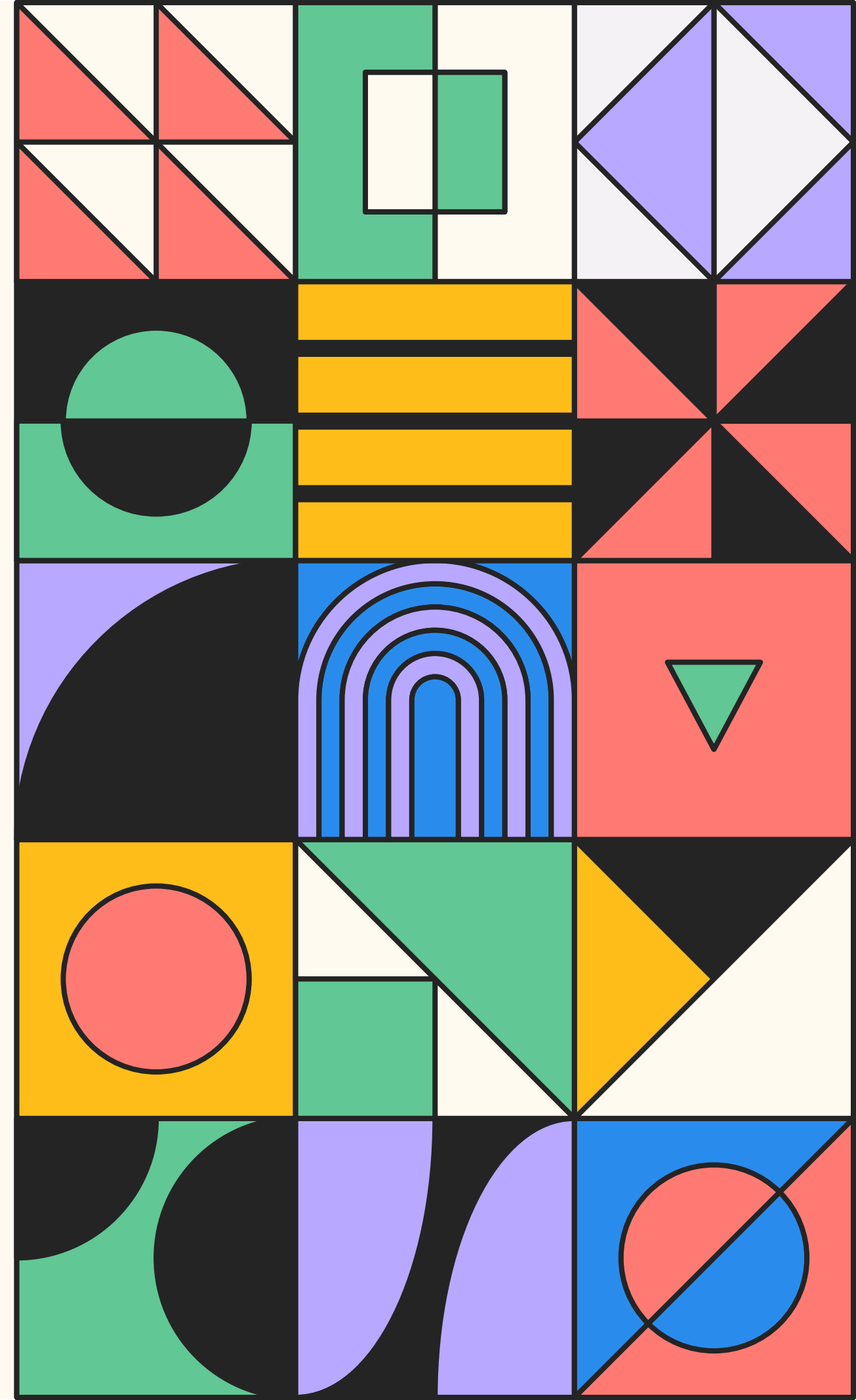




eBook | The 2024 State of Software Learning & Adoption

A study exploring historic and future innovation
in workplace learning & customer education.



Synopsis

In the past two decades, we've witnessed a whirlwind of changes to how software companies and their customers attempt to get end users to adopt their technology.

Multi-day instructor-led training classes, 300-page manuals, computer-based training, intranets, and the LMS have all made their debuts.

While the delivery methods have certainly changed over time, the way we are trying to drive adoption seems to be stuck in a time warp.

Live training, the LMS, and everything in between, is based on an outdated approach to change and learning that's failing to keep pace with the needs of learners in today's economy.

This is illustrated in three key areas:

- 1 The Software Customer Experience
- 2 The Software Vendor Experience
- 3 The End-User Experience

In this report, we'll explore educational approaches (past and present), the market impact of those trends, and make predictions about the next wave of innovation.

Report length: 21 pages





About BrainStorm

BrainStorm is a market leader in end-user adoption and software education. Our solutions—and this report—are informed by our long-term study of what successfully compels people to change their behavior with their software.

Our findings are based on observed history and the insights we’ve identified as we’ve observed millions of end users in their software adoption journeys.

Through this report, we hope to contribute valuable insights to professionals in the market through our key findings.

