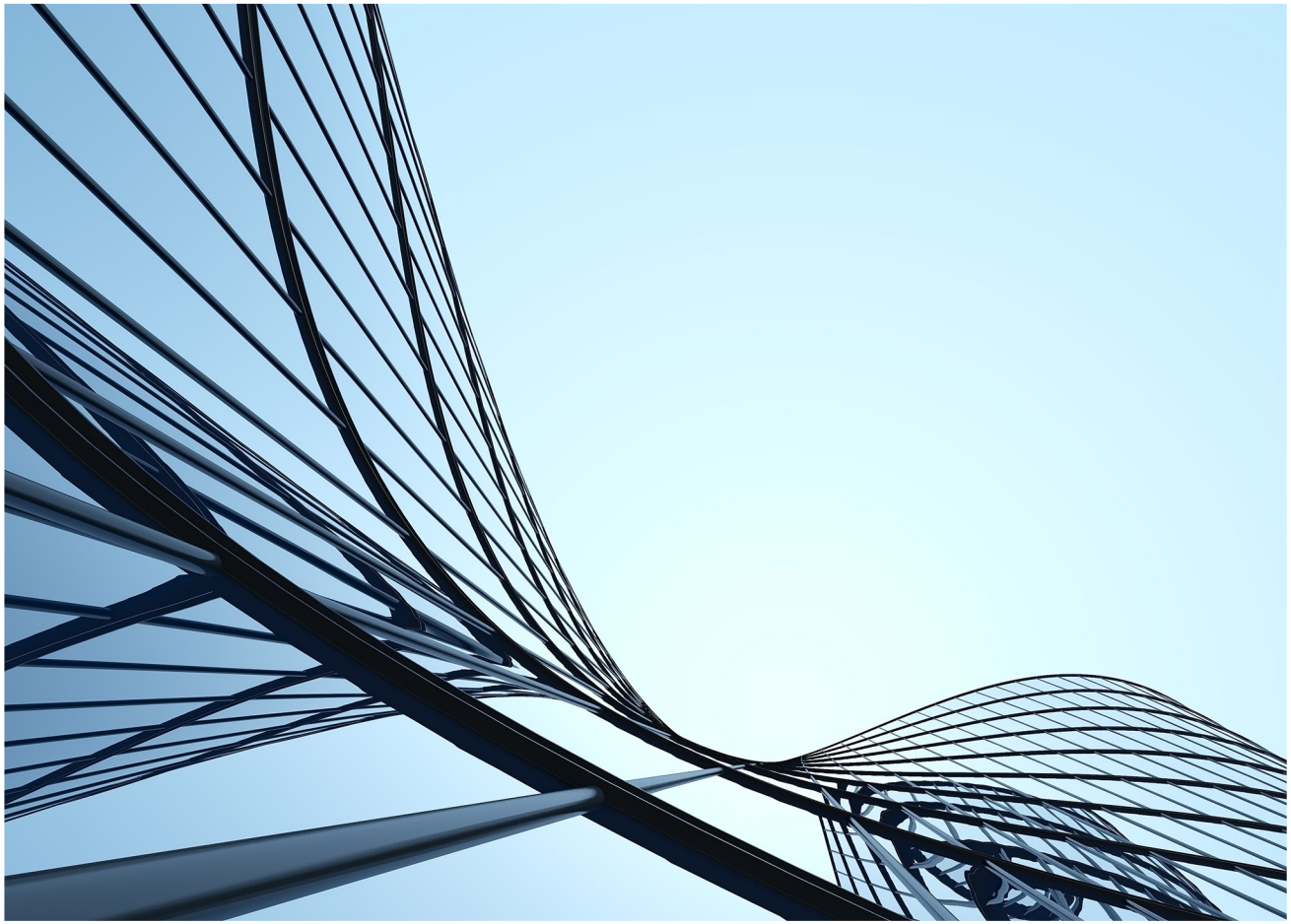


Few topics generate more frustration in learning than measurement. The benchmark data clarifies why.

When respondents were asked which **business outcomes** they expect learning to influence most over the next 12–24 months, several outcomes dominated:

- **Productivity and efficiency,**
- **Workforce capability and readiness,**
- **Internal mobility and retention,**
- **Quality and consistency of execution.**

