

DIGITAL ROLES ARE THE FUTURE

Andy Lancaster has more than 25 years' experience in learning and organisational development in commercial, technological and not-for-profit organisations and has also worked as a consultant.

As Head of Learning and Development Content at CIPD Andy is responsible for professional development and learning products, content and qualifications for L&D, coaching and mentoring and management and leadership.

The 10 identified roles in my research are significant for Belgian organisations. Do you have any thoughts about these roles ?

All roles are recognizable. However some roles correspond more to a specific job in a company. For example, the role of Business Analyst is a completely different function in some companies. Other roles are more likely to be included as part of a function.

Are there roles whose importance you expect to change in the near future ?

There are two types of roles that I see emerging in the future. Digital roles will become more common. In order to find effective learning solutions in our rapidly changing society, the digital world will play an increasingly important role. I expect roles such as 'Digital asset creator' or 'Digital Prototyper' to become more important. These new roles overlap somewhat with the role of 'Learning Producer', but are more specialized. They require experts in the design and development of digital learning solutions.

Another role I see developing is the role of 'Learning Community Manager'. This role will ensure the management of the online learning communities.

Four organizational profiles were identified based on the combination of the roles within organisations. Which elements do you think have an influence on an organisation's profile ?

The generalist profile seems to me to be compatible with smaller organisations with smaller L&D-teams.

A larger L&D team can take up more roles. Larger L&D teams are usually found in larger companies, so I see the All-in profile fit more closely with large companies.

Some companies choose to outsource learning solutions. This can be done for several reasons, for example when the available expertise is insufficient to design and develop learning solutions. It is also often less profitable for smaller companies to go through the process of creating a new learning solution themselves. This may explain the Admin focused Profile and the Restricted Profile.

Another important note is the 'place' of the L&D team in an organisation. Are they part of HR ? Do they function independently ? Sometimes they are also part of the operational team. This can affect the roles they take on and thus also the L&D profile of the organisation.

In my Research, an effect of the size of the company on the recording of several roles was determined after analysis. Larger companies more often take on the role of Learning Producer, Administrator and Talent Manager than small companies. Do you have an idea of the cause of these differences ?

It is often more cost-effective for large companies to develop their own learning solutions than it is for small companies. In addition, large companies often have more experts present in the design and development of learning solutions. That, in my opinion, could be one of the reasons for the difference in the inclusion of this role.

In large companies with as a consequence a large number of employees, there are many more administrative tasks to be performed, which means that this role is more often taken up.

Due to the larger number of employees, it is also more important for larger companies to have a talent management vision and strategy than smaller companies. That is why the role of 'Talent Manager' is more common in larger companies.

What advice do you give our L&D teams here in Belgium ?

"As an L&D team, it is important to see where the team stands now and to decide in which direction they must to move. This will be different for each organisation. It is vital to look at the future needs of the company and in our fast-changing world there will inevitably be new L&D roles that will be essential to support organisational performance." ■



Lisa De Schrijver is student Training and Educational Sciences and works as a regional planner and analyst for the City of Antwerp's city control department.