Learn more about us at www.brainstorminc.com



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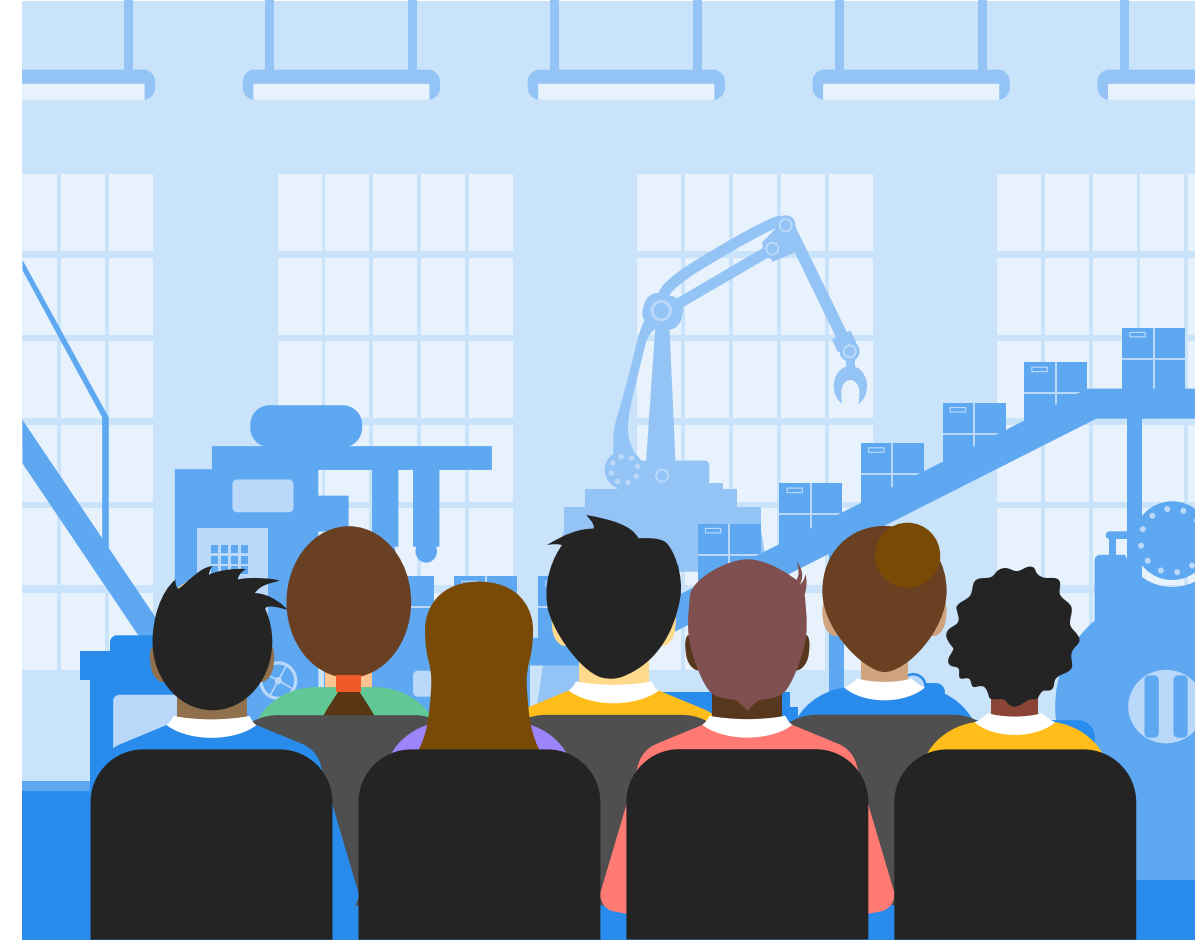


Looking Back in Time

The similarities between today's education and training approaches and those from centuries ago are surprisingly similar.

In an attempt to be efficient, we've heavily standardized the way we educate learners.

This standardized, static, and one-size-fits-all approach stems from the factory model of education that emerged during the industrial revolution. At that time, the economy required a large volume of factory workers with specific, rote skillsets; the assembly-line approach to education was born.



If you were to step into a classroom in 1850, you'd see plenty of differences from today, but one thing that would appear virtually the same is the model of education being used.

Still today—in the age of electric cars and generative AI—we place individuals in boxes (classrooms) based on their age, teach them a specific subject, and then move them to the next box for the next subject. It's the conveyor belt approach.



While it served the needs of the industrial age, the landscape has transformed dramatically since then, with new jobs, technologies, and industries emerging. But the way we teach and develop people (students, employees, the labor market) remains fundamentally unchanged.

Modern Learners in the Information Age

Today, we find ourselves in the information age, where constant streams of information bombard us, and time is a scarce resource.

Attention spans have shortened, demanding a high degree of relevance and engagement to capture and retain learners' attention.

Customer Education and L&D Teams are competing with the highly engaging algorithms of YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat. Workers are time-strapped, struggling to prioritize a constant stream of tasks

and notifications, with little time left over for learning.



And yet, user and customer education have been virtually untouched. It's been neglected as a priority for innovation. In the workplace, training may have gone digital, but it's essentially the same model that was in circulation during the industrial era, and it shows:



of features in the average software product are rarely or never used.¹

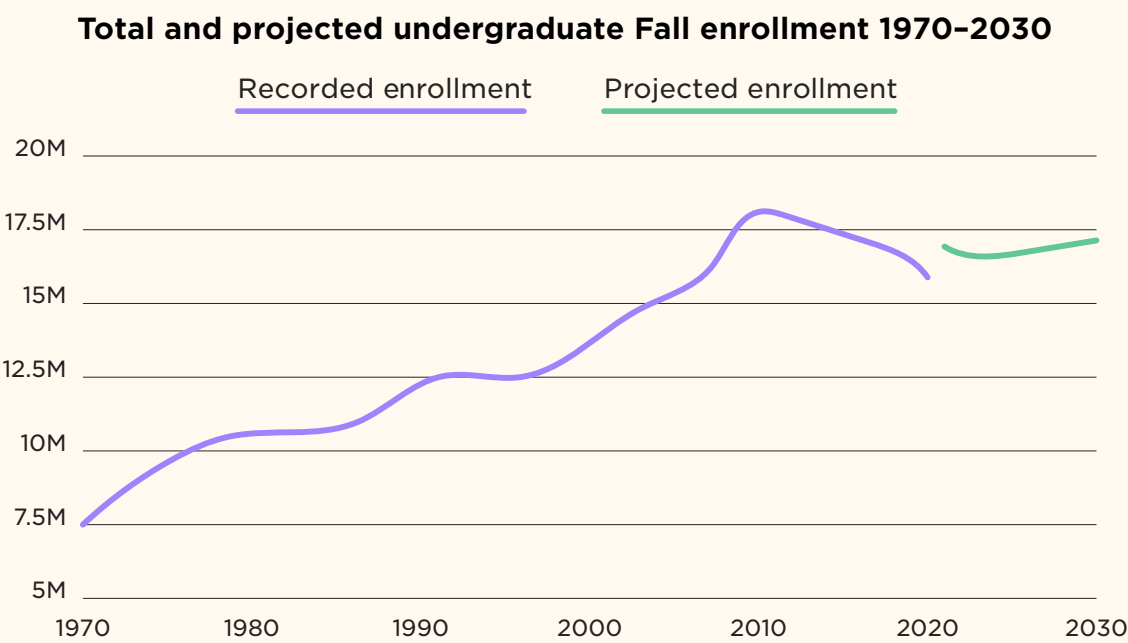
¹ | [Pendo 2019 feature adoption report](#)