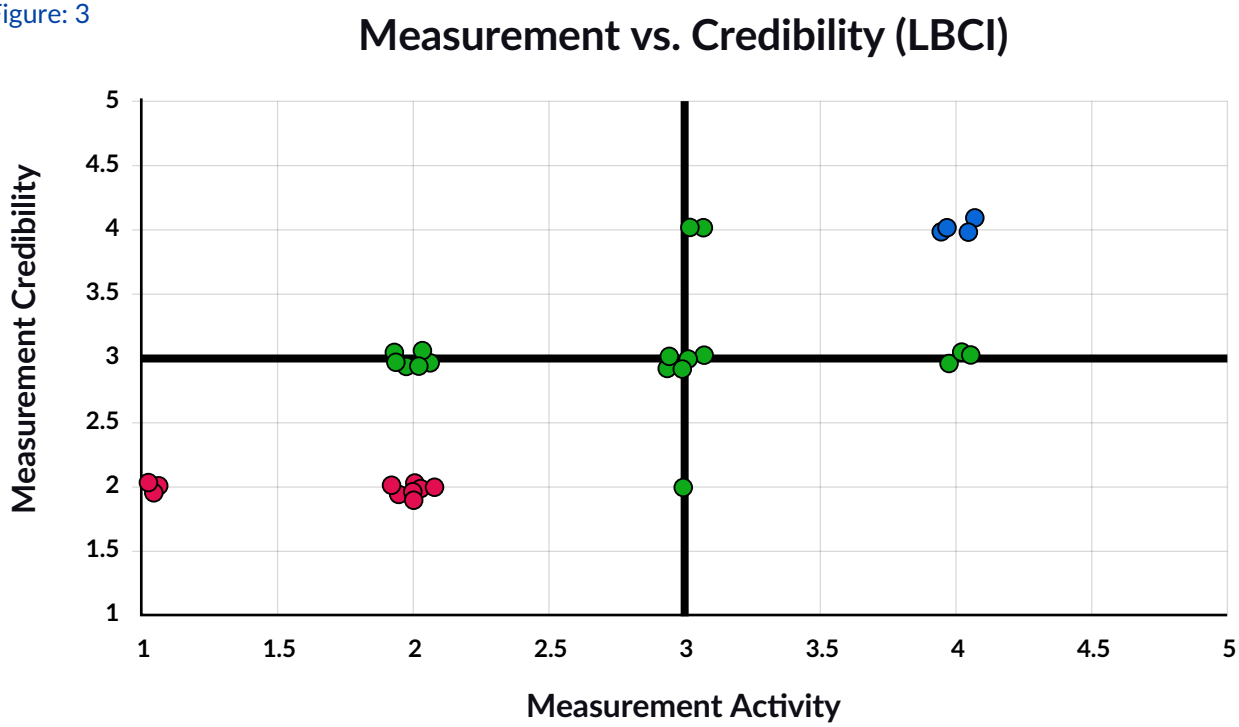
Respondents then rated how effectively learning is currently measured against the outcomes they prioritized. The resulting **Learning–Business Credibility Index (LBCI)** reflects whether learning evidence is **trusted and used,** not merely produced.

The gap between measurement activity and credibility is meaningful. And measurement activity alone does not guarantee influence.

Many organizations report increasing volumes of data—participation metrics, satisfaction scores, usage analytics. Yet LBCI remains modest. This indicates that **data exists without decision influence.**

> We have plenty of metrics. What we don't have is agreement on which ones actually matter in a decision.
>
> **CHRISTINA GRIFFIN**
> Head of Learning & Organizational Development, Industrial Distributor

Figure: 3



The pattern is consistent:

- Measurement expands,
- Dashboards proliferate,
- But learning evidence remains peripheral to funding, planning, and workforce decisions.

Organizations with lower LBCI often respond by adding more metrics. The data suggests this approach is counterproductive. Additional data increases cognitive load without increasing trust when it is not aligned to decisions leaders already care about.

Credibility improves when three conditions are met:

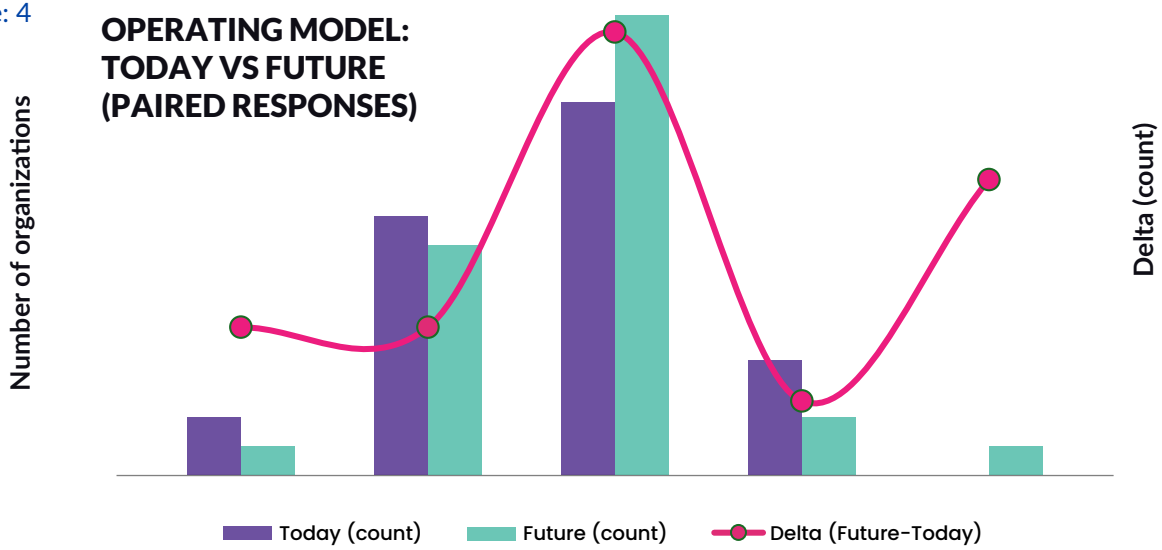
- Measurement is tightly focused on a small number of prioritized outcomes,
- The logic connecting learning to those outcomes is explicit (even if imperfect),
- And evidence is embedded into existing governance and decision routines.

In this sense, credibility is not a reporting problem. It is a **system design problem.** Learning becomes credible when it reduces uncertainty for decision-makers not when it produces better charts.

OPERATING MODEL EVOLUTION: AUTONOMY WITH INTEGRITY

08

Figure: 4



Discussions about the future of learning operating models often polarize around centralization versus decentralization. The benchmark data tells a more pragmatic story.

