

STRATEGY BRIEF

Bigger Business Impact: Using AI to Create Skill-Based Learning — Fast



by Claude Werder



Learning & Development



Talent Management



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Leadership Development



Talent Acquisition

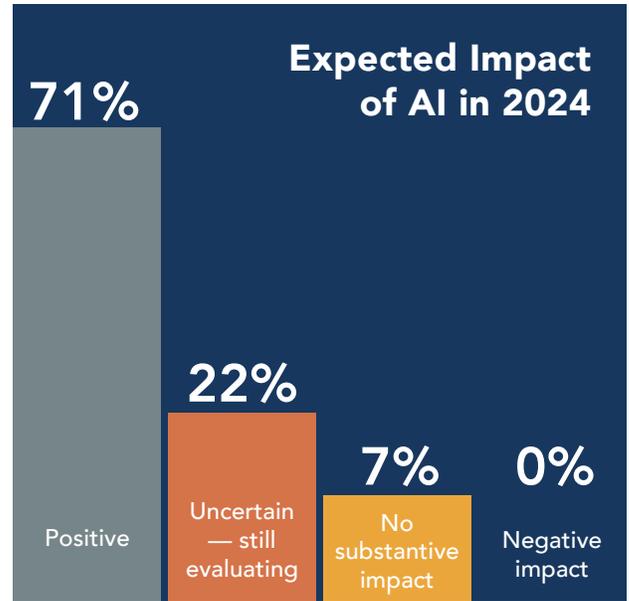


Workforce Management/HR

CURRENT STATE

AI is top of mind in businesses the world over. For learning professionals — instructional designers, eLearning developers, learning architects and others — not only is AI top of mind, but there is still fear and uncertainty associated with the subject. Some learning professionals — especially instructional designers — worry about losing their jobs.

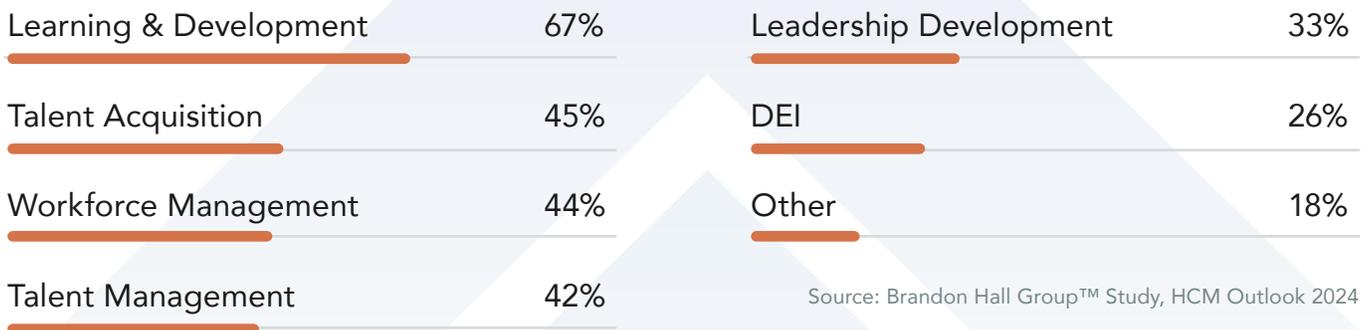
However, as Learning leaders have gathered more information and understanding about AI over the past year, they increasingly see that AI can have a positive impact on organizations — and L&D organizations in particular.



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, HCM Outlook 2024

When Brandon Hall Group™ asked organizations about how AI would be used in Human Capital Management in 2024, Learning & Development was the top response — and by a significant margin.

In What Functions Do You Plan to Use AI in 2024?



Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, HCM Outlook 2024

There are many reasons for the interest in AI for learning, but the two identified most often in interviews are the need to:

- Quickly upskill and reskill the workforce as technology transforms work, workforces and the economy.
- Move beyond knowledge-level learning to create learning experiences that are contextualized and relevant to the skills and business objectives that organizations need to urgently address.

The bottom line is that traditional methods of designing and deploying learning take too long and do not enable enough learners to develop and apply skills in contextualized and relevant environments.

