



WORLD OF LEARNING · MAIN STAGE

Beyond the LMS: Orchestrating High-Performance Ecosystems in the Age of AI

A thought leadership talk by **Nick Gonios**
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We built a culture obsessed with completion over capability.

Treating login screens as success whilst ignoring true ROI isn't a technology failure. It's a strategy failure. And it's entirely fixable.

The Learning Paradox We Can No Longer Ignore

Organisations are spending more on training than ever before and yet most employees still feel underprepared for the pace of change they face every day.

The question isn't whether your people are learning. The question is **whether learning is actually moving your business forward.**



Learning spend is rising

U.S. corporate L&D investment exceeds \$102.8B* annually, yet ROI remains stubbornly difficult to measure.

*source: <https://trainingmag.com/2025-training-industry-report/>



Skills gaps are widening

47% of employees say some of their job skills have become outdated within the last five years.

Source: <https://www.talentlms.com/research/speed-to-skill-report>



Engagement is stalling

28% of employees say training content doesn't match real job needs.

Source: <https://www.talentlms.com/research/speed-to-skill-report>

The Core Problem

What's Broken With the Traditional Model

The conventional L&D playbook was designed for a slower world scheduled courses, annual reviews, and one-size-fits-all curricula. In a world of accelerating change, this model doesn't just underperform. It actively holds organisations back.

Learning is disconnected from work

Pulling people away from their jobs to complete mandatory modules creates friction, resentment, and knowledge that fades before it's ever applied.

The LMS has become a compliance tool

Most organisations use their LMS to track completions, not to drive performance. It's a filing cabinet, not an engine.

Skills data is siloed and stale

Without a real-time picture of workforce capability, leaders are making talent and development decisions in the dark.

Personalisation is an afterthought

Generic learning paths treat every employee the same, ignoring role, readiness, experience, and ambition.



The Uncomfortable Truth

What Executives Report

90%

of managers say their organisation actively supports employees in developing their skills.

What Employees Experience

60%

of employees agree a 30 point perception gap between the support leaders think they provide and what employees actually experience.



This is not a resources problem. It is a design problem. The solution is not more training. It is better designed, more impactful learning.

Nick Gonios

Pioneering 'Uppercase T' Learning Leadership

- VP, Learning Transformation & Company Ambassador.
- **Three decades of experience** from global SaaS scale-ups to listed companies like Microsoft, Fujitsu, and 8common.
- Bridging emerging technology, particularly AI, with **tangible business outcomes** (with some 'battle scars' along the way).
- Empowers organisations to **transform learning into a proactive driver of performance**, offering a practical roadmap for navigating the complexities of the modern workforce.



Today's Agenda

From strategy to execution.

This session will take you through a complete rethink of how high-performing organisations approach learning.



The "Performance First" Strategy

Flipping the training hierarchy to deliver support at the point of need



Invisible Technology in Action

How adaptive AI quietly closes skills gaps while work is actually happening



Human Mentorship at the Core

Why technology amplifies but never replaces human connection and coaching



Your New Role as Orchestrator

Mastering the shift from course manager to high growth environment builder

The "Performance First" Strategy

Flipping the traditional training hierarchy from scheduled learning to real-time performance support



Performance First

Redefining the Learning Hierarchy

Traditional L&D is built around a simple assumption: teach first, apply later. But this model is increasingly out of step with how modern work actually happens fast, contextual, and constantly evolving.



The Old Model

Schedule → Attend → Complete → Return to work

Learning is **a pause** from performance.



The Performance First Model

Work → Detect gap → Deliver support → Continue working

Learning is **embedded** in performance.

The shift is profound: instead of interrupting work to deliver training, you embed learning inside the workflow precisely when it's needed, invisible when it isn't.



Performance First

Learning at the Point of Need

Point-of-need learning means your employees get the right support, in the right format, at exactly the right moment without breaking their flow state or filing a helpdesk ticket.