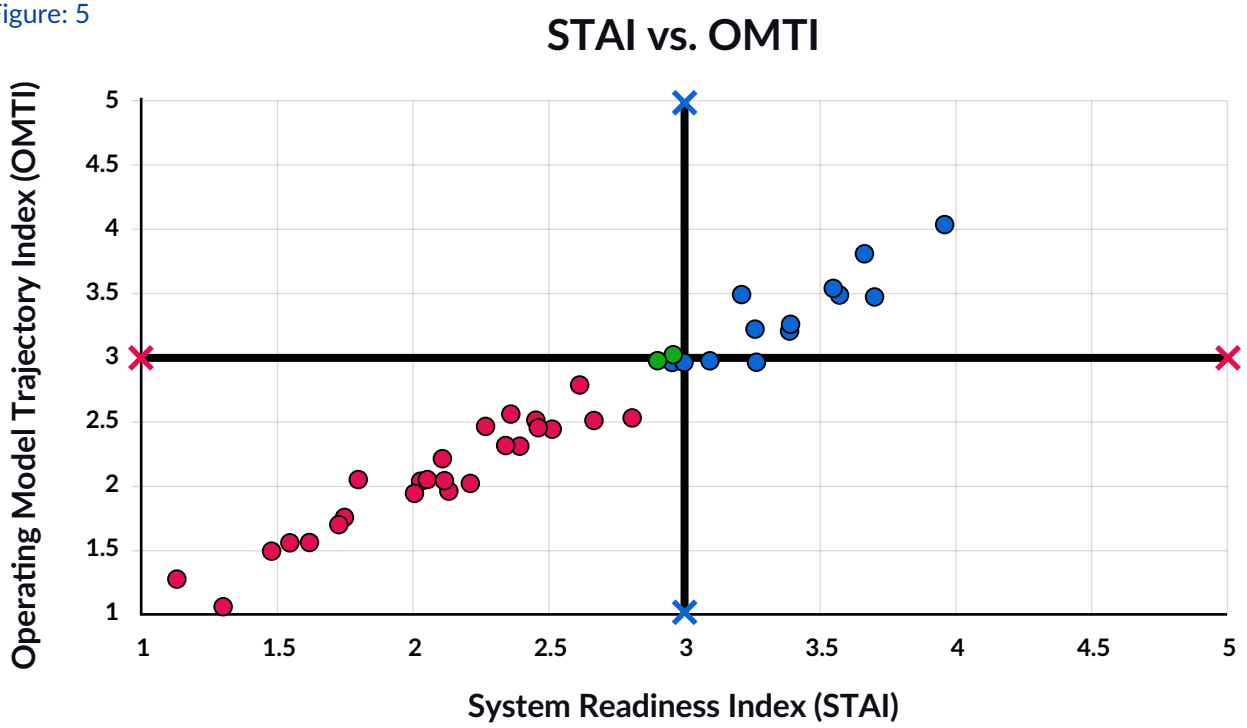
When respondents compared their **current operating model** with their **expected future state,** most anticipated movement toward **hybrid or federated models.** Very few expected fully centralized or fully democratized futures.

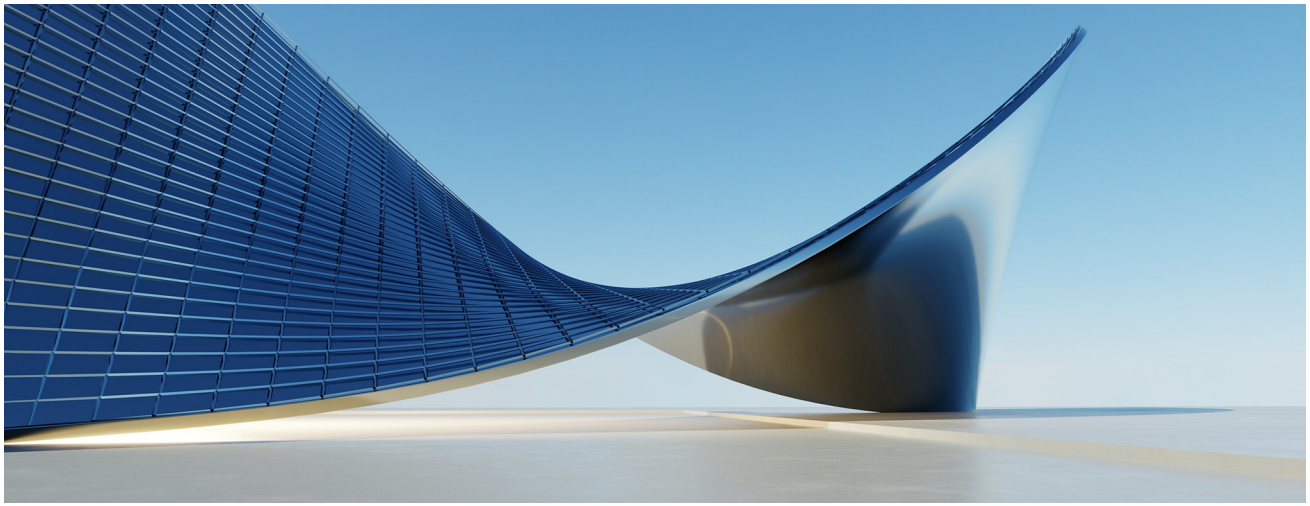
This reflects a deliberate tension.

