people matters | [H] HARAPPA

THE STATE OF BEHAVIORAL LEARNING 2020

A PEOPLE MATTERS -
HARAPPA EDUCATION STUDY

HARAPPA

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FOREWORD

BUSINESSES AROUND THE WORLD ARE BEING DISRUPTED AS WE SPEAK. IN AN UNCERTAIN BUSINESS WORLD, COMPANIES ARE IDENTIFYING WAYS TO BECOME FUTURE-PROOF.

And those at the forefront of navigating disruption are preparing their employees with the right skills to identify opportunities, take charge of uncertain projects and drive business results in a near real-time environment.

As technical competencies become easier to automate, the focus is now on behavioral skills – critical thinking, collaboration, communication, leadership, and problem solving skills are more critical now than ever before. To understand the shifts in behavioral learning, Harappa Education in partnership with People Matters launched the "The State of Behavioral Learning 2020". The survey was aimed at benchmarking data on how companies in India are planning and executing their behavioral learning strategy.

A total of 350 companies participated in the study covering a diverse group of industries and business types. Apart from the analysis, this report is also supplemented by expert views of five talent leaders from Tata Technologies, Home First Finance, Shree Cements, Aditya Birla Group and Cars24 - who shared their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in behavioral skilling.

We hope you will use the report to not just gain a better understanding of the landscape of the behavioral skills in India, but also to put into practice some of the key action items that are outlined in the study. These suggestions are aimed at accelerating your behavioral skilling strategy. We would like to thank all the participants who gave us their valuable time and expertise.

ESTER MARTINEZ
CEO & Editor-in-Chief
People Matters
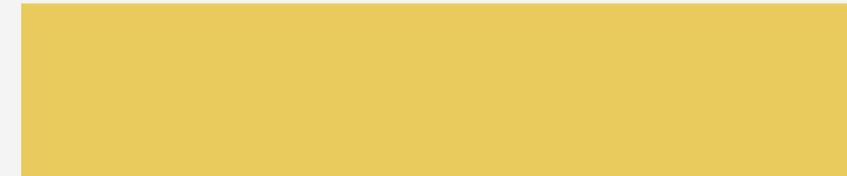
FOREWORD

AS AN ONLINE LEARNING INSTITUTION THAT IS COMMITTED TO HELPING PEOPLE BUILD GOOD WORKPLACE HABITS, WE BELIEVE THAT COGNITIVE, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SKILLS ARE CRITICAL FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS.

While formal education prepares people for the technical and functional aspects of their work, mastering behavioral skills requires continuous effort, both by individuals and the organizations that employ them.

This first-of-its-kind research is an effort to understand how organizations are playing that role: the practices, possibilities and potential they are tapping to enhance behavioral skills.

The research has validated our hypothesis - and cautious hope! - that most organizations surveyed value behavioral learning. But, valuing the skills hasn't led to an easy path to achievement: most organizations surveyed struggle to create impactful, sustained learning paths for their employees.

On the delivery side, while we were delighted to discover that online learning is witnessing widespread adoption, given its advantages for an increasingly global and remote workforce, the fundamental challenge of learning becoming a true habit, applied to tasks and teams, remains an obstacle. Companies have realized that at the root of this lack of application is employee motivation. Without true buy in from employees, no learning program can aim for success.

We hope that these findings will reiterate the need, relevance and criticality of behavioral skills for workplace success; and trigger approaches on reinventing them as employee-centric and outcome-focused.

SHREYASI SINGH
Founder and CEO
Harappa Education

Navigating continuous change has become a critical business differentiator. Companies today need employees to become self starters, identify possible opportunities to collaborate cross functionally, and build daily habits that will enable them to work seamlessly and create business leverage. Behavioral skills are a critical component of delivering value to businesses. In this context, employers can't just expect their employees to display behaviors right from when they walk through the door; they need to invest actively in training employees.

THIS STUDY ON "THE STATE OF BEHAVIORAL LEARNING 2020" BY PEOPLE MATTERS AND HARAPPA EDUCATION BRINGS TOGETHER DATA FROM 350 COMPANIES,

a first-of-its-kind research aimed at understanding the priorities, challenges and opportunity areas for companies on behavioral skills. The research was aimed at surveying:

Strategic priorities on behavioral learning

Top challenge and opportunities in behavioral skilling

Approach and focus areas on impact measurement

INTRO-
DUCTION
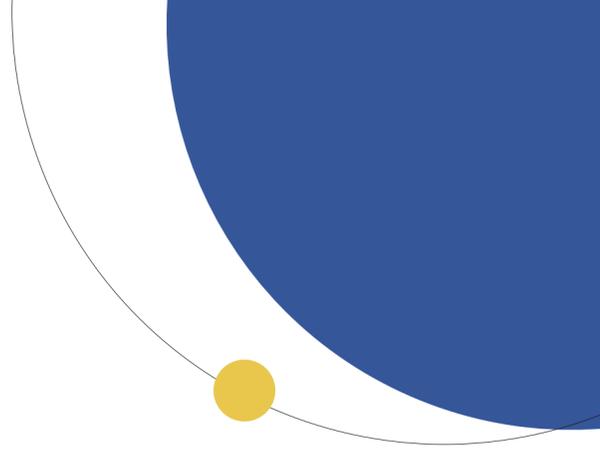
During the course of the research, experts shared varied pressing concerns on behavioral skills - from giving the time needed to develop these skills to personalizing roadmaps - companies need to design for the individual employee; they can no longer expect the employee to stay engaged with mandatory programs prescribed for the organization at large. HR and L&D teams need to demonstrate the value of behavioral learning not just to the business, but also to the individual employee. As one of the participants in the research mentioned - a training of three months alone is not going to bring about the desired change; there is a need to actively work with the employee to communicate the 'why' of learning and experiment with a number of formats before choosing the one that works for him/her.

Measuring and showing impact is another area where there's an opportunity for the entire ecosystem of service providers and companies to come together to map not just individual behavior improvement, but show business results. There is also a need to take a long view of the impact on businesses.

HR and L&D professionals have a task cut out for themselves: To bridge the gap in behavioral learning in an engaging manner while also keeping abreast with the latest trends in learning. They also have the added responsibility to work with the business, service providers as well as the individual employees to demonstrate the value of learning and the impact on the business. We hope this report will give you an opportunity to reflect on your own learning and skilling priorities, as behavioral skills become a differentiator in the world of work.

TREND 1

PERSONALIZATION IS A KEY CHALLENGE IN DELIVERING BEHAVIORAL SKILL PROGRAMS

While a majority of the companies (85 percent) that participated in the study said that they already have programs focused on behavioral skills, most of them don't haven a personalized behavioral learning roadmap for their employees. This is a key focus area for most HR and L&D departments. Experts believe that while the benefits of personalized training is unparalleled, the roadmap for individual learning is still difficult to establish at scale. Companies are turning to smaller cohorts depending on job-based responsibilities.

