

Sponge.

Six inspiring ways to enhance learning with **data**

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The download covers...



**WHY DOES DATA
MATTER?**



**THE CURRENT STATE
OF ADOPTION IN L&D**



**WHERE ARE YOU ON THE
DATA MATURITY SCALE?**



**WHAT DATA IS L&D
ALREADY COLLECTING
AND WHAT BARRIERS
DO THEY FACE?**



**SIX INSPIRING WAYS TO
USE DATA TO ENHANCE
THE LX AND SUPPORT L&D**



**A USEFUL TOOL TO
SUPPORT DATA
GATHERING**



Why does data matter?

In a poll of 700 L&D leaders, the Towards Maturity research report¹, asked:

“What do you want data to help you achieve?”

The responses...

01 TRACK BUSINESS IMPACT

L&D want to be able to increase credibility and be accountable for the results they've achieved

02 IMPROVE LONG-TERM DECISIONS

L&D want data to help them create an evidence base that will lead to better long-term decisions

03 ENHANCE EXPERIENCE

L&D want to understand design factors to help improve user experience

04 MAKE SMART RECOMMENDATIONS

L&D want to be able to use data to make suggestions that make sense at an individual and organisational level



The current state of adoption in L&D

Despite the fact that learning professionals understand the importance of measurement and data, it remains a blind spot for L&D.

A report by the CIPD² – the UK's professional body for HR – found that 96% of L&D practitioners identify data analytics as a development priority. However, just 24% believe they have developed the core skills needed for data analytics.

96%

IDENTIFY DATA ANALYTICS
AS A PRIORITY

24%

BELIEVE THEY HAVE THE CORE
DATA ANALYTICS SKILLS



Where are you on the data maturity scale?

This data 'blind spot' is not unique to the L&D industry. A Gartner study³ of global companies found that advances in data analytics have been slower than anticipated in businesses across industry sectors.

This is a simplified version of Gartner's Data and Analytics Maturity Model. According to the study, 60% of businesses rated themselves in the first three levels of data maturity.

Where would you put your organisation on this scale?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Data & analytics central to business strategy

DIFFERENTIATING

Data & analytics fuels innovation and performance

60%

SYSTEMATIC

Agile use of data & analytics emerges

OPPORTUNISTIC

Attempts to formalise but hampered by culture and barriers