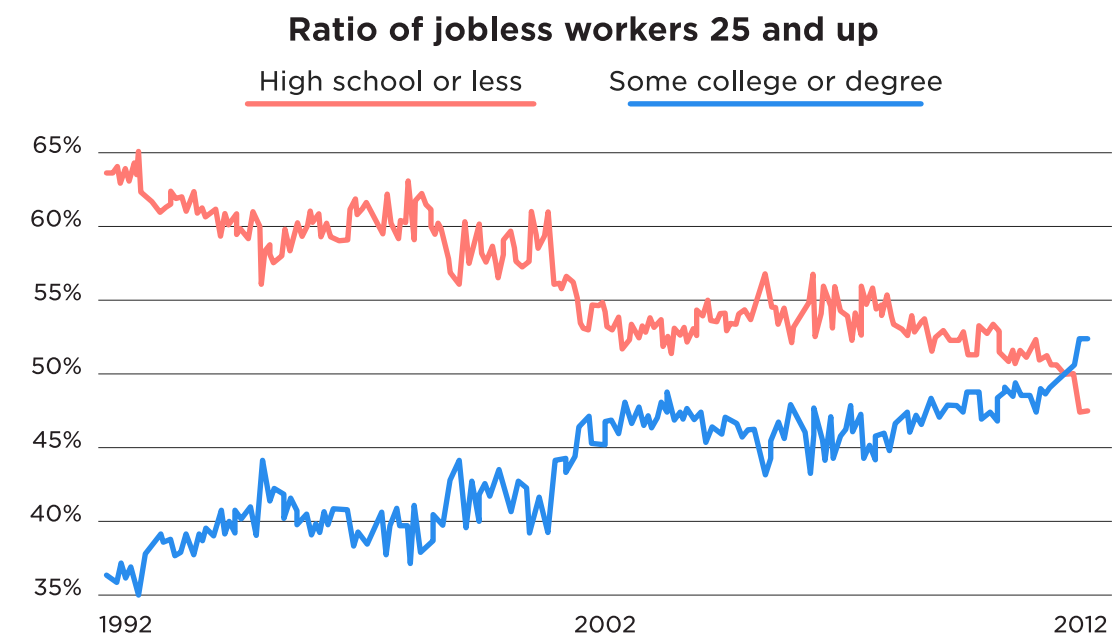
The Looming Skills Gap

Why is this a pressing issue? Because if we don't adapt, we'll struggle to develop the labor force that the modern economy is demanding. The skills gap is widening.

The labor force is not supplying the education the economy is demanding.



College enrollment rates in the U.S. have declined since 2010; projected to stay flat.

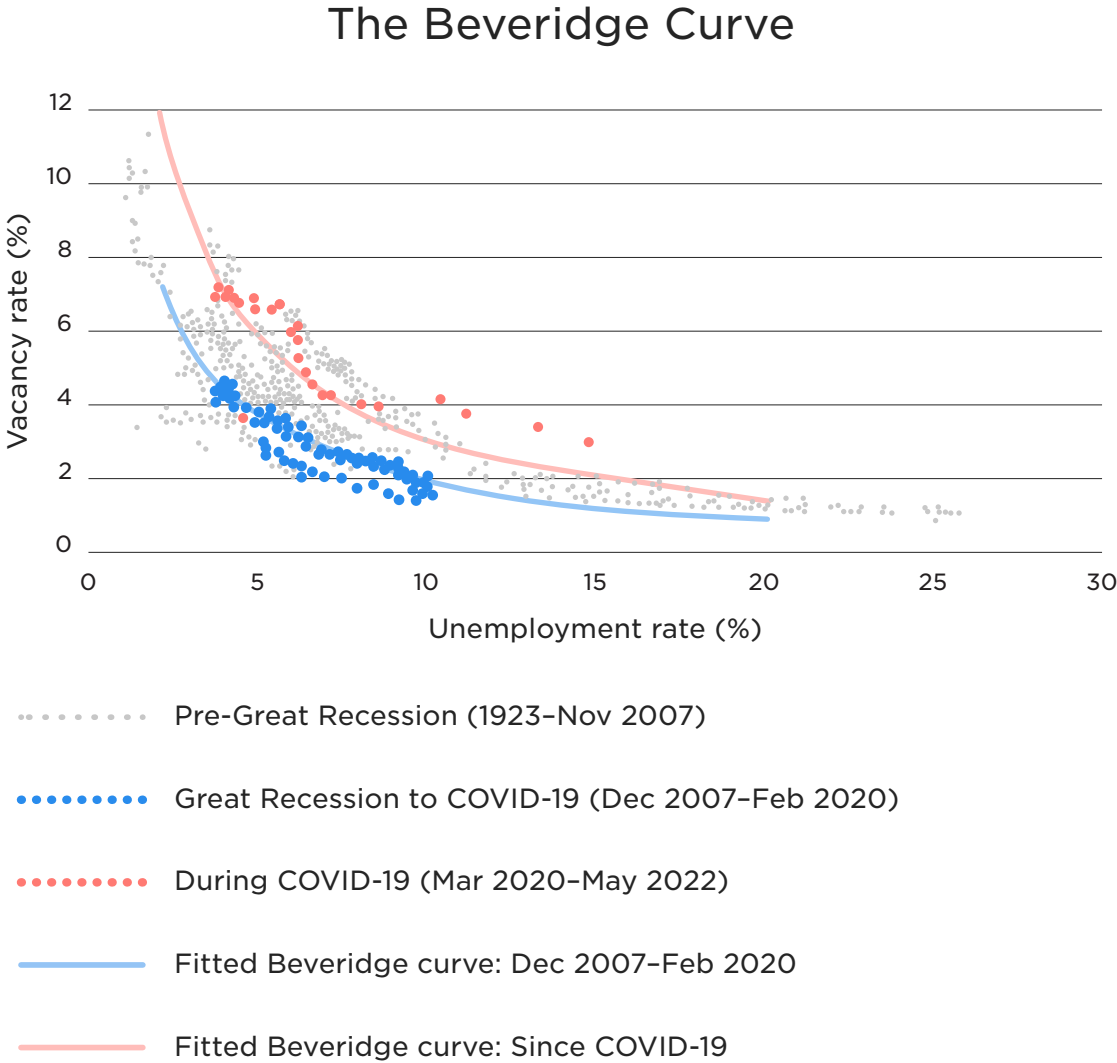


College degrees are increasingly not a fit for the modern economy's needs.

The Beveridge Curve vividly illustrates the mismatch between the skills available in the labor force and the jobs the market needs to fill. When the job vacancy rate and the unemployment rate are both on the rise at the same rate, it's time to be concerned. There are jobs to be filled, but not enough skilled candidates to fill them.