About half of the employers surveyed said that they are satisfied with the current stack of learning programs on behavioral skills. 40 percent of them said they were either unsure of the programs or not satisfied with them.

When it comes to personalization – and involving employee input in the design process, most companies route their learning programs through the line managers (51 percent) and 47 percent said the employees discuss their learning preferences during the goal-setting process. Another method of taking into account employee feedback, is to capture their feedback through surveys (29 percent) and evaluate them (35 percent). Curiously, although a number of companies said that they involve employees' (62 percent) input in the learning process, only 29 percent of the companies surveyed actually have a personalized learning roadmap.

DOES YOUR L&D STRATEGY INCLUDE TRAINING & PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON BEHAVIORAL SKILLS?

15% NO

85% YES

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A PERSONALIZED BEHAVIORAL LEARNING ROADMAP FOR ALL EMPLOYEES?

29% YES

71% NO

STATE OF CURRENT TRAINING PROGRAMS ON BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

8%
VERY SATISFIED

42%
SATISFIED

29%
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

10%
DISSATISFIED

2%
VERY DISSATISFIED

9%
DON'T HAVE AN EXISTING LEARNING PROGRAM ON BEHAVIORAL SKILLS
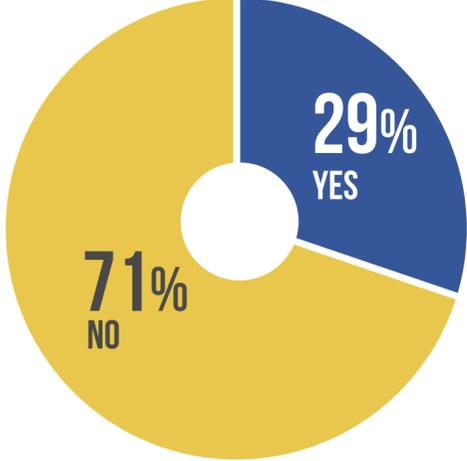
EMPLOYEES' PARTICIPATION IN DESIGNING THE BEHAVIORAL LEARNING ROADMAP

51%
DISCUSSION WITH LINE MANAGERS/ L&D EXPERTS

47%
SHARE INPUTS IN THE GOAL-SETTING PROCESS

35%
PERIODIC ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATION

29%
THROUGH ANNUAL OR PERIODIC SURVEYS

38%
THE EMPLOYEE IS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN DESIGNING THE LEARNING ROADMAP
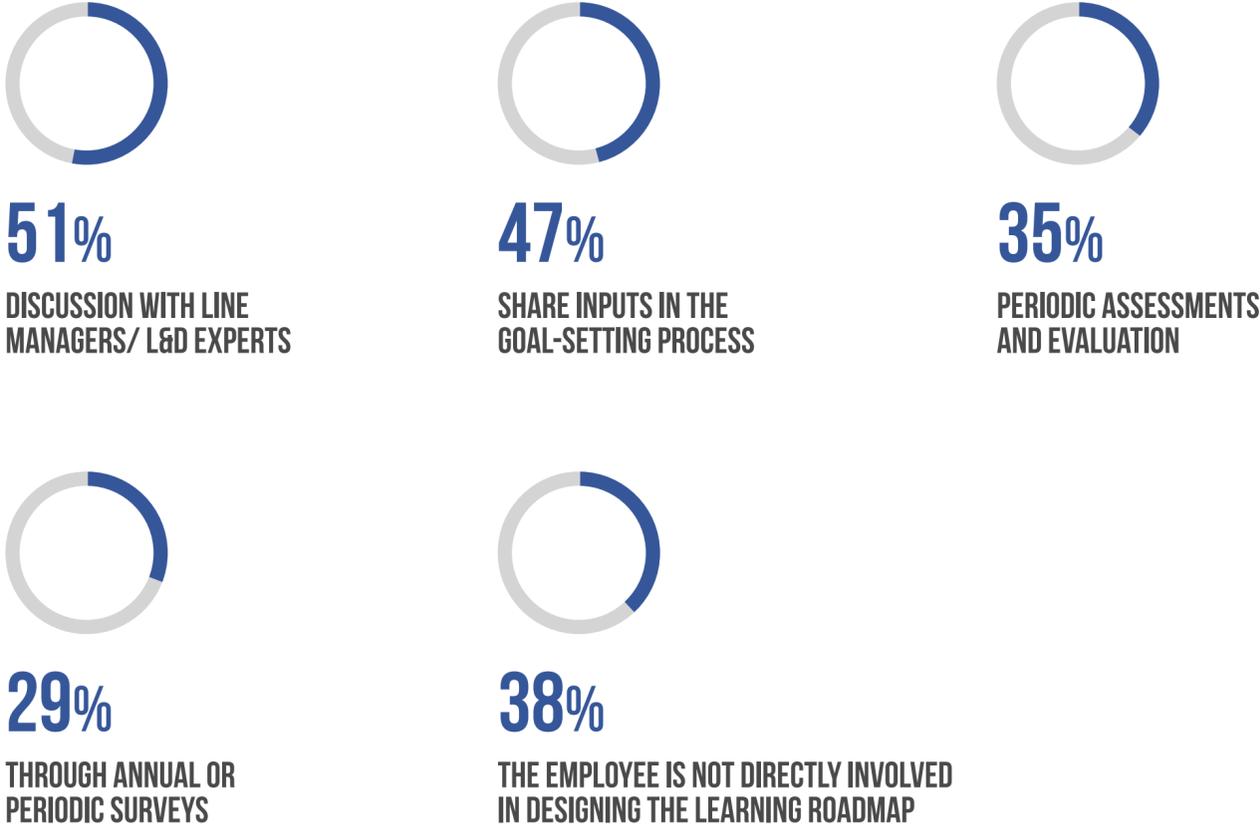
TREND 2

"APPLYING LEARNING TO WORK" AND "AN UNCERTAIN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT" ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING BEHAVIORAL PROGRAMS

When asked to choose among the top challenges that businesses face with respect to behavioral skills, 69 percent of the survey respondents opted for "applying learning to daily work" as the top most challenge. This was followed by "uncertain future business environment (55 percent)" and "limited resources (54 percent)", indicating that the prevailing business environment due to the global pandemic has adversely affected training on behavioral skills. As companies continue to evaluate their business continuity plans, it is clear that training or additional investment in behavioral learning may not rise in the near future.