Leaders want faster, more locally responsive learning. At the same time, they are acutely aware of risks related to equity, quality, compliance, and data integrity. These concerns shape how far and how fast autonomy can be extended.

The **Operating Model Trajectory Index (OMTI)** captures this directional movement. When OMTI is read alongside STAI, a clear pattern emerges.

Figure: 5





Organizations with stronger system readiness tend to:

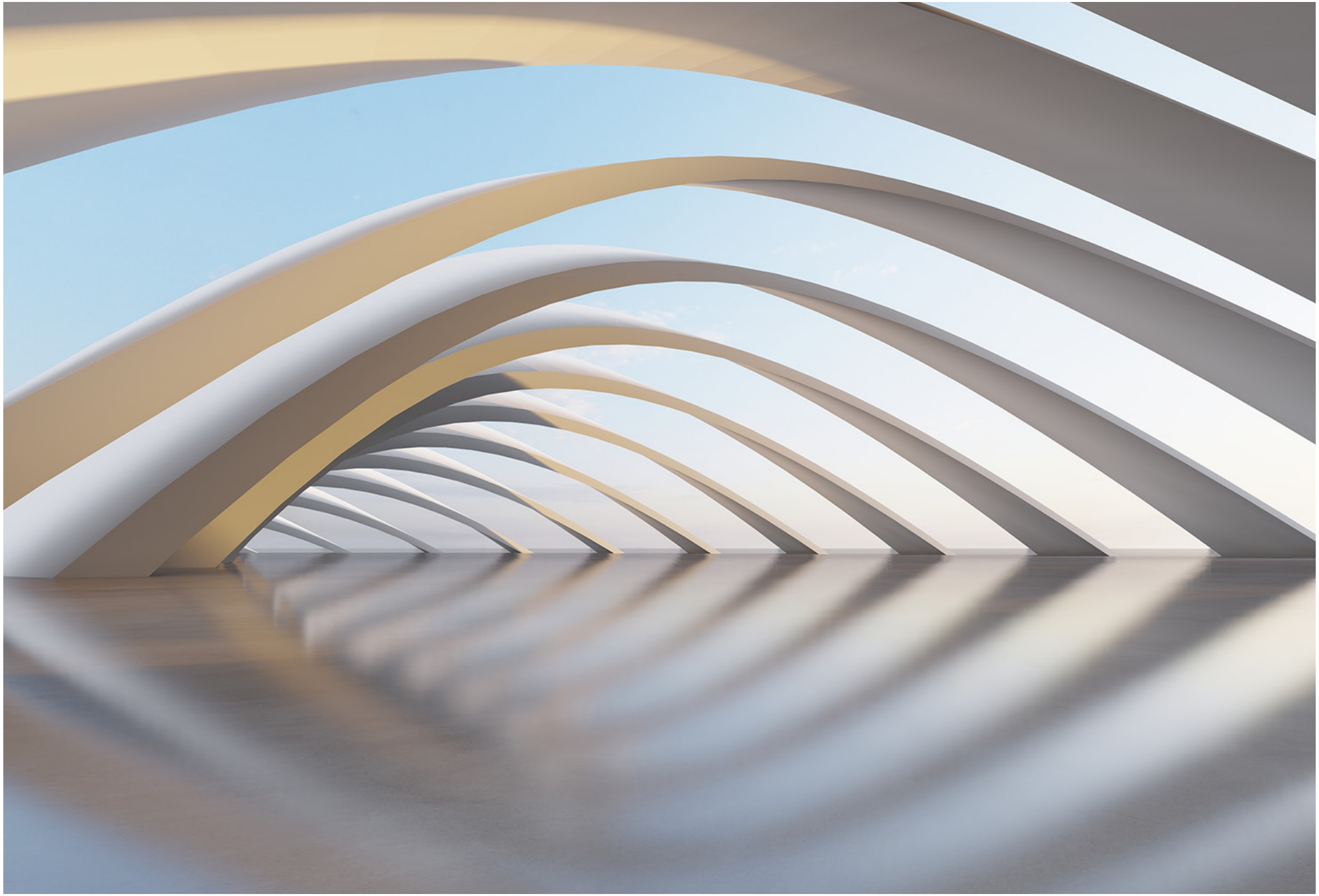
- Stage autonomy behind shared standards,
- Invest in skills and data infrastructure,
- And use governance to enable rather than constrain speed.

Organizations with weaker readiness experience decentralization differently. Decision rights fragment without guardrails. Standards vary. Measurement becomes inconsistent. Trust erodes.

The implication is not that autonomy is risky. It is that **autonomy without integrity is.**

> Local flexibility only works when there are enterprise rules underneath it.
>
> **BRETT LOCASCIO,**
> Managing Director, Advisory Learning Leader, KPMG

The future of learning is not defined by where decisions sit, but by whether the system can support distributed decision-making without sacrificing coherence.



ARCHETYPES OF REBUILD READINESS

09

The interaction of ambition, system readiness, credibility, and operating model produces **distinct structural patterns** across organizations. These patterns recur consistently in the data and are best understood as **archetypes of rebuild readiness.**

Importantly, these archetypes are **not maturity stages.** Organizations do not progress neatly from one to another by adding activity or investment. Each archetype represents a **structural equilibrium**—a position created by how ambition, architecture, governance, and evidence interact. Without deliberate intervention, organizations tend to remain in their current archetype even as effort increases.