COMPLEXITIES

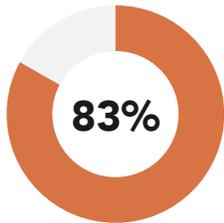
The need for greater speed, context and relevancy does not mean instructional designers are not important; it means that their roles will change.

AI tools can accelerate the production of in-depth learning experiences — such as online simulations — and the creation of content. That simply frees up learning designers to actually design — creating learning experiences that are emotionally and cognitively engaging.

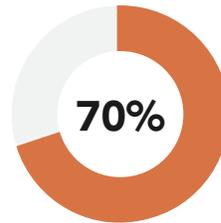
Rather than doing everything, designers can focus on what humans do best — understand what learners need and create compelling, high-impact experiences that move the needle on acquiring and deploying new skills. And AI can do what it's best at — creating knowledge-level learning and developing the content designers envision more quickly and efficiently than humans can.

AI, with the right tools, used in the right way, enables learning designers to have more fulfilling jobs rather than being overburdened with content development on top of the conceptual and creative responsibilities.

There is no better example of the mutually beneficial impact of AI than the creation of online and in-person simulations. Increasingly, simulations are seen as a learning modality that empowers organizations to upskill and reskill faster and better by replicating real-world situations that learners deal with every day:



of organizations plan heavy or moderate investment in upskilling and reskilling the workforce in 2024.



of organizations in 2024 plan to increase simulations to help learners apply new skills in a real-world context to evaluate readiness.

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, HCM Outlook 2024

Simulations have been hailed as a game-changer for scalable experiential learning. But there are barriers that — until now — have been difficult to overcome. Because of their level of interactivity, personalization, contextualization and real-world application, simulations are often costly and time-consuming to design and produce.

Use of them has been relatively limited, available only to organizations with large enough budgets to cover the development of simulations, the time demands on subject matter experts, the challenges of global deployment and the expense of maintenance.

IMPACT OF AI

AI has the ability to democratize simulations. Tasks that once required months for creation and review can now be completed in just a few days with the right AI tools.

For simulations to be more affordable for more organizations, two developments are necessary:

- The creation of a user-friendly, no-code authoring technology that enables designers to quickly build and deploy materials.
- Tools to handle the bulk of content creation for simulations. The major cost drivers are writing storylines, case materials, personas and activity content, as well as creating assets like videos, avatars, voiceovers, perspectives and digital coaches. Building simulations requires a different skill set than creating traditional eLearning content, which adds to the complexity and cost.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

As organizations weigh the benefits and costs of increasing the use of learning simulations, they must answer several critical questions. They include:



How can learning simulations improve our ability to create better learning experiences that accelerate acquisition and deployment of new skills at scale across the organization?



Are there AI tools that are currently available to help us break down the barriers to leveraging simulations?



What are the barriers to making greater use of simulations?



What will the impact of using AI to build simulations have on our Learning budget?



What will the impact of using AI to build simulations have on our Learning team in terms of learning new skills and making the best use of their current skills?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POV

1 Commit to Simulations to Accelerate Learning Transformation

AI is having a massive impact on Learning and Development, with reams of instructional content now available with a few simple prompts. However, turning information into actual, on-the-job skills requires practice in realistic settings. Practical experience is how you get from knowing what you need to do, to doing what you need to do.

Simulations create learning experiences that put your employees in situations to meaningfully apply their skills in real-world situations — but without real-world consequences. Learners can make mistakes and learn from them.

The experience adds context to learning that does not generally exist in traditional learning modalities, which makes it difficult to measure and understand the actual proficiency employees have and how well learning is moving the needle.

Effectiveness of Measuring Learning's Impact on Individual or Organizational Performance

Proficient/
extremely proficient

16%

Somewhat or
not at all proficient

62%

22%

Moderately proficient

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ Study, Think Like a CEO: How Learning Drives Business Impact

Most Learning organizations know they must improve learning's impact, but it is often difficult to shed what you have expertise in for something new and time-consuming, especially when the investment cost is high and there is a fear that reliance on new technology may threaten jobs.