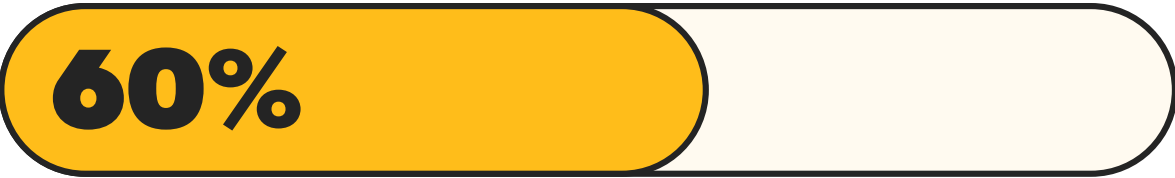


The skills gap is widening.



This gap is palpable in the workplace as well. Employees often feel ill-equipped, lacking both the technology and the corresponding skills to succeed in their roles. Businesses, too, are concerned about their digital maturity and the slow adoption of technology by end-users.

Low end-user adoption jeopardizes business value.



of decision makers express concern about whether digital projects will provide their expected ROI, primarily due to slow technology adoption, according to a recent WalkMe study.



The Software Customer Experience

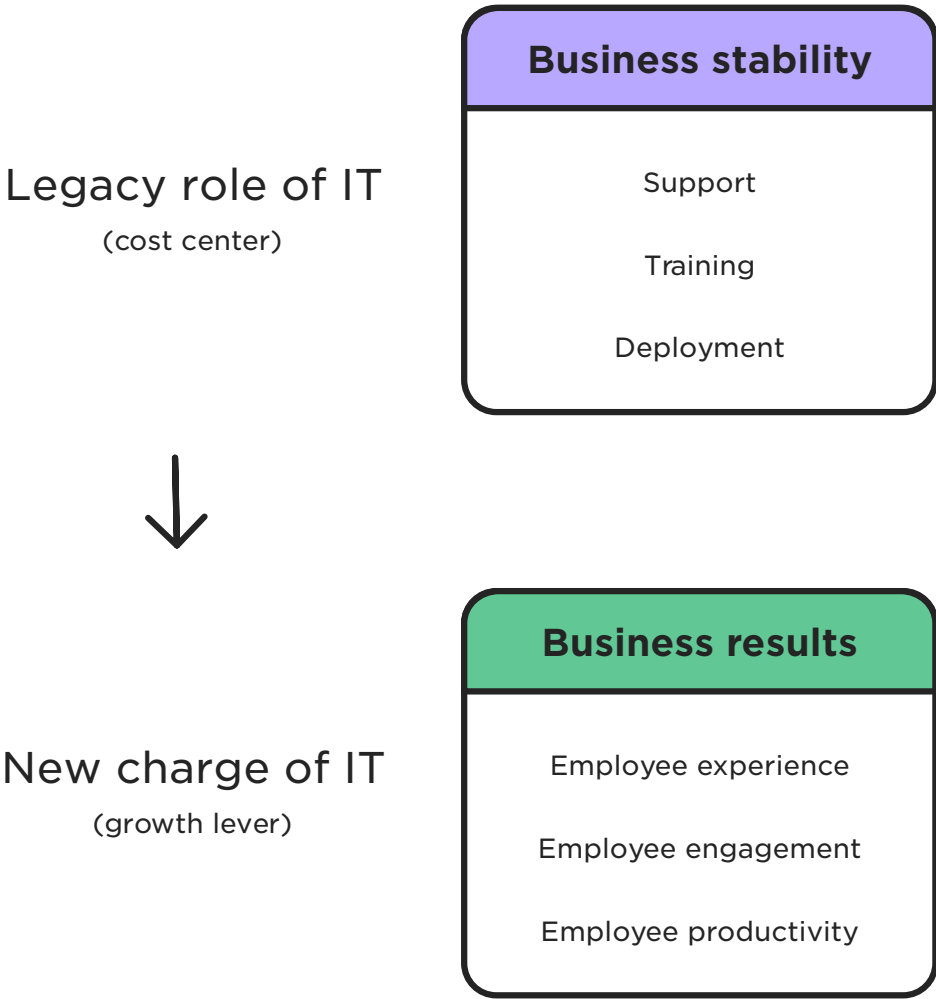
IT & HR Teams

In response to these challenges, IT leaders are facing a new mandate—expanding their footprint beyond managing software applications. They are now taking a central role in driving the all-up digital employee experience.

Business leaders recognize that human capital and technology are both their greatest expenses—and resources. And they see that getting the two to work in sync is key.

Consequently, the charge often falls to IT leaders to create a technology experience that drives optimal employee engagement, productivity, collaboration, and, ultimately, business output. This is new and

expanded focus for an already time-strapped and often under-resourced team.



However, IT teams often lack the tools needed to drive this change effectively. They find themselves limited to going to software vendor’s product academies, finding the right content, putting it on a



SharePoint site, et. Or they lean on other outdated learning technologies like instructor-led training, and distant access to HR's LMS systems.

Gavin Joye, an IT System Administrator at Imagine360 healthcare, described his experience as a software customer as scattered and ineffective:

66 *Right now, each vendor has their own training on their own site, or they might post it to YouTube.*

While each has positives and negatives depending on how their site is structured or whether logins are needed, it's very difficult to track or remember to go to their individual sites for training.

Plus, I have no idea who's doing training on what apps; HR has no idea. Their manager has little to no idea.

Users need to have multiple accounts on multiple sites and then they also need to remember to bookmark those for each application.