Understanding the archetypes shifts the conversation from aspiration to **sequencing**: what must change first to alter how the system behaves.

AMBITION-LED, ARCHITECTURE-LIGHT

STAI: ●●○○○ **LBCI:** ●●○○○
OMTI: ●●●○○ **AI Readiness:** ●●●●○

Organizations in this archetype exhibit high ambition and high priority pressure, reflected in elevated PEGI scores. AI-enabled learning, skills-based strategies, and strategic partnership are top priorities. However, STAI scores are low or uneven, particularly in governance, measurement, and career architecture.

These organizations move quickly. Pilots launch, innovation is visible, and early wins generate momentum. The challenge emerges at scale. Integration gaps surface, standards vary, and measurement struggles to distinguish signal from noise. Confidence erodes as initiatives fail to generalize.

The risk is not lack of effort, but r**estart fatigue.** Without investment in system readiness, ambition continually outruns the system's ability to absorb it.

> We're great at starting things. We're not great at finishing them enterprise-wide.

ARCHETYPES OF REBUILD READINESS

FRAGMENTED EXCELLENCE

STAI: ●●●○○ **LBCI:** ●●○○○
OMTI: ●●●○○ **AI Readiness:** ●●●○○

Fragmented Excellence organizations demonstrate moderate overall readiness with **high internal variance** across STAI components. Local teams deliver strong results. Delivery leaders report real progress. Enterprise leaders, however, see inconsistency and duplication.

This archetype is defined by **non-portable success.** Skills definitions vary, data does not travel, and governance is implicit rather than explicit. Progress remains context-bound.

The risk here is subtle. Because performance exists in pockets, the need for structural change is often underestimated. Over time, however, fragmentation limits scale and erodes trust at the enterprise level.

Some teams are world-class. But none of that travels very well.

MEASURED, NOT BELIEVED

STAI: ●●●○○ **LBCI:** ●●○○○
OMTI: ●●○○○ **AI Readiness:** ●●●○○

Measured, Not Believed organizations have invested heavily in analytics and reporting. Measurement activity is high, but **LBCI remains low.** Learning data exists, but it does not influence decisions.

In these environments, dashboards proliferate while credibility stagnates. Measurement is treated as an output rather than an input to decision-making. Leaders receive information, but it does not reduce uncertainty or shape tradeoffs.

The risk is cynicism. Over time, leaders disengage from learning evidence altogether, reinforcing the perception that L&D is operational rather than strategic.

We report a lot, but it doesn't really change the conversation.

DELIBERATE SYSTEM ARCHITECTS

STAI: ●●●●○ **LBCI:** ●●●●○
OMTI: ●●●●○ **AI Readiness:** ●●●○○

Deliberate System Architects exhibit higher STAI and LBCI scores, lower PEGI, and more intentional OMTI movement. These organizations invest early in coherence—skills frameworks, governance, data integration before scaling ambition.

Progress may appear slower initially. However, initiatives compound. AI-enabled learning scales more safely. Measurement influences decisions. Autonomy expands without sacrificing integrity.

The defining feature of this archetype is **intentional sequencing.** Architecture precedes acceleration.

We slowed down on purpose so we wouldn't have to unwind it later.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REBUILDING L&D

10

Across archetypes, the benchmark points to four clear implications for leaders rebuilding learning for an AI-driven world.

SYSTEM READINESS PRECEDES SCALE

Organizations cannot scale what their systems are not designed to support. Ambition without readiness increases execution risk rather than advantage. Investments in platforms, content, or AI must be paired with investments in governance, data, and integration.

> Once the foundations were in place, everything else got easier — not harder.
>
> **CHARLES DONNELL,**
> Senior Director, Learning Innovation,
> Fortune 100 CPG

SKILLS ARE THE INTEGRATION LAYER

Skills are not simply a learning taxonomy or a talent profile. They are the connective tissue linking learning, talent decisions, workforce planning, and measurement. Without shared skills architecture, progress remains fragmented.

MEASUREMENT MUST EARN CREDIBILITY

Measurement adds value only when it informs decisions leaders already care about. Credibility comes from focus, logic, and integration into governance not from volume.

GOVERNANCE ENABLES SPEED

In AI-enabled environments, governance is not a brake. It is what allows autonomy to expand safely. Clear standards and decision rights reduce friction and increase trust.

Taken together, these implications point to a single conclusion: rebuilding L&D is a system design challenge, not a delivery optimization exercise.

HOW THESE FINDINGS COMPARE TO OTHER RESEARCH

11

The broader learning research landscape shows increasing alignment on a central message: AI does not diminish the importance of learning, it raises expectations for how learning operates, where it lives, and how it delivers value. Across consulting firms, research organizations, and industry analysts, there is strong consensus that the future of learning is embedded in work, personalized at scale, and shaped by trust, leadership behavior, and culture.

Our research reinforces these themes but it also sharpens the diagnosis.

HOW THESE FINDINGS COMPARE TO OTHER RESEARCH

WHERE THESE FINDINGS REINFORCE MARKET CONSENSUS

Like other leading research, our findings confirm that learning must move into the flow of work to remain viable. Leaders consistently describe time as the scarcest resource and view embedded, just-in-time support as essential in an AI-accelerated environment. Similarly, our data aligns with the prevailing view that AI enables personalization at scale, particularly through coaching, feedback, and adaptive support that would be impossible to deliver manually.