Another challenge faced by businesses currently is driving learning programs to a largely remote workforce. A total of 49 percent of the survey respondents said that training remote employees has become a key challenge in 2020. While leadership buy-in when it comes to implementing behavioral programs is still needed, the employee's direct role in giving inputs has increased.

TOP CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING BEHAVIORAL PROGRAMS IN 2020

69%
APPLYING LEARNING TO DAILY WORK

55%
UNCERTAIN FUTURE BUSINESS CONTEXT

54%
LIMITED RESOURCES

49%
TRAINING FOR REMOTE EMPLOYEES

38%
LEADERSHIP BUY-IN
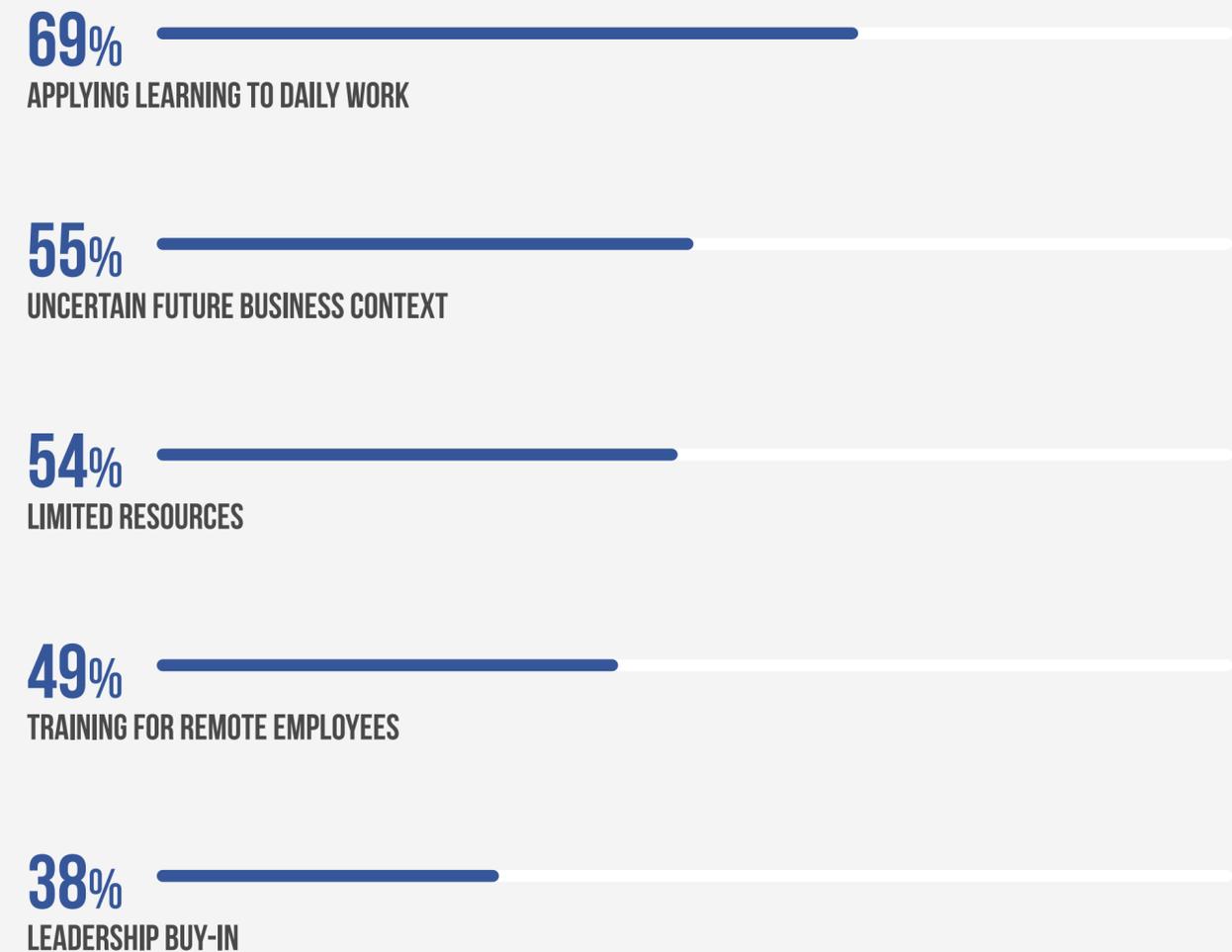
TREND 3

"ON-THE-JOB, DIGITAL LEARNING AND CLASSROOM ARE STILL THE GO-TO METHODS FOR TRAINING EMPLOYEES"

Despite the rise in the number of digital tools and resources on behavioral skills, classroom training and on-the-job training still rank among the most preferred methods to develop or enhance behavioral skills. A number of companies also prefer to invite expert speakers to share their business knowledge and people management skills in a company wide Town Hall or through webinars.

Experts note that employees today want to understand 'why' it is relevant to them. And therefore, HR and L&D professionals must work with line managers as well as business leaders to clearly articulate the need and value of training programs. When done well, there is an opportunity to build a closer partnership with the business.

THE PRIMARY MODES OF DELIVERING BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

66%
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
(JOB SHADOWING/ COACHING/
MENTORING)

64%
DIGITAL LEARNING (WEB AND
MOBILE BASED COURSES/
GAMIFIED APPS)

63%
CLASSROOM BASED TRAINING
PROGRAMS (INCLUDING
UNIVERSITY TIE-UPS)

40%
NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNING
(OFFSITES/ WORKSHOPS)

TREND 4

"COLLABORATION", "CLIENT MANAGEMENT" AND "LEADERSHIP" SKILLS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT BEHAVIORAL SKILLS THAT BUSINESSES NEED TODAY

According to employers who participated in the study, 'collaboration' ranks on the top when it comes to behavioral skills needed for businesses today. It is followed by 'client or customer management skills', 'leadership skills, 'problem-solving skills, 'communication skills' and 'critical thinking skills'. While many employers are mapping these specific skills to job roles and to individual KRAs of their employees, not all companies are mandating or evaluating these skills as part of the performance management or appraisal process.

While HR and L&D professionals view these skills as the critical differentiating factors as the employees climb up an organizations' hierarchy, where it is assumed that employees already possess the adequate technical knowledge, the lack of learning metrics and clear alignment to the business need tend to derail learning programs.

01 Collaboration

02 Client Management skills

03 Leadership skills

04 Problem-solving skills

05 Communication skills

06 Critical thinking

TREND 5

96% OF THE COMPANIES BELIEVE COACHING IS IMPORTANT TO IMPART BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

Most employers who participated in the Study said that coaching is an essential component of imparting behavioral skills. But only 56 percent of the companies surveyed have an ongoing coaching component to their behavioral learning programs. While a number of companies already have ad-hoc coaching programs focused on certain employee groups like women, senior leadership, and top talent, company-wide coaching programs mapped to behavioral learning continue to be minimal. Most coaching programs are still largely need based and cater to specific leadership needs.