Just-in-Time Delivery

Instead of scheduled courses, imagine micro-resources that are available the moment they're needed, when a task begins, a decision is required, or a knowledge gap appears.



Context-Aware Content

AI matches the format, length, and depth of support to the specific context. A quick checklist, a short video, or a guided workflow.

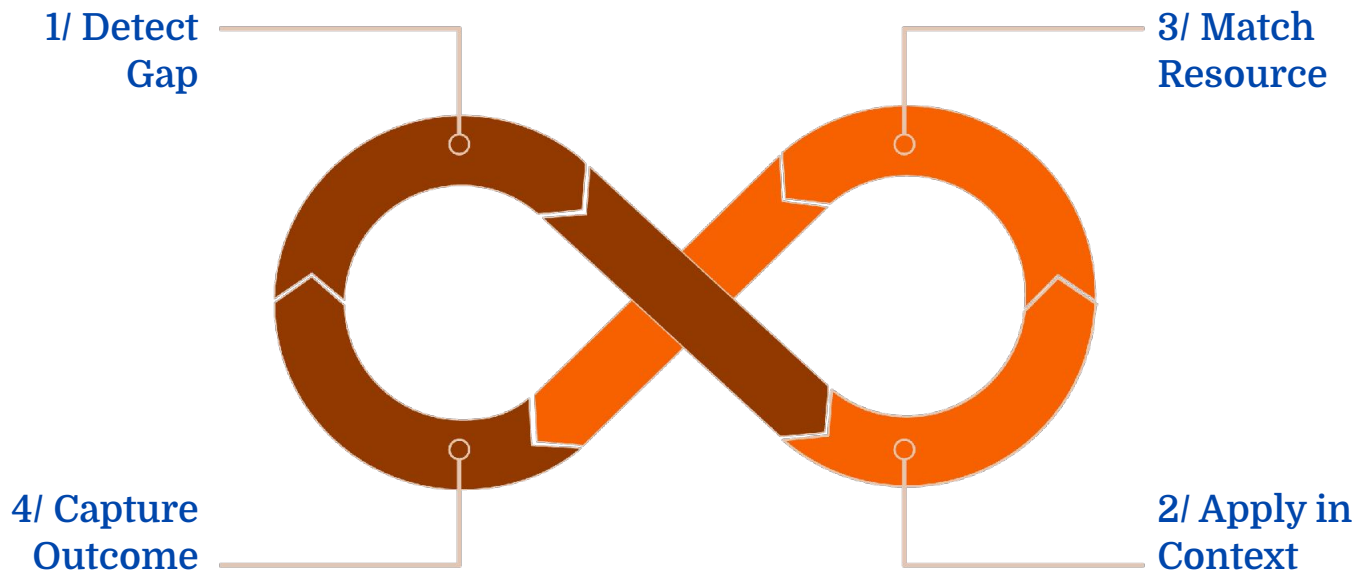


Measurable Performance Impact

Because learning happens within the work, outcomes are directly trackable. A task completion, quality scores, time-to-proficiency all improve visibly.