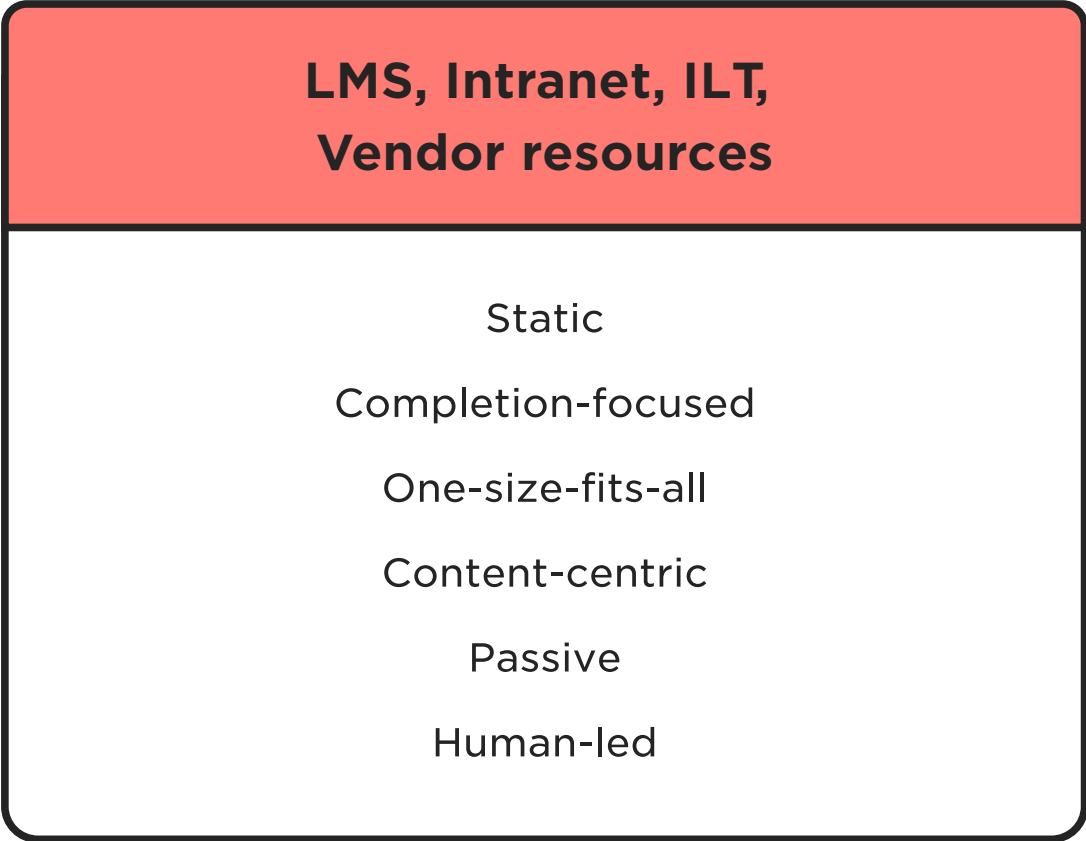
So often, they come to me one at a time and ask, 'Where do I go for training on this app?'

Then, it's up to me to go and find that information, or I have to request it from my CSM because I don't recall where to go either.

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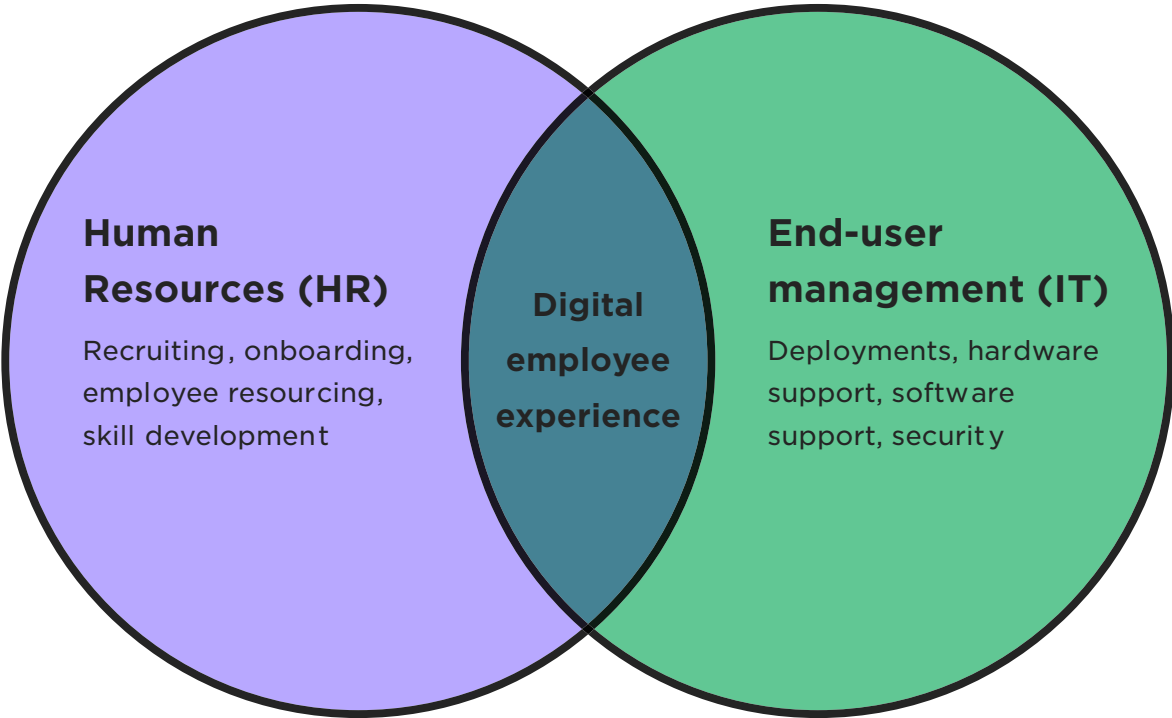


Innovation in workplace technology adoption solutions has become a critical need, as the success of businesses hinges on the harmony of employees and their technology.



Further, HR leaders are similarly being tasked to address the technology needs and gaps as they build the employee experience. But they often lack

the expertise to do so on their own. HR and IT are in silos, each possessing something the other needs. In response, we are seeing DEX (digital employee experience) functions, teams, and roles beginning to emerge in the market.