IMPORTANCE OF COACHING FOR IMPARTING BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

70%
VERY IMPORTANT

26%
IMPORTANT

4%
NEUTRAL

0%
LESS IMPORTANT
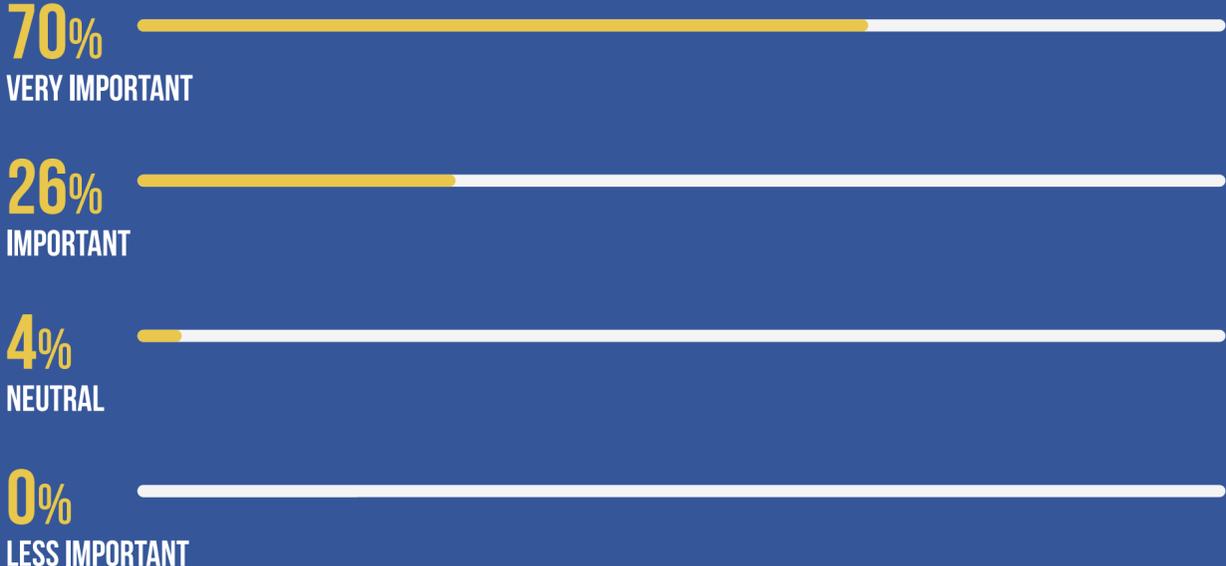
IS COACHING A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF YOUR ONGOING BEHAVIORAL LEARNING PROGRAMS?

44%
NO

56%
YES
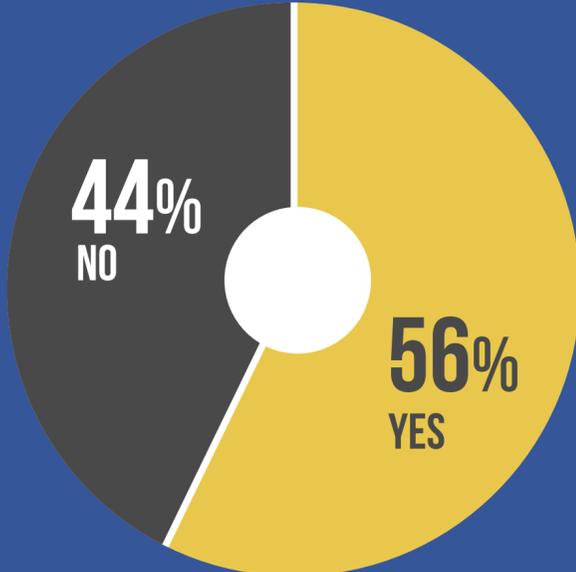
TREND 6

"FEEDBACK SURVEYS" AND "PERFORMANCE" ARE THE TOP IMPACT MEASURES ON BEHAVIORAL LEARNING

While mapping behavioral learning to business outcomes is a difficult thing to do, since most behavioral change occurs over a long period of time, companies continue to use a few metrics to assess the effectiveness of their programs. Feedback surveys (66 percent) - from employees, peers and managers continues to be a critical input to businesses on behavioral change. This is closely followed by performance measures (like goals/ KRAs) at 57 percent and assessments (at 51 percent).

DO YOU MAP THE IMPACT OF LEARNING BEHAVIORAL SKILLS TO BUSINESS OUTCOMES?

52% NO

48% YES
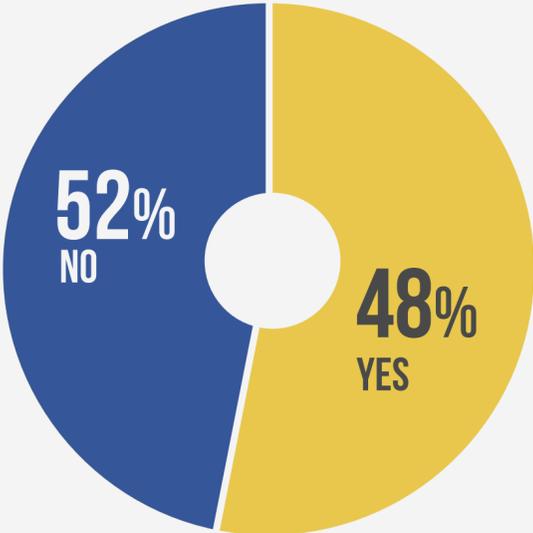
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF BEHAVIORAL TRAINING & PROGRAMS

66%
FEEDBACK SURVEYS (EMPLOYEE, PEER TO PEER, MANAGERS)

57%
PERFORMANCE (AGAINST GOALS, KPIS)

51%
ASSESSMENTS (PRE/POST LEARNING, TECHNICAL, COGNITIVE)

40%
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

24%
EMPLOYEE RETENTION

TREND 7

LEARNING BUDGETS FOR BEHAVIORAL SKILLS ARE NOT GROWING IN FY 20 - 21

Given the current pandemic, a number of companies have chosen to either not invest heavily or to continue with the stack of programs already in place. A majority of the companies (77 percent) said that their employee budget per person per year stands at less than Rs. 25,000. Within which, 51 percent said their budget is less than Rs.10,000. A majority of the budget on behavioral skills is allocated to senior management or at the managerial level.

