

STARTER KIT · PIECE 3 OF 3

The L&D Diagnostic

30 questions to assess whether your L&D function is a cost center or a capability engine.

Where is your L&D function strongest? Where is it most exposed?

This diagnostic shows you both — in 15 minutes.

YOU WILL ASSESS FIVE STAGES

DIAGNOSE

STRUCTURE

ACTIVATE

MEASURE

EVOLVE

For each statement, mark 1 if it is completely false in your organization and 5 if it is completely true. There are no wrong answers — only honest ones. At the end, you will tally your score per stage and identify where your Capability Engine is strong and where it stalls.

TURN THE PAGE TO BEGIN

STAGE 01

D

Diagnose

Can you see the capability risk clearly?

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 1 My team has a defensible method to identify the capability gaps most at risk in operations.
<i>Not training needs in general – the gaps that, if left open, would show up in operational KPIs.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 We map capability requirements to specific roles and shifts, not generic job titles.
<i>A 'maintenance technician' on Plant 3 needs a different stack than one on Plant 1.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 When a request comes in for training, we ask 'what problem does this solve' before designing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 We can name the three biggest capability risks in the business right now, with evidence.
<i>If asked in a board meeting, you could answer in under two minutes.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Our diagnostic process produces business cases that finance respects, not training requests. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 We track capability gaps over time as a leading indicator, not after an incident occurs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

YOUR DIAGNOSE SCORE

_____ / 30

STAGE 02

S

Structure

Do your programs survive contact with the floor?

1
strongly
disagree

2
disagree

3
neutral

4
agree

5
strongly
agree

- | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | strongly
disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly
agree |
| 7 | Our training programs are designed for the constraints of the work environment, not the classroom.
<i>If your operators have 4 minutes between tasks, your microlearning fits in 4 minutes.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | We use validated instructional design principles, not generic content creation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Our programs include practice opportunities under operational conditions, not just simulations.
<i>Practice in a quiet room is not practice when the real moment is on a noisy line.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | We design for retention at the moment of work, not just for completion of the course. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Subject matter experts and instructional designers work as a team, not in handoff mode. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | We pilot programs in one location before scaling, and we redesign based on what we learn. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

YOUR STRUCTURE SCORE

_____ / 30

STAGE 03

A

Activate

Does the knowledge reach the moment of work?

1	2	3	4	5
strongly	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly
disagree				agree

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>13 Workers can retrieve the knowledge they need at the moment they need it.</p> <p><i>Not 'they learned it in training' – they can retrieve it under operational pressure.</i></p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>14 We have an Activation Layer beyond the LMS – embedded job aids, AI assistants, or similar.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>15 Our completion data and our application data are different metrics, and we track both.</p> <p><i>Completion answers 'did they go through it.' Application answers 'do they use it.'</i></p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>16 Senior workers are not the default knowledge source for routine questions.</p> <p><i>If the answer to 'how do I do X' is always 'ask José,' you have a Knowledge Activation Gap.</i></p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>17 We measure how fast knowledge can be retrieved during work, not just how much was delivered.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>18 Frontline supervisors actively reinforce learning, not just sign attendance sheets.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

YOUR ACTIVATE SCORE

/ 30

STAGE 04

M

Measure

Do you report in the language of business?

1	2	3	4	5
strongly	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly
disagree				agree

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>19 Our reports show readiness and capability, not just completion rates and hours.
<i>Completion rates are an inventory metric. Capability is what the business buys.</i></p> <p>20 Operations leadership uses our data to make decisions, not just to acknowledge our existence.</p> <p>21 We can connect a training program to an operational KPI within one or two analytical steps.</p> <p>22 We use leading indicators (readiness, time-to-proficiency), not just lagging ones (completion).</p> <p>23 Our dashboards are designed for executives, not for L&D administrators.</p> <p>24 We never have to explain what our metrics mean to people who run the business.</p> | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> </table>
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

YOUR MEASURE SCORE

_____ / 30

STAGE 05

E

Evolve

Does the engine get better every cycle?

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree
25 Every program we run produces evidence that feeds the next program's design.	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>
26 We treat L&D initiatives as experiments with measurable outcomes, not as compliance events.	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>
27 We have killed at least one program in the last year that was not producing capability. <i>Sunsetting programs is harder than starting them. If you have not killed anything, you may be hoarding.</i>	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>
28 Our function gets stronger over time — measurably, not just in narrative form.	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>
29 We share lessons learned across plants and regions, not just within one team.	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>
30 We invest in our own capability — the L&D team has its own learning roadmap.	<div>1</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>2</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>3</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>4</div> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div>5</div> <input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR EVOLVE SCORE

_____/ 30

FINAL STEP

Your Capability Engine Score

Add up each stage and read what your score means.

STAGE	YOUR SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS
D Diagnose	_____/30	Below 18: you are designing solutions without verifying the problem. Risk of irrelevant programs.
S Structure	_____/30	Below 18: your programs may look good but break down at the moment of work. Survive-the-floor failure.
A Activate	_____/30	Below 18: the Knowledge Activation Gap is wide open. Completion data is misleading you.
M Measure	_____/30	Below 18: you are reporting in the wrong language. Operations is not listening because it cannot.
E Evolve	_____/30	Below 18: your function is not compounding. Without Evolve, each year starts from zero.
TOTAL CAPABILITY ENGINE SCORE		_____/150

READ YOUR TOTAL SCORE

120 – 150	Capability Engine running.	Your function operates as a strategic engine. Focus: defend gains and share with peers.
90 – 119	Engine sputtering.	Some stages are strong, others are bottlenecks. The book's Practice Labs target the weakest stage first.
60 – 89	Cost center pattern.	You are running training, but not building capability at scale. Read Chapters 1, 6, and 10 first.
Below 60	Critical exposure.	L&D is a compliance function in your organization. Start with the Prologue and Chapter 1, then Chapter 10 for the budget conversation.

The diagnostic is only valuable if you act on the weakest stage. Pick one – the lowest score – and turn to that chapter. Run one Practice Lab in the next two weeks. Then re-take this diagnostic in 90 days.