Closing Skills Gaps in Real Time

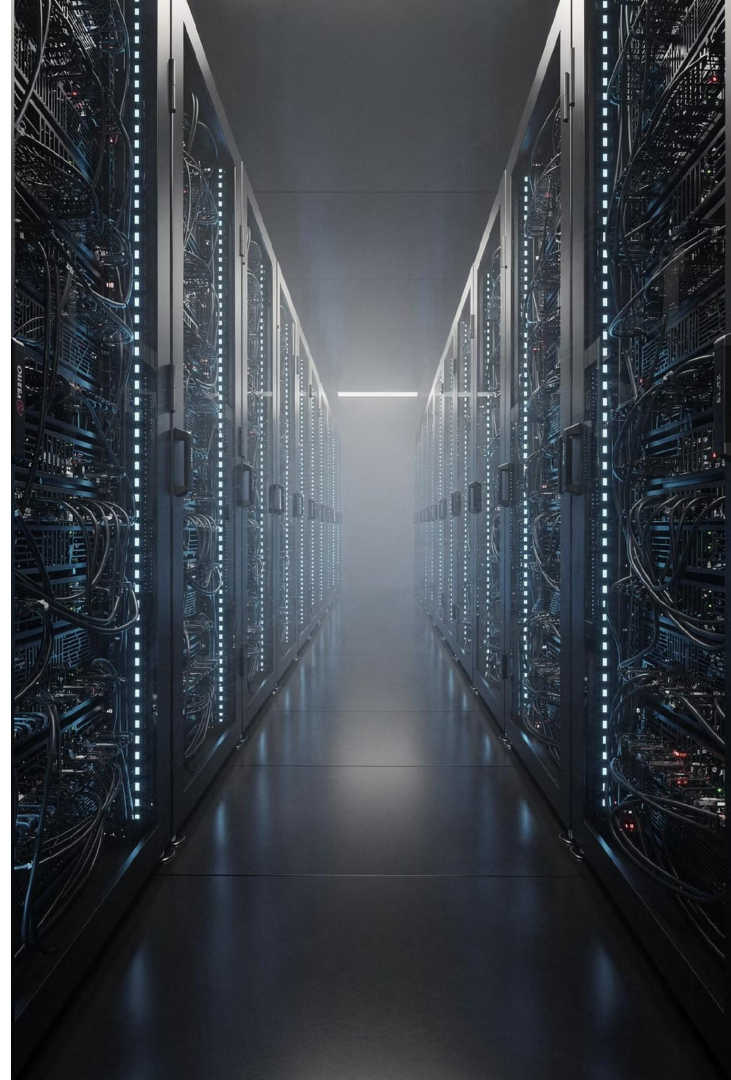
The traditional approach to skills gaps follows a long cycle: survey, analyse, design, build, deploy, review. By the time the course launches, the need has often moved on. A '**performance first**' model compresses that cycle dramatically.



This closed-loop approach means your skills intelligence improves continuously every interaction makes the system smarter and your workforce more capable.

Invisible Technology

How adaptive AI works quietly in the background supporting your people without getting in their way



The Best Technology Is the Kind You Don't Notice

The most effective learning technology doesn't announce itself. It anticipates. It adapts. It delivers. And then it gets out of the way.

Learning is moving from something employees go to toward something that comes to them. An intelligent layer that works alongside the tools they already use every day. Their workflow apps, collaboration platforms, and communication channels.

→ **Embedded in existing tools**

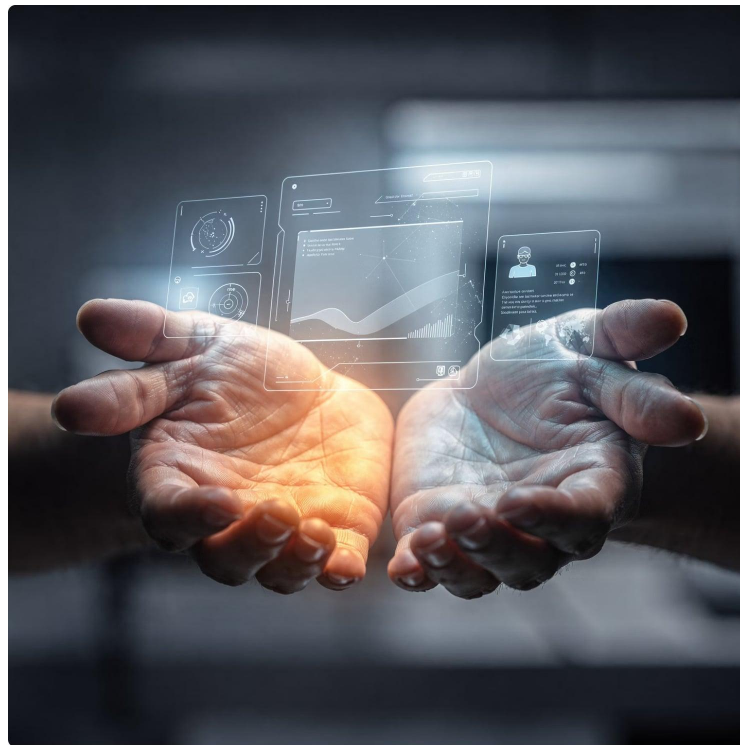
Learning surfaces inside Slack, Teams, Salesforce, or any workflow tool.