According to survey respondents, the percentage of total L&D investment for behavioral skills stands at less than 50 percent. And 33 percent of survey respondents said that the percentage of total L&D investment on behavioral skills is less than 25 percent. Only 3 percent of the companies surveyed said they the percentage of their investment in behavioral skills stands at over 75 percent.

When asked about the current financial year, most respondents either said their budgets are staying the same (30 percent) or they're going down (29 percent). Only 15 percent of the participants said their budgets are increasing

LEARNING BUDGETS FOR FY 20-21

30% STAYING THE SAME

29% GOING DOWN

15% GOING DOWN

26% NOT APPLICABLE
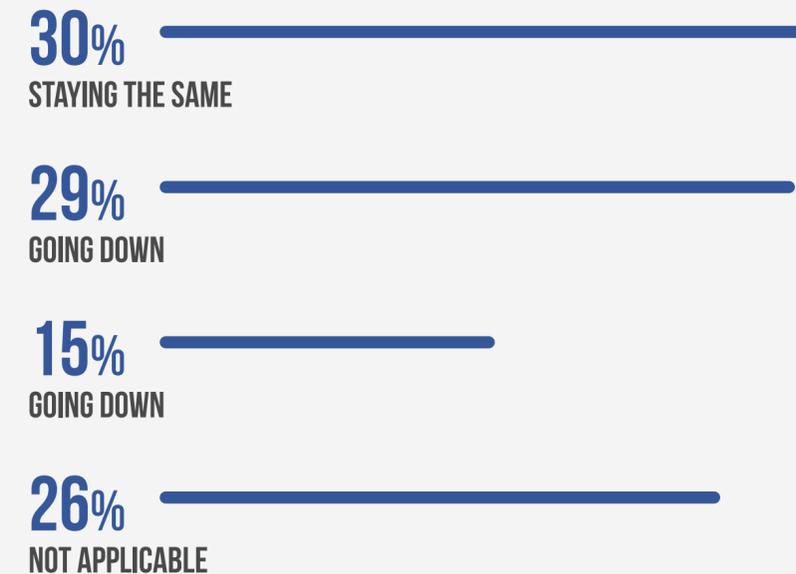
ESTIMATED LEARNING BUDGET PER EMPLOYEE EVERY YEAR

51% LESS THAN INR 10,000

26% BETWEEN INR 10,000 - INR 25,000

11% BETWEEN INR 25,000 TO INR 50,000

12% MORE THAN INR 50,000

PERCENTAGE OF L&D INVESTMENT PER EMPLOYEE ON BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

33% LESS THAN 25 PERCENT

30% 25- 50 PERCENT

10% 50- 75 PERCENT

3% ABOVE 75 PERCENT

25% NOT APPLICABLE
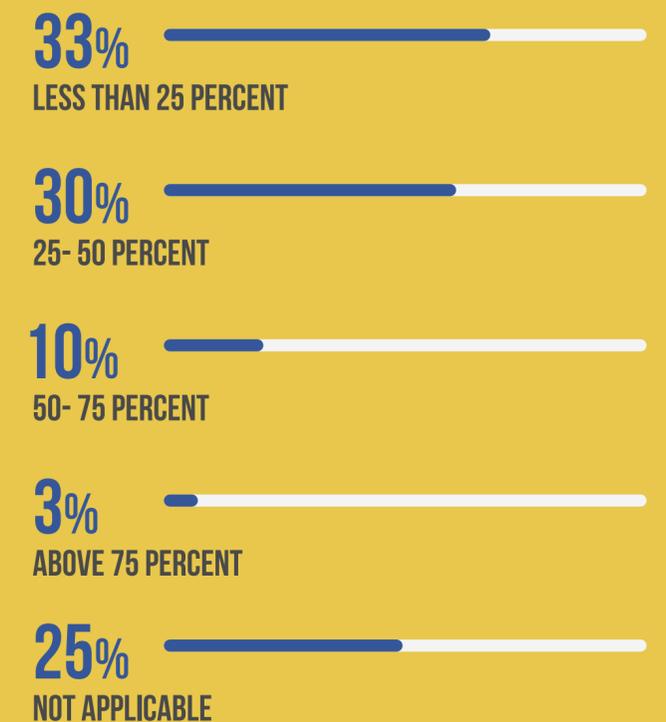
TREND 8

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERS ARE AT THE TOP OF PRIORITY WHEN IT COMES TO BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

HR and L&D leaders are unanimous while talking about the importance of behavioral skills for senior executives and leadership. As employees move up the hierarchy, their technical acumen is taken for granted, and it's the behavioral skills that is a key focus area for decisions involving new job roles and promotions.

Apart from senior leadership, specific job roles also heavily depend on behavioral skills, especially those that are customer or client facing roles – like HR and learning departments, sales and marketing, and customer service and support roles. Data from the Study also shows that CEOs, CHROs and L&D Heads play a critical role in the decision making on behavioral skills.

IMPORTANCE OF BEHAVIORAL SKILLS ACROSS EMPLOYEE GROUPS

1 ——— SENIOR LEADERSHIP

2 ——— MID-LEVEL MANAGERS

3 ——— FIRST TIME MANAGERS

4 ——— INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

5 ENTRY LEVEL EMPLOYEES

BEHAVIORAL L&D BUDGET ALLOCATION BY DEPARTMENT (RANKING)

1 Executive management

2 HR/ talent/ learning

3 Sales and marketing

4 Customer service and support

5 Product/ engineering

6 Operations/ manufacturing

7 IT and technology

STAKEHOLDERS WHO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF BEHAVIORAL L&D PROGRAMS

32% CHRO

26% L&D HEAD

23% CEO

3% COO

3% PRODUCT/ ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP

3% HEAD OF SALES/ MARKETING

1% CFO

9% OTHERS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

PLANNING YOUR BEHAVIOR LEARNING STRATEGY

85 percent of the companies said that personalization is important. Although in many companies (62 percent), employees play a direct role in giving inputs on behavioral skills learning, there's still a need to **create personalized learning roadmaps**. Over 71 percent of the companies **DO NOT** offer personalized roadmaps.

"Digital learning" is on par with 'On the job training' and 'Classroom training' as one of the most preferred methods of imparting behavioral skills. In fact, training remote employees was identified as a challenge area by 49 percent of respondents. It is essential to **create a digital strategy around behavioral training**.

Although 96 percent of companies believe that coaching is important, 44 percent don't currently have coaching as a significant aspect of the learning program. There's a need to **create coaching programs for short and long term** for behavioral skilling needs to support your employees.

Articulate the 'why' of learning in consultation with the line manager and the business. Most experts who participated in the research said that there's greater engagement in the learning process when employees have clarity about how it would help them.