We also reinforce a widely held conclusion: culture and leadership behavior matter deeply. Trust, experimentation, and visible leadership engagement continue to shape whether learning innovations gain traction or stall.

WHERE THESE FINDINGS DIFFER FROM THE PREVAILING NARRATIVE

Where our research diverges is in what we identify as the primary constraint. Much of the market narrative implies a relatively linear path: introduce new tools, modernize experiences, and culture will follow. Our findings suggest a more sobering reality.

Across organizations, ambition consistently outpaces system readiness. Leaders express strong confidence in AI's potential and strong intent to modernize learning—but the enterprise foundations required to support that ambition are often fragmented or weak. Governance is unclear. Decision rights are inconsistent. Measurement lacks credibility. Operating models are misaligned.

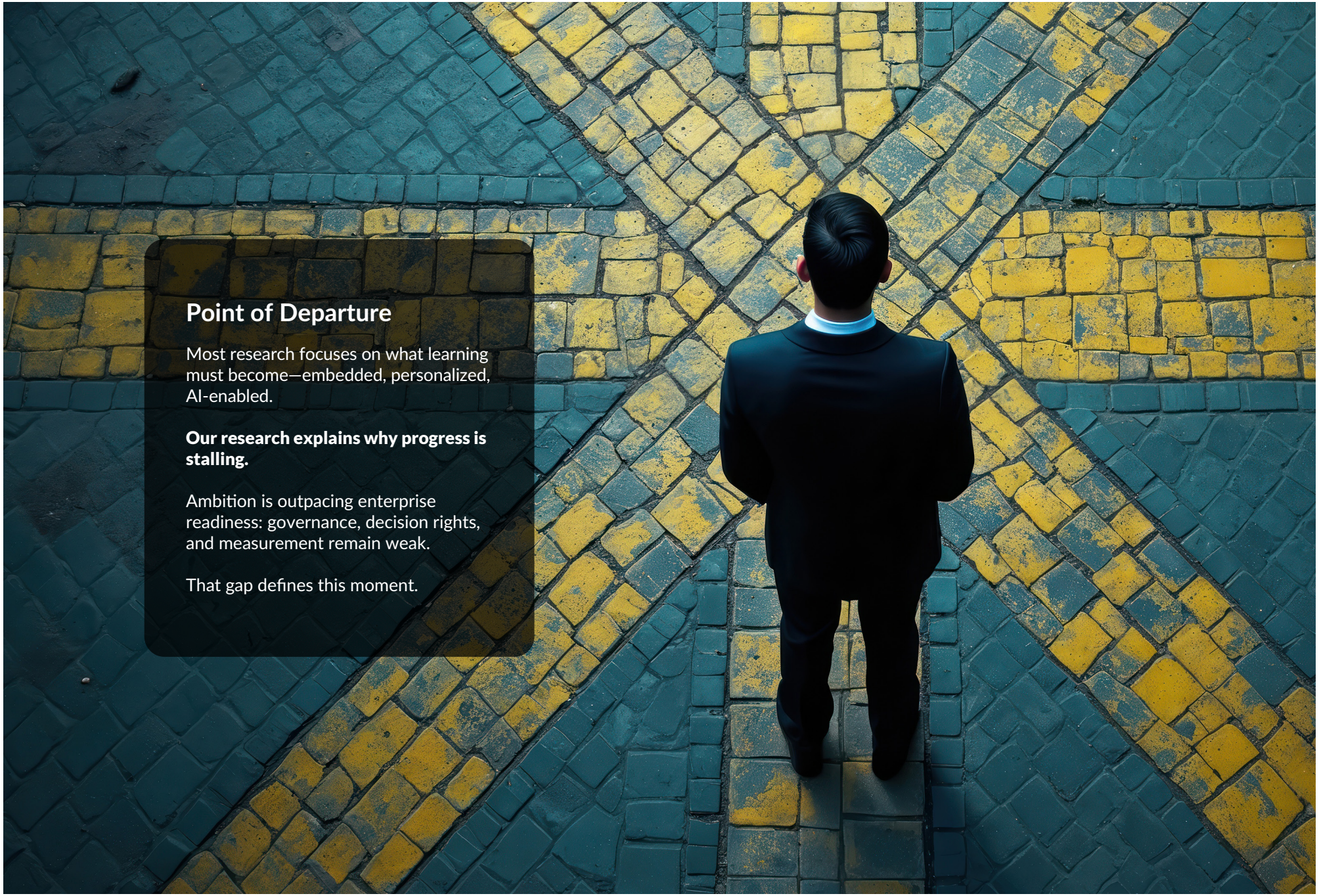
As a result, many organizations are attempting to scale advanced learning experiences on top of unstable systems—creating duplication, confusion, and risk rather than compounding value.

OUR DISTINCT POINT OF VIEW IN THE MARKET

Our research advances a distinct and defensible point of view: learning must be treated as enterprise infrastructure, not a function or portfolio of programs. In an AI-driven world, learning systems need the same rigor applied to other forms of enterprise infrastructure—clear ownership, consistent standards, disciplined governance, and trusted measurement.

We also elevate the business partner and architect roles as the new center of gravity for learning organizations. While other research gestures toward L&D as a guide or curator, our findings make explicit what that role requires to succeed: enterprise mandate, authority to shape decisions, and credible data to inform tradeoffs.