→ **Triggered by behaviour, not schedules**

The system responds to what employees actually do, not when HR decides it's time for refresher training.

→ **Personalised at scale**

AI delivers a unique learning journey for every individual simultaneously, across the entire organisation.



The Context Engine Advantage

Intelligence Without Context Is Just Noise

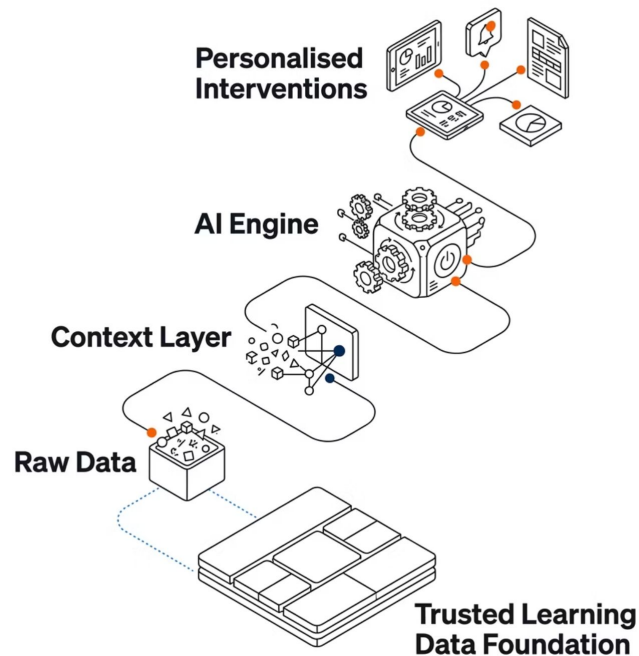
Without deep, proprietary context, AI produces generic, uninspired responses that feel disconnected from real organisational needs.

The organisations winning today own a **Trusted Learning Data Layer**.

A rich, contextualised repository that powers AI to deliver genuine personalisation at scale.



We are moving from a system that *records* learning to an engine that *drives* capability.



Adaptive AI: What It Actually Means in Practice

Adaptive AI in learning isn't a chatbot or a recommendation engine bolted onto an existing LMS. It's a **fundamentally different architecture** one that continuously reads signals, adjusts content, and refines its understanding of each learner.



Signal Detection

Reads performance data, engagement patterns, role changes, and workflow behaviours to identify learning needs before the employee can articulate them.



Dynamic Personalisation

Adjusts content format, difficulty, pacing, and sequencing in real time based on individual progress and demonstrated capability.



Continuous Learning Loop

Every interaction feeds back into the model, making recommendations increasingly precise and reducing irrelevant or redundant content over time.



Guardrails & Governance

AI operates within L&D defined parameters ensuring compliance, quality standards, and organisational values are always maintained.

Human Mentorship at the Core

Technology **amplifies** human connection. It never replaces it.



Why the Human Layer Is Non-Negotiable

Every high-performance learning ecosystem **has a heartbeat and it's human**. No matter how sophisticated your AI infrastructure becomes, the most critical development moments in an employee's career are still deeply personal, relational, and contextual.

What AI Does Well

- Processes large volumes of performance data
- Delivers consistent, scalable content
- Identifies patterns invisible to human observers
- Removes friction from knowledge access
- Personalize at scale across the entire org

What Humans Do Better

- Build trust and psychological safety
- Provide nuanced, empathetic feedback
- Model values, mindset, and culture in action
- Navigate ambiguity and organisational politics
- Inspire growth that goes beyond a skills framework

📌 The goal is not human or AI. It's human **amplified by** AI. A partnership where technology handles the routine, and people focus on what only people can do.