The Software Vendor Experience

Customer Education & Client Success Teams

Customer Education

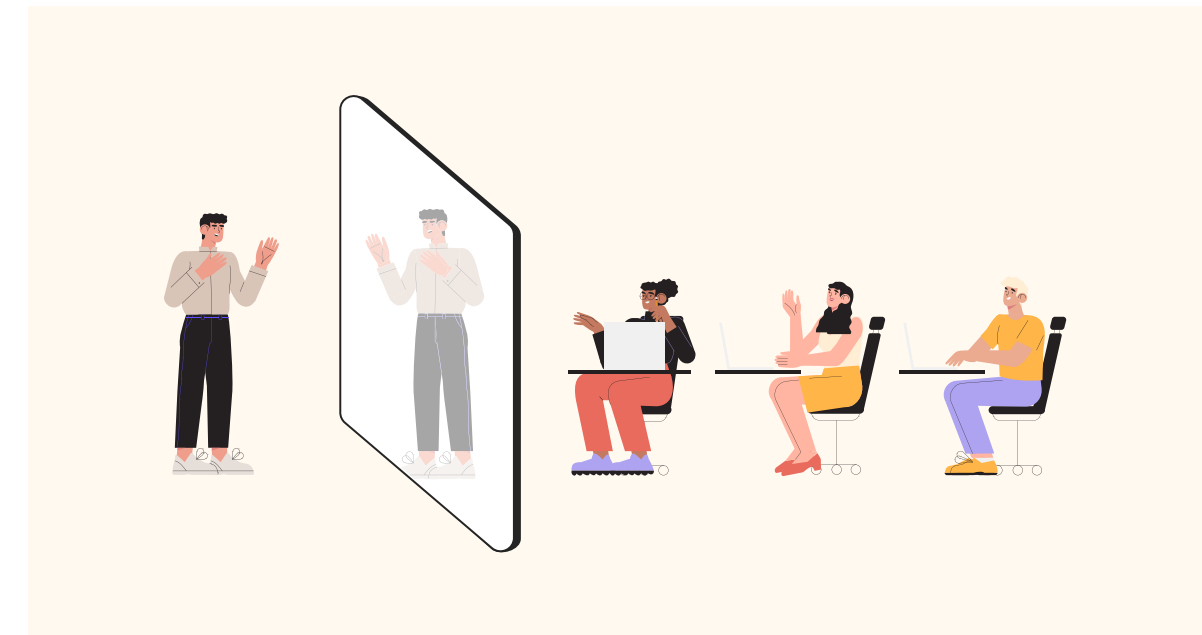
Customer Education faces constraints imposed by this lagging innovation—specifically in analytics, scalability, and integrations. Let’s take a look:

Analytics & Feedback

Today’s Customer Education & Training teams are completely distanced from their learners. After researching, writing, and producing state-of-the-art learning content, they receive minimal insight into:

- 1 consumption of their content and
- 2 the impact of their content

Today’s solutions like product universities and support sites leave them without the necessary information to iterate on their content effectively.



It’s like teaching a class from inside an observation room—you’re looking at a one-way mirror and your learners are on the other side.

Are they engaged? Are they listening?

Are they even still there?



It's accepted practice for learning teams to lack:

- Visibility into how the learning content they create impacts software use
- A central location for all training resources that's also easy to keep up-to-date
- A scalable way to collect end-user feedback on their experience with your tool
- A direct path to reach end users where they'll actually pay attention

Scalability

As software products become more complex and varied in use cases, Customer Education teams must develop and maintain an increasingly diverse set of content, and get it into the right hands.

User bases are also expanding, meaning that the demand for personalized, high-quality content is growing in an exponential way. These teams are pressured to produce content that is not only relevant and engaging but also accessible to a diverse and growing audience.

In addition, this scaling issue is compounded by the need for content to be updated regularly to reflect software updates, new features, and evolving use cases, requiring a significant investment in resources and strategic planning to ensure that all customers, regardless of their number or geographic location, get what they need to succeed with their software licensing.

Integrations

Finally, the integration of educational tools with other systems (such as CRM, customer support



platforms, customer community platforms, etc) is often lacking, which can create silos and disrupt the continuity of the customer education experience. These challenges underscore the need for more versatile, integrated, and user-centric educational tools in the customer education space.

Customer Success

Customer Success feels the pain, too. They rely on many other departments to help drive customer adoption and ultimately, renewal and expansion. These teams include Implementation, Customer Education, Product Marketing, and Support.

Despite the many resources allocated to driving successful client adoption, CSMs often find themselves stuck playing a glorified support role—another indicator that the system isn't working.

They spend as much as half of their time simply answering product questions or managing the product on behalf of the client.

This leaves little time to:

- Expand their focus outside of their top customers
- Hold regular, strategic quarterly business reviews with clients
- Pull, organize and surface key data to clients
- Consult with clients on achieving outcomes vs. simply using the tool
- Find out what matters most to clients
- Develop more points of contact within an organization



The End-User Experience

Enterprise software users

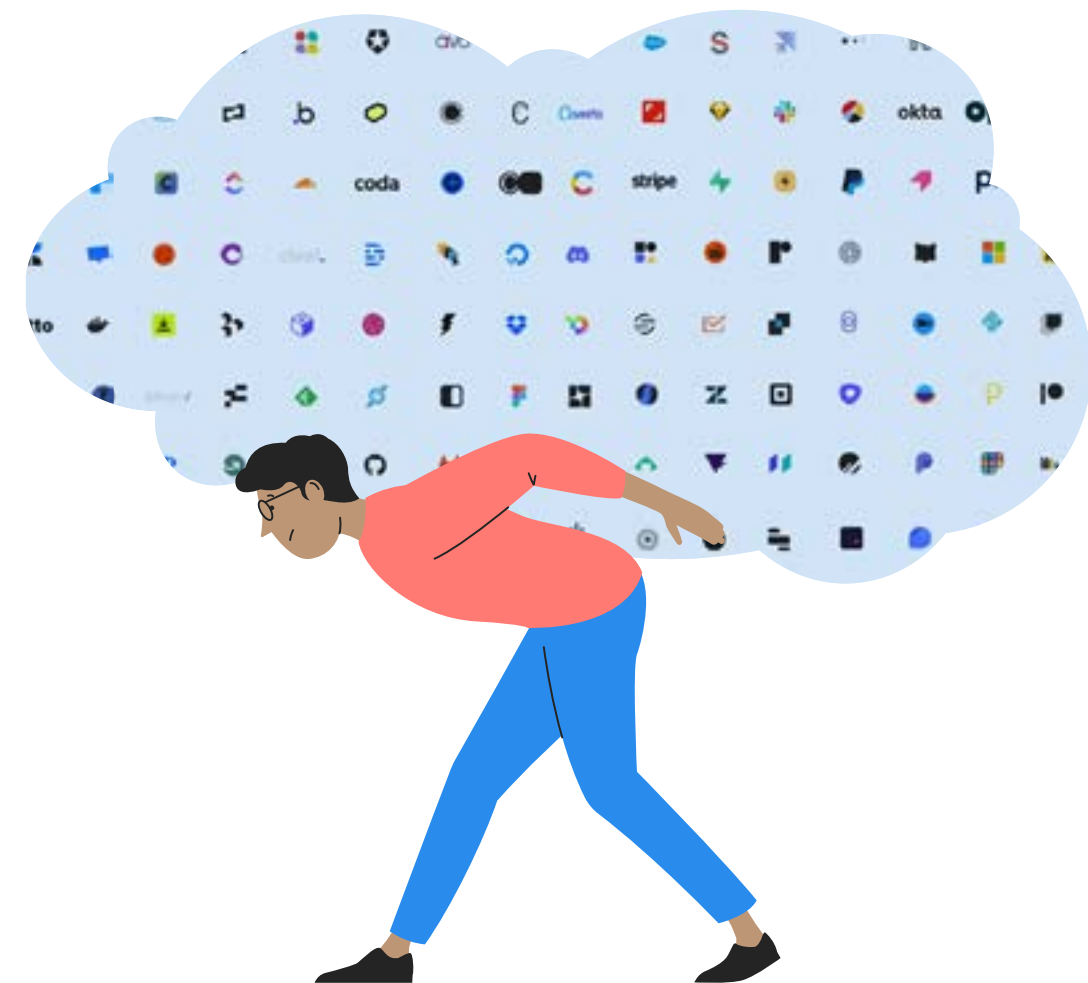
The employee experience in today's workplace has become intrinsically linked with technology. Software applications are now the primary way employees accomplish their work. This shift has fundamentally changed the nature of work, making software adoption the cornerstone of employee productivity and job satisfaction.