*However, **experiential learning** is the key to **increasing the business impact of learning and increasing the relevance and importance of the Learning function**. A higher impact on business results can't occur by sticking with current practices.*

Our research shows that most organizations believe simulations can be highly effective, but many shy away from them because of the cost of the technology needed to develop them. But with the proliferation of AI, which reduces cost and complexity, continuing to resist simulations as a critical learning modality puts Learning's long-term relevancy at risk, which also can put jobs at risk.

2 The Right AI Tools Make Simulations Affordable

Rather than intensive upfront development, natural language AI can generate characters, conversations and scenarios from templated prompts. This allows designers to swiftly build out simulations covering the situations most relevant to learners.

Additionally, AI-powered recommendation engines can provide employees with personalized guidance and feedback based on their decisions, reducing the need for constant human involvement. As these technologies improve, any company will be able to create customized business simulations at a fraction of the time and money previously required.

With AI-powered simulations, employees can experience hundreds of realistic situations in risk-free environments, honing their judgment and preparing them for the complexity of the modern business world. AI can also deliver data that provides insight into the effectiveness and enable adjustments if needed.

However, we are relatively early in the evolution of these tools, so finding an experienced and innovative provider is essential.

3 The Regis Company as the Answer

The Regis Company — a frequent Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Awards winner, including three Gold Awards in AI technology for learning and talent development in 2023 — has been developing learning simulations for more than 20 years.

Regis is in a unique position of strength as the evolution and momentum around AI motivate more companies to explore the advantages of immersive experiential learning through simulations.

Regis is differentiated by two AI-driven tools that, when used together, remove much of the complexity in developing simulations. The SimGate platform provides a no-code authoring environment. Its AI integrations allow designers to easily create new storylines that are highly contextual with a few simple prompts. Depending on your learning need, these simulations can range from 15-minute individual self-paced microlearning to two-day team workshops.

SimGate-created courses also generate key data about what's working and who is making progress in their learning journey. By analyzing employee performance data, organizations can identify skill gaps and design targeted training programs.

The data can also be used to tailor experiences to individual learners and provide insights into L&D effectiveness and ROI.

Regis recently launched ReX AI, which serves as an AI-powered assistant for instructional designers, aimed at speeding up the creation of simulations, eLearning modules and assessments. It helps designers produce high-quality content. Tasks that once required months for creation and review can now be completed in just a few days with ReX AI's guidance.

Most importantly, ReX is a co-pilot, not a replacement for learning designers, who remain central to the role of creating, reviewing, and publishing high-quality content. Designers have full control over everything ReX learns and produces and determines what is important (and not important) for the learning experience. ReX simply accelerates the process and performs countless tasks that free designers for higher-level work.

The combination of SimGate and ReX AI enables organizations to develop scalable and effective simulations efficiently and cost-effectively, complete with integrated eLearning and assessments, for a wide array of learning needs.

Authors and Contributors



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Pat Fitzgerald (patrick.fitzgerald@brandonhall.com) edited this report. Pat is Content and Community Coordinator at Brandon Hall Group™. Prior to joining Brandon Hall Group™, he was an award-winning community journalist for 30 years and recognized for his writing, investigative reporting, editing, photography, design and community service. He also started and then sold his own successful weekly newspaper in the Branson, Mo., area.

About The Regis Company

AI-supported.
Human-centered.

With over 20 years of business in the industry, The Regis Company understands that in the world of Learning & Development, real experience now reigns supreme over mere content.

Our human-centered, AI-supported simulations are crafted to redefine experiential learning for the enterprise sector, merging technological sophistication with a deep understanding of human learning needs.

We're on a mission to prove how experiential learning develops skills beyond simply understanding and into meaningful application. This approach is at the heart of what we do, creating learning experiences that are not only engaging but also transformative to career development.

At the forefront of this customized learning revolution is our commitment to making experiential learning not only easier to create but also more impactful than ever before.



50+

AWARDS

25+

FORTUNE 500 CUSTOMERS

200+

PROGRAMS

1,200,000+

LEARNERS ACROSS
6 CONTINENTS

 **THE REGIS COMPANY**

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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.



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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.



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