Most companies invest heavily on behavioral skills when employees move up the organizational hierarchy. The study showed that senior management and executive rank on top of the priority list. It is however a good idea to **invest in behavioral skilling early-on in an employee's career**.

ROLE-BASED PERSONALIZATION OF LEARNING

ANUP MALAVIA

Global Head –
Learning & Organization
Development,
TATA Technologies

At Tata Technologies, there are two levers to skill development – 1) Capability Building 2) Critical Role Identification; Succession Planning. Consequently, these processes are also dependent on organizational and business priorities. Our skills map is both need based and personalized. While most skills that are a part of the learning roadmap are technical, an evaluation of the non-technical aspects of the job is also conducted. The weightage of behavioral skills depend on the job level.

"THE PRIMARY CHALLENGES IN BEHAVIORAL SKILLING ARE TO DO WITH JOB ROLES AND WORK PRIORITIES."

Job level and behavioral skills

At the senior leadership level, the weightage of leadership skills is much higher since these employees must deliver performance while also being measured on a balanced scorecard, which includes a people quadrant. There are structured assessments and/or discussions undertaken to find role fitment, and then interventions are aligned as per gap identified. These includes multiple approaches including senior leadership programs with leading business schools, online learning tools, and also on-the-job experience.

For the mid and junior levels, employees are trained using classroom-based interventions over a period of three to six months. The appraisal process takes into consideration participation in these programs. Over the last few months, we have witnessed the shift in behavioral learning and it is primarily delivered through online learning. On-the-job learning is also supported by the organization. Through specific mechanisms, employees are also encouraged to volunteer on cross-functional projects. The concept of Tribe has recently been introduced to encourage people from different disciplines to work together to solve a business problem. As an organization, we leverage e-learning as well through our content platform (IGETIT) for the same. For senior business leaders, we have been leveraging Executive Coaching to bring in the desired changes, on a select-only basis.

Tata Group also organizes talks from leading experts with a focus on practical issues. These recordings are available to all employees across the group. The learning team also recommends behavioral skills. Information on behavioral skills is a useful way for internal HR functions to understand individual employees and their managers. Programs are offered according to the level and the role played by the employee. These programs range from soft skills like Time Management to skills needed at senior levels such as Design Thinking, Decision Making, Negotiations Skills, to name a few.

THE FOCUS AREAS

Work and learning

The primary challenges in behavioral skilling are to do with time and work priorities. Employees in delivery and sales roles are more likely to prioritize their work over learning. What we have learned is that when the HR team identifies the right learning interventions, they unlock opportunities to build productive relationships with the business. It is also an opportunity to get feedback from the employees on the process.

Scaling and personalization

Another important challenge in delivering behavioral skills is measuring performance at scale. While role-specific training is linked to business outcomes, it is much more difficult to map learning outcomes when the learning is done for a large cohort of employees. Hence, our focus has been to determine a smaller cohort of and ensure we conduct specific interventions that are relevant to the role being played.

Culture and learning

A third focus area which is not directly related to behavioral skills is developing a learning culture. If an organization must create or sustain a learning culture, employees must first understand and inculcate the vision, mission, and values of their organization. Senior leadership involvement is required for delivering sessions on culture. If such sessions are conducted by just HR, it has a muted response. Within Tata Technologies, the focus is on cultural immersion, based on sessions from the leadership from time to time. It is also backed up by a pulse survey as well as communications geared towards celebrating culture. In addition, we leverage various forums to reinforce our vision, mission and values from time to time.

BUILDING A LEARNING CULTURE AT EVERY LEVEL

RAMAKRISHNA VYAMAJALA
CHRO, Home First Finance Company India Ltd

At Home First, the focus on learning is on building a culture of inquiry and seeking out answers, and we encourage employees to learn from each other. If you're faced with a challenge, you learn.

"MINDSET WILL ONLY CHANGE WHEN WE'RE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF BEHAVIORAL LEARNING ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, THAT'S GOING TO BE MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER BEFORE"

Every role in the company has a mix of technical and behavioral skills since a majority of our hires are freshers, it allows us the opportunity to emphasize on learning as part of the most important activity to start their career. In the initial stages, there's a lot of technical training, As employees grow up in the hierarchy, they will need to learn more behavioral skills. The competency framework is aligned with the business model. We have specific focus on front line organization and only 10 percent of our employees work out of the hea office, making it an agile workplace with limited hierarchy.

The need to personalize

The impact of learning is dependent on the context, and people. Therefore, there's always a need to personalize – whether that's encouraging online self-learning or recommending classroom sessions. The idea is to create a habit ensuring sustainability of the learning. There is a mix of techniques that are employed in the learning process. While introducing a concept, we found that having employees as part of a group is effective. After that, employees can work on exercises on their own. We e courage employees to implement their learning on the job and then write back their feedback as part of the assessment.

Breaking notions

Today, we are limited by what we know. Due to COVID-19, there has been a tectonic change, not incremental changes as we were used to. Therefore, there is a real opportunity to engage in experimentation and transform learning for the better. For example, on behavioral skills, how do we tweak group work? Are the current learning channels efficient to sustains? Due to the lockdown and the shift to remote work, employees are rediscovering learning as an essential part of doing their current job differently and also surviving in the job market in the post COVID-19 era.

Measuring the impact

Several factors influence the ultimate learning impact – right from a manager, work context, external factors that the employee is dealing with while working. Therefore, the focus is not so much to assess our learning programs individually but against a stack of learning programs.

On business metrics, the balanced scorecard has a 360-degree view of the performance of the employee. There are additional metrics that are added as and when required.

Scaling up coaching

I personally believe in coaching and mentoring across the organization and not restricted to the senior leadership team alone. Although there's been a need, the cost of engaging a coach one-on-one basis across the organization is a costly affair. So the key question ahead of us is: How do you scale up coaching? Internally, we've developed several employees to become coaches/ mentors – while they help mostly on the technical side of the job with some help in cultural assimilation, the focus needs to go beyond it.

Learning essentially is a personalized journey, the moment the focus is on behavioral training, employee sees it as generic and therefore the normal tendency has been to think of lightly. This mindset will only change when we're able to communicate the value of behavioral learning on a personal level, that's going to be more important now than ever before.

PERSONALIZE AND EXPERIMENT WITH LEARNING STRATEGIES AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT

DEEPSHIKHA THAKUR
Head – Learning & OD, Shree Cements

At Shree Cements, the culture of learning is driven by the senior leadership. Over the last several months, the company moved towards online learning. For most manufacturing companies, the lockdown forced a temporary reset and there was a need to introduce remote working facilities, but during this time, the participation in online learning drives saw a tremendous response – so much so that the total number of hours clocked in learning was four times over last year.