Ultimately, our research reframes the challenge facing learning leaders. The question is no longer whether organizations understand the direction of travel. It is whether their learning systems are designed to survive—and perform—in a world where AI accelerates both opportunity and consequence.



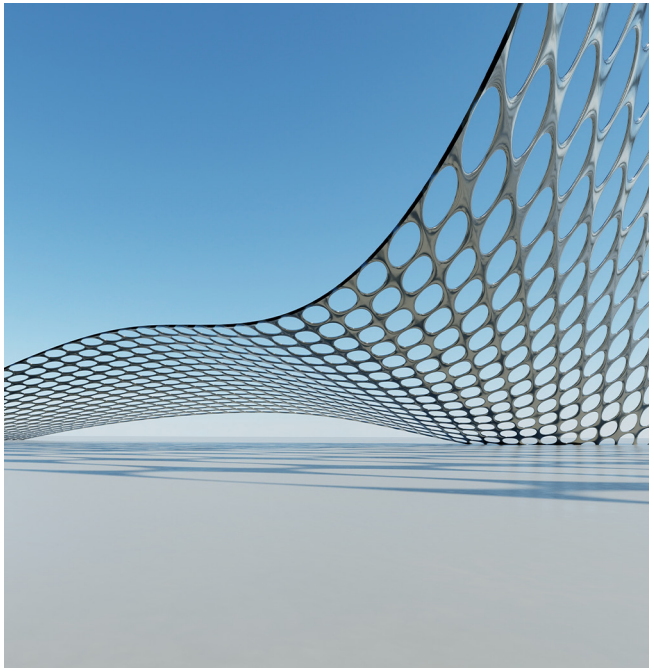
Point of Departure

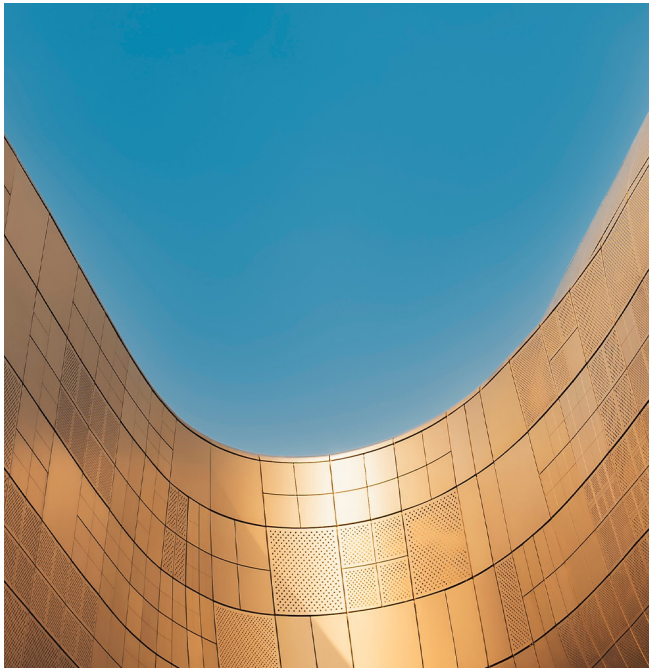
Most research focuses on what learning must become—embedded, personalized, AI-enabled.

Our research explains why progress is stalling.

Ambition is outpacing enterprise readiness: governance, decision rights, and measurement remain weak.

That gap defines this moment.





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CONCLUSION

The AI-driven world does not eliminate the need for learning. It raises the bar.

As learning moves closer to work and decisions scale faster, weaknesses in system design surface sooner and with greater consequence. Organizations that treat learning as enterprise infrastructure—designed to scale, governed to protect integrity, and measured to inform workforce and business decisions—create the conditions for adaptation and resilience.

Those that do not will continue to cycle through initiatives without compounding impact.

The rebuild is already underway.

The only real choice is whether it will be **deliberate.**

APPENDICES

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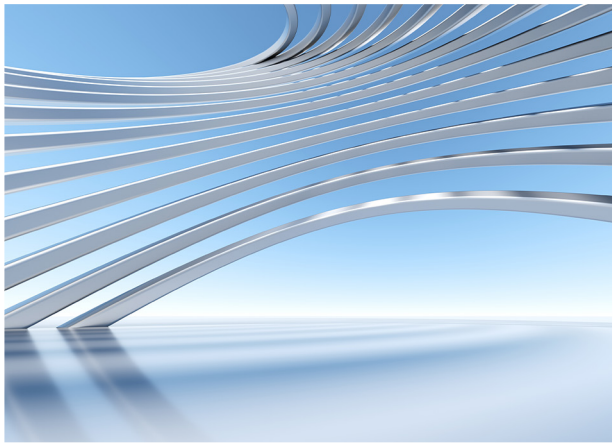


APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The 2026 Global Learning Transformation Benchmark is a cross-sectional, global survey designed to diagnose **system readiness for learning and talent transformation in an AI-driven environment.**

The survey captures perceptions of priority, readiness, operating models, and measurement effectiveness across learning, talent, and workforce domains. Results are interpreted directionally, not causally.

Forced-ranking questions were used to surface tradeoffs and sequencing risk. Analysis focuses on patterns and interactions rather than point estimates.

Respondents were given the option to participate in a brief follow-up survey to provide additional context and examples. The qualitative quotes included in this report come from those who opted into that follow-up and are used to illustrate themes observed in the quantitative findings.