As businesses license more and more software solutions to drive efficiency, streamline processes, and foster collaboration, employees' ability to navigate these tools directly impacts their job performance.

Employees often find themselves navigating a labyrinth of apps, each with its own set of alerts, messages, and workflows. This digital clutter can

lead to information overload, reducing focus, increasing stress, and fragmenting attention.

It's a new form of workplace overwhelm.



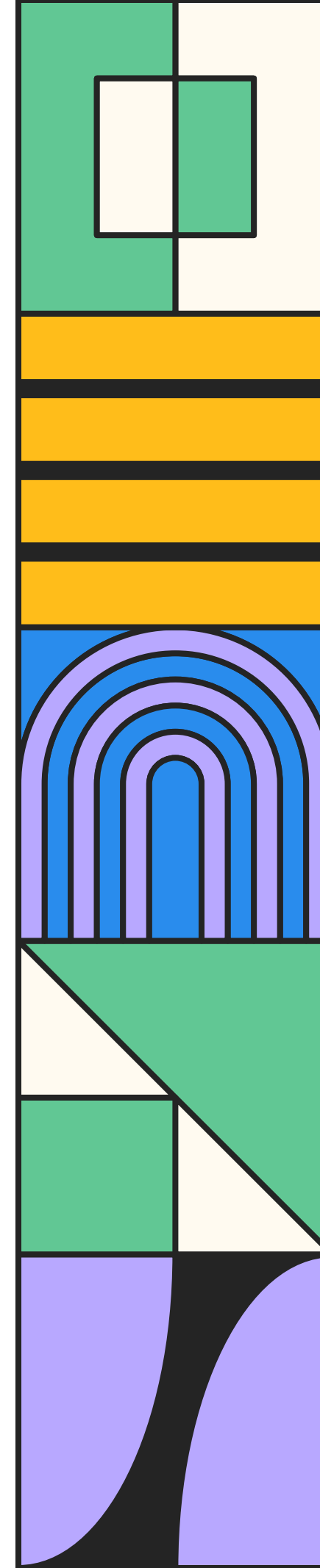
Employees' effectiveness is increasingly dependent on their skill levels with a wide range of software



tools and platforms. Mastery of these tools, coupled with the ability to integrate them into daily work processes, is becoming business-critical.

An initial training during roll-out with online resources in follow-up simply don't move the needle. Employees today need ongoing education to keep pace with software updates, new features, and evolving best practices. And it needs to hold the attention of modern learners, who are accustomed to content that is short, hyper-relevant, timely, and built to engage.

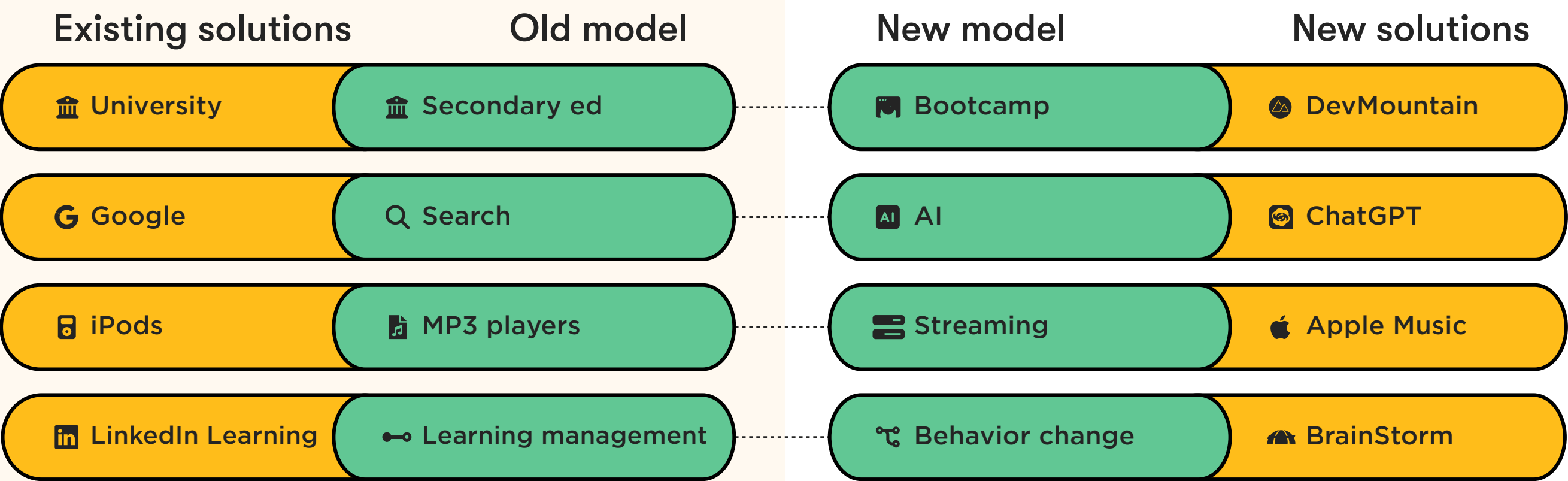
Standard solutions like instructor-led training and company intranets can't keep up. They're infrequent, one-size-fits-all, and passive. To get ahead of the looming skills gap, employers need to push the market to provide more flexible, modern solutions for their employee training programs.