Building a Mentorship-Powered Ecosystem

When AI handles the administrative and analytical burden of L&D, your managers and subject-matter experts are freed to do something far more valuable: **mentor, coach, and connect with their teams at a human level.**

Identify Mentors

Use skills data and performance signals to surface your best internal coaches not just by title, but by demonstrated capability and growth mindset.

1

Measure the Impact

Track mentorship outcomes in the same performance ecosystem closing the loop between human connection and business results.

3

2

Enable the Conversation

Provide mentors with rich, AI-generated context on their mentees development priorities, recent progress, recommended talking points.

Your New Role: From Manager to Orchestrator

Mastering the most important leadership shift
in the modern L&D function



The Orchestrator Role

What Orchestration Actually Looks Like

The metaphor of the orchestrator is deliberate. A conductor doesn't play every instrument. They set the tempo, ensure harmony, elevate individual talent, and keep every part of the ensemble aligned with a single vision. That is precisely what modern L&D leadership demands.



Connect the Systems

Integrate skills data, AI tools, content libraries, and performance platforms into a coherent, unified ecosystem not a stack of disconnected tools.



Map Skills to Strategy

Translate business priorities into a dynamic skills architecture so the organisation is always building the capability it will need next, not just managing what it has today.



Speak the Language of the Business

Shift your L&D narrative from completions and course ratings to skills velocity, time-to-proficiency, and talent pipeline health.

The Orchestrator Role

From Courses to Capabilities: The Mindset Shift

The single most important change you can make as an L&D leader is to **stop organising your thinking around courses** and **start organising it around capabilities**. Courses are an output. Capabilities are the outcome. The business only cares about the outcome.



Course-Centric Thinking

- "We need a leadership programme."
- Success = completion rates
- Annual curriculum planning
- L&D owns the learning agenda



Capability-Centric Thinking

- "We need leaders who can navigate ambiguity."
- Success = business performance change
- Continuous, adaptive skills investment
- L&D orchestrates; the business co-owns

Your Three Commitments, Starting Monday

You don't need to rebuild everything at once. The highest-performing organisations start with clarity of intent and a few bold moves. Leave today with these three.

Audit Your Ecosystem

Map where learning is currently disconnected from performance. Identify the one highest-value workflow where AI-embedded support would have immediate impact.



Activate Your Mentors

Identify three internal subject-matter experts who could become formal mentors this quarter. Give them the data, the time, and the permission to coach.

Reframe the Conversation

At your next leadership meeting, replace one "training completion" metric with a capability or performance based measure. Change the language; change the culture.



Key Takeaways

The future of learning isn't just a better LMS. **It's a smarter, more human, and more strategically integrated ecosystem.** Here's what to carry forward from today.

Performance First

Embed learning inside the workflow. Deliver support at the moment of need not in a scheduled classroom weeks later.

Invisible AI

The best technology disappears into the work. Adaptive AI personalizes at scale so your people can focus on performing, not navigating a platform.

Human at the Heart

AI amplifies human mentorship. It never replaces it. Protect and invest in the coaching relationships that drive the deepest growth.

Orchestrate, Don't Administer

Your role is to connect systems, people, and strategy into a coherent, high-growth ecosystem not to manage a content catalogue.



Let's Keep the Conversation Going

The shift from a traditional LMS to a high performance learning ecosystem is not a single event; **it's an ongoing journey**. Connect with Nick and the TalentLMS team to explore what this transformation looks like for your organisation.



Continue the Conversation at Our Booth

Meet the TalentLMS team to discuss your learning strategy, exchange ideas, and explore what performance-first learning could look like in your organization.



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Connect with Nick

Follow Nick Gonios on LinkedIn for ongoing insights on learning transformation, AI strategy, and the future of work.

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