APPENDIX B: INDEX CONSTRUCTION AND LOGIC

STAI: Mean progress across eight learning–talent system components.

AILRI: AI ambition combined with enabling conditions.

PEGI: Rank-weighted gap between priority and readiness.

LBCI: Rank-weighted effectiveness of learning measurement against prioritized outcomes.

OMTI: Directional shift in operating model decision rights.

Indices are interpreted relationally, not independently.

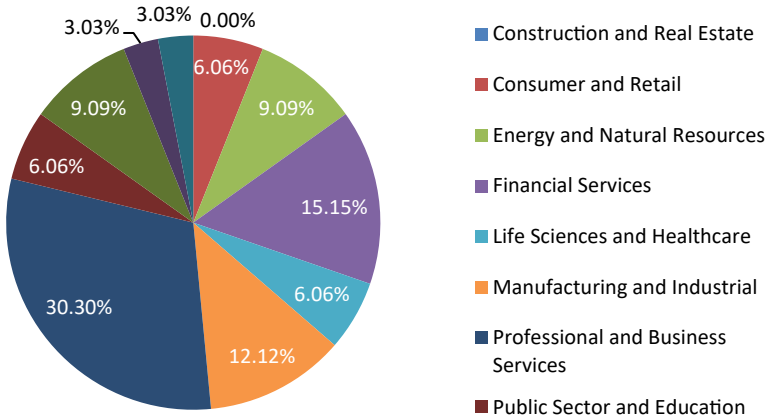
APPENDICES

APPENDIX C:
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

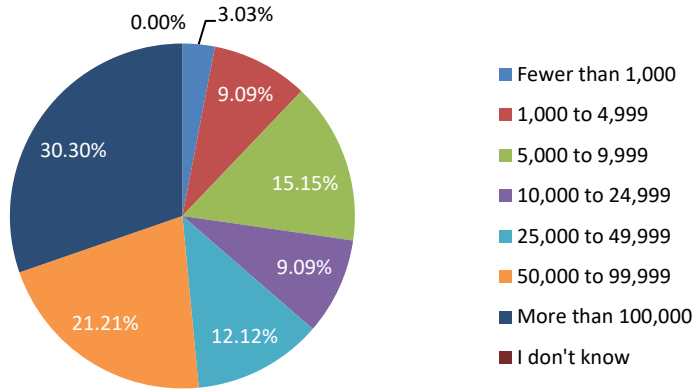
Respondents are senior leaders with responsibility for learning, talent, and workforce transformation across a range of industries and organizational environments. Participants span executive and enterprise roles, with accountability for strategy, operating model design, and capability investment at scale.

The charts that follow summarize key characteristics of the respondent population, including role level, organizational size, industry, and geographic footprint.

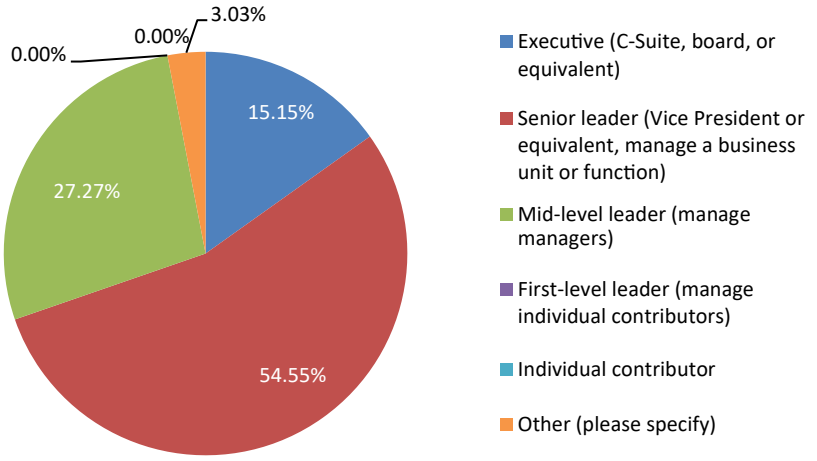
Which of the following best describes your organization's industry?



How many workers are there in your organization worldwide? (Please include employees and long-term contractors.)



Which of the following best describes your level?



APPENDICES

APPENDIX D: SEGMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION RULES

Primary segmentation includes span of responsibility, organization size, region, and budget authority. Span of responsibility is the most explanatory lens.

Small subgroups are treated as hypothesis-generating. Outliers are reviewed qualitatively.

APPENDIX E: EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS

To complement the survey data, NIIT conducted a small set of follow-up interviews with senior learning and talent leaders who participated in the benchmark.

Interviews were semi-structured and aligned to the core constructs of the survey, including skills implementation, operating models, AI readiness, and measurement credibility. All interviews followed the same question set, allowing responses to be analyzed by question rather than by individual.

Interview data was used to support interpretation of survey findings by surfacing underlying constraints, decision-making dynamics, and execution challenges. Interview insights are illustrative and interpretive; they do not introduce additional findings or alter the directional patterns observed in the survey data.

Verbatim quotes are included selectively to clarify mechanisms, reinforce structural tensions identified in the analysis, and bring archetypal patterns to life.

APPENDIX F: EXHIBIT INVENTORY AND DATA SPECIFICATIONS

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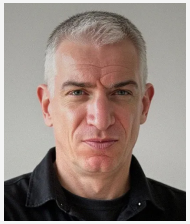

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