"THERE IS A NEED TO ADDRESS THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT THE EMPLOYEES ARE TRAINED ON AND THE IMPACT OR BEHAVIOR THEY NEED IN THEIR JOB."

The company partnered with a third-party service provider to assess competencies necessary for the business, and after a small pilot, a development center was launched. The focus on behavioral skills is on eight competencies and this includes creativity and innovation, collaborative working, financial acumen, and problem solving. Among senior leaders, there's a greater focus on strategic thinking, partnering with stakeholders, and so on.

Although, as a company, we track the reach of programs, the average number of learning hours, completions, etc., the completion of the learning is the responsibility of the individual. It is not mapped to individual KRAs. Apart from sessions with experts, online learning courses, and classroom training, sports is also a focus area in building behavioral skills.

Measuring effectiveness

One of the principal challenges with behavioral skills is to do with measuring the effectiveness of the learning program and the actual gap in skill. There is a perception gap between what employees need to be trained on and the impact or behavior they need in their job. This needs closer attention from all stakeholders – leaders, employees, and service providers.

Time to learn

The time to pick up behavioral skills is different for different employees. One of the challenges that come in the way of building new skills is the expectation that the employee must have picked the skills at the end of the workshop or the learning program. Getting acquainted and using these skills effectively involves time and effort over time. Employees also respond to different formats, differently. It is the job of the L&D function to continuously identify new ways of personalizing learning.

Feedback mechanism

With behavioral learning, one of the important processes that improve learning outcomes is feedback. However, not everyone is equipped to give feedback. Often, managers need to be trained to give feedback and employees will also need to learn to receive feedback. Over time, we want to move to a system where there's anonymous feedback which captures three inputs – what worked in the program, what did not work, and how can you make it better.

Based on our experience, the RoI models don't necessarily work as they should. This is because several factors determine the outcome – including time, processes, and experimentation. That said, there are many avenues for employees to learn behavioral skills, the number of trainers has increased and learning is delivered in capsules. There are also scientific methods like nudge theory informing learning strategies.

BRINGING ABOUT A SHIFT IN EMPLOYEE MIND-SET IS CRITICAL

ARPITA BANERJEE

Vice President, BCOE - Talent Management,
Learning& Development and Organisation Effectiveness,
Grasim Chemicals, Aditya Birla Group

"WE ARE CLEAR ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MINDSET SHIFT REQUIRED TO IMPACT LEARNING ON EMPLOYEE CAREER GROWTH. THUS EMPLOYEES HAVING SIMILAR CAREER ASPIRATIONS DO GET DIFFERENTIATED BASED ON THEIR MANAGERIAL CAPABILITIES AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS."

Framework and approach

ABG has a well defined leadership competency framework, and at the Chemicals business, we have specific competency based training designed to build leadership capabilities in our current and future leaders. There are long duration blended learning programs, which have classroom sessions, e-learning content (through the Groups e-learning portal), functional content provided by SMEs, which gets tied up with action learning assignments and panel reviews, to help knowledge integration and enhance senior leadership visibility to our future leaders. Employees who outperform in these long duration leadership development programs, get "first amongst equals" treatment for career progression.

The approach to learning is tiered across employee groups (behavioral and functional) – from entry level to middle managers to senior management. Our technical academy reinforces and enhances functional capabilities whilst focussing on making behavioral shifts towards maintaining the culture of safety and compliance at our units. The L&D department has a tailored approach to learning - involving senior managers as design team, as well as external partners and internal SMEs (including CXOs) who are actively engaged in mentoring, teaching and reviewing. Our senior leaders get exposed to global best practises by attending suitable leadership programs in top international universities and interaction with global academicians and peers therein to network with.

Demonstrating value

Impact metrics are defined but takes time – more so in behavioral learning. Our key challenge is to constantly address employees 'whats in it for me", whilst focussing on short vs. long term impact of inputs being provided. But we are clear about the importance of the mindset shift required to impact learning on employee career growth. Thus employees having similar career aspirations do get differentiated based on their managerial capabilities and leadership skills.

Changing metrics

Manager feedback (post 90 or 180 days) is used as an important yardstick to evaluate program impact, along with pre-post assessment of knowledge and skills. In some cases we even track impact on business numbers or team performance. There are other methods like employee feedback surveys, or tracking mandated learning hours/ days, completion of courses, enrollment and other conventional metrics that are part of the annual review process.

Coaching

The Group offers a coaching certification program of CFI through our global learning centre Gyanodaya, and we have business level coaching and mentoring programs too for middle managers. Peer coaching and even reverse mentoring is practised in many of our businesses. Practises like structured "Know your talent" conversations by leadership teams to connect to talent pool members also help. In the coming days our focus would be on structured shadowing and career track based learning journeys to ensure well rounded knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer processes, and help make the L&D initiatives more robust and well accepted amongst our employees.

CREATE AN AGILE WORKFORCE THROUGH CUSTOMIZED LEARNING
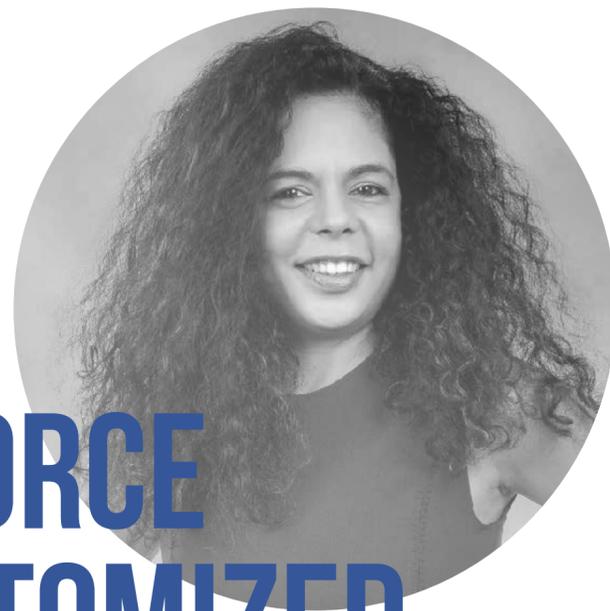
POOJA DUDANI

Head of L&D, Cars 24

"WHEN YOU HAVEN'T MAPPED THE RIGHT SKILLS WITH BUSINESS NEEDS, BEHAVIORAL TRAINING WILL ONLY REMAIN 'A FEEL GOOD' EXPERIENCE."

Building a learning culture depends on multiple factors within the organization, what's been working at Cars 24 is a 'user-centricity' and 'inclusive' content. As L&D, your customers are your employees, so it's necessary to think from their perspective – you need to understand the pulse of the target audience by partnering with them. And this is where subject matter experts play a key role in shaping the learning agenda in the company. This process of instilling the loop of learning, feedback, and learning within any organization takes time. It also takes strong collaborative efforts to build the culture of learning.