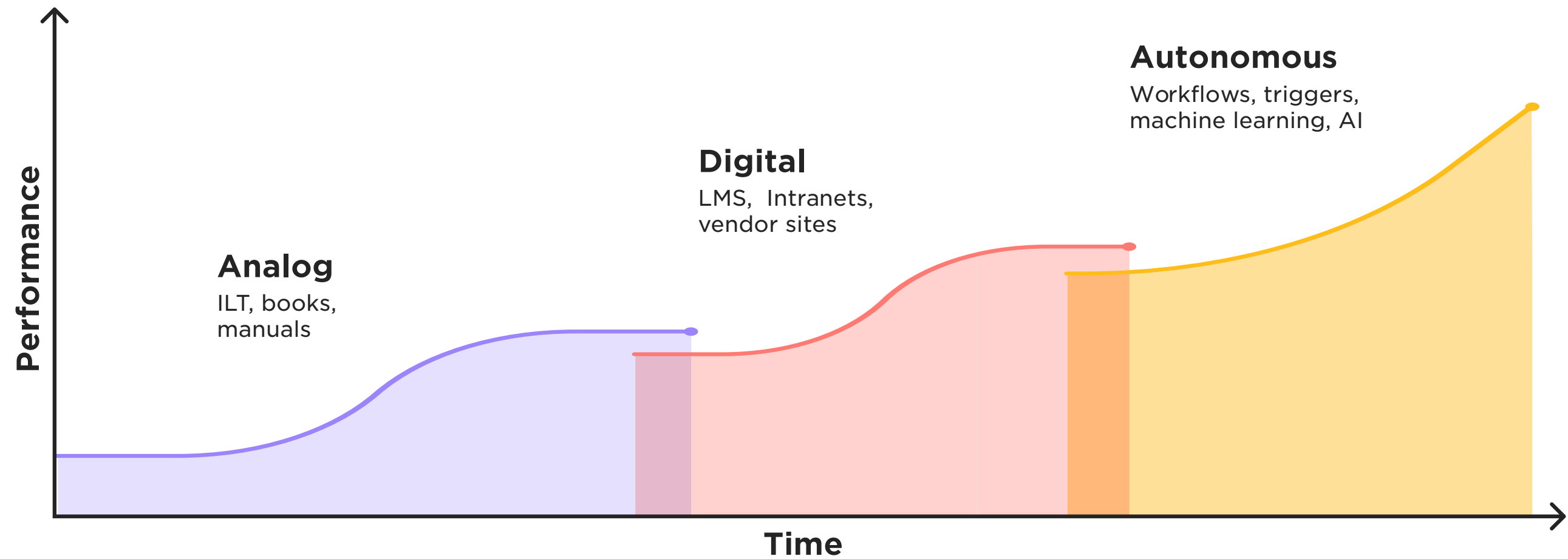


Characteristics of the Next Wave of Innovation

Innovation curves are the critical junctures in advancing approaches to problems. Each time a new curve is introduced, disruption occurs.

And it takes time for the market to manage that disruption and take the leap. We see this time and time again—from the toaster oven to the air fryer, MP3 players to music streaming services etc.





The same is true for workplace learning and customer education, but innovation has lagged for many decades beyond the industrial revolution where its model originated. While it's true that learning moved from classroom instruction and lengthy manuals to a digital format, the method is still the same.

Essentially, the content simply moved from being written or spoken to being hosted. But in that format, it continues to be passive with limited ability to keep up with the frequency of updates and changes in workplace software.



As we push learning to keep up with innovation we see in other industries, new defining characteristics are emerging:

Hyper-relevant

1 Personalized

Unique experiences created for each user

2 Curated

Only delivers what the individual user actually needs to learn

3 Aligned

Solution providers, customers, and users brought together in a single space

Dynamic

4 Intelligent

Responds to observed user behaviors

5 Autonomous

Delivers the right message, at the right time, to the right people without continual human intervention

6 Scalable

Simultaneously delivers unique user experiences across the entire organization

Data-driven

7 Insights

Discovers and communicates what is actually happening with adoption in the organization

8 Expert

Applies adult learning theory, neuroscience, and large learner datasets to optimize learning and learning outcomes

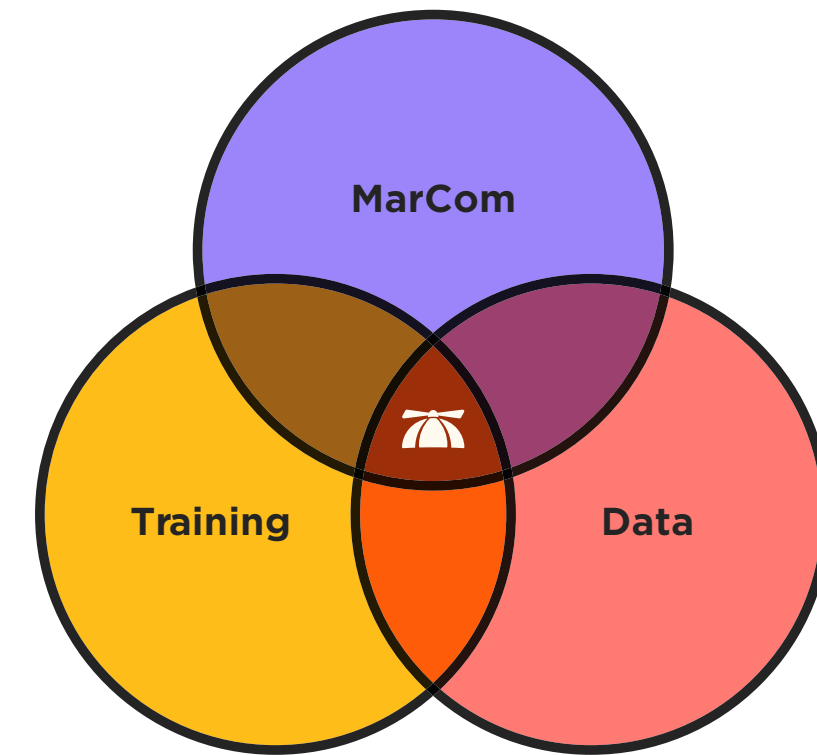


Ride the Next Wave of Learning Innovation with BrainStorm

BrainStorm's software adoption platform is paving the path from tradition to innovation, for IT teams, customer education teams, and the end user.

The BrainStorm platform combines the power of user behavior data, automated training workflows, and end-user communications to drive real, measurable behavior change.

When end users experience more value in their tools, their contribution levels rise, their employers receive increased value from their software licensing spend, and software vendors see reduced churn.



-  **Hubspot for end-user engagement**
-  **Automated adoption campaigns**
-  **Usage and engagement tracking**

Request more info:

For software customers

For software vendors





BrainStorm[®]