As a business that's very fast paced – In terms of market dynamics and product development, many times traditional methods of learning don't work successfully. Therefore, there's a MVP (Minimum viable product) approach, which enables you to go ahead with a/b testing and come up with data backed decision making. It is an on-going model that relies on feedback and teamwork. In an agile and fast moving business, there also has to be a great focus on organization culture and values because customer experience and employee experience both contribute towards shaping the brand's perception.

The partnership with business

L&D departments need to work with the business on their day to day activities – that's when you get a first-hand understanding of their challenge areas and where skill gaps are. It's where you also assess what's the depth of training that's required.

When you haven't mapped the right skills with business needs, behavioral training will only remain 'a feel good' experience, and it will not translate to habits on the field. So there's a need to make the right contract with the leadership.

Focus on the target audience

With behavioral skills, the goal is to build habits, and it can't work if it's a standard one-size fits all approach. You need to focus on your target audience to understand what kind of skill is needed, what is the level of expertise? And how often does an employee need to undergo training to build that skill?

Blended approach

We promote a combination of approaches including virtual training, interactive e-learning, gamification and simulation. We also focus on providing customized content which is suited to the business context.

Measuring outcomes

The focus on metrics is on a combination of metrics – including measuring outcomes. For example: If there's a sales person responsible for customer interaction, , the part of their learning journey should be designed based on their NPS/audit score etc. which should target how their scores should improve post training and thus it becomes a true value addition to business. Also, another focus can be on assessing individuals based on peer feedback and manager's feedback after they've undergone specific training modules.

Coaching and digitization

Coaching is not an event; it is part of the culture of the company. It needs to happen organically – without assigning it as a task. As a company that's focused on feedback and appreciation, there is an inherent DNA for coaching.

In the end, digitization is one of the most important pillars, and it's not about buying the most expensive learning product. It is about your employee needs, demographics, formats they understand, and your business model. One needs to take innovative and bold decisions to build an extraordinary learning culture in the organization.
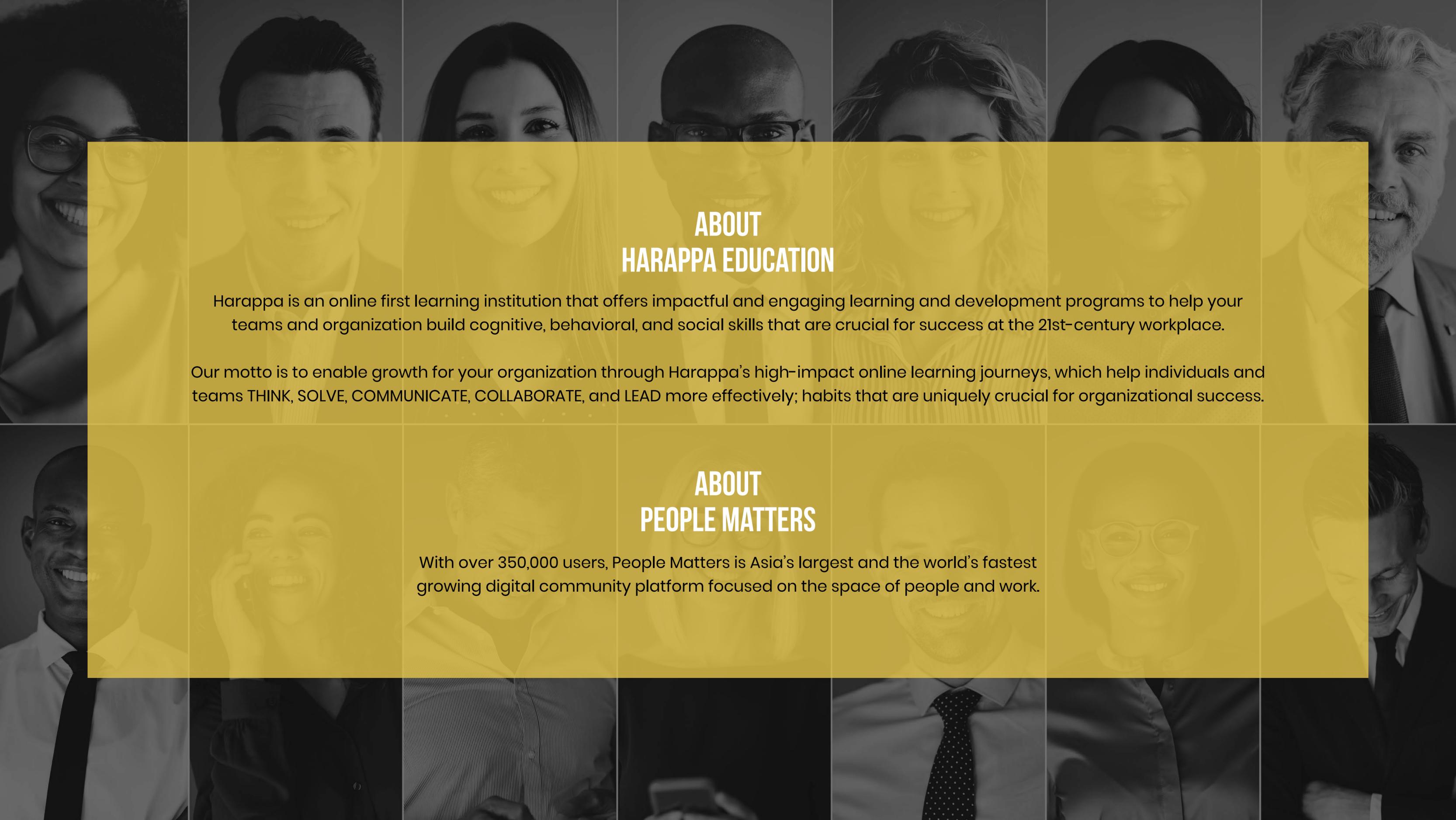
ABOUT
HARAPPA EDUCATION

Harappa is an online first learning institution that offers impactful and engaging learning and development programs to help your teams and organization build cognitive, behavioral, and social skills that are crucial for success at the 21st-century workplace.

Our motto is to enable growth for your organization through Harappa's high-impact online learning journeys, which help individuals and teams THINK, SOLVE, COMMUNICATE, COLLABORATE, and LEAD more effectively; habits that are uniquely crucial for organizational success.

ABOUT
PEOPLE MATTERS

With over 350,000 users, People Matters is Asia's largest and the world's fastest growing digital community platform focused on the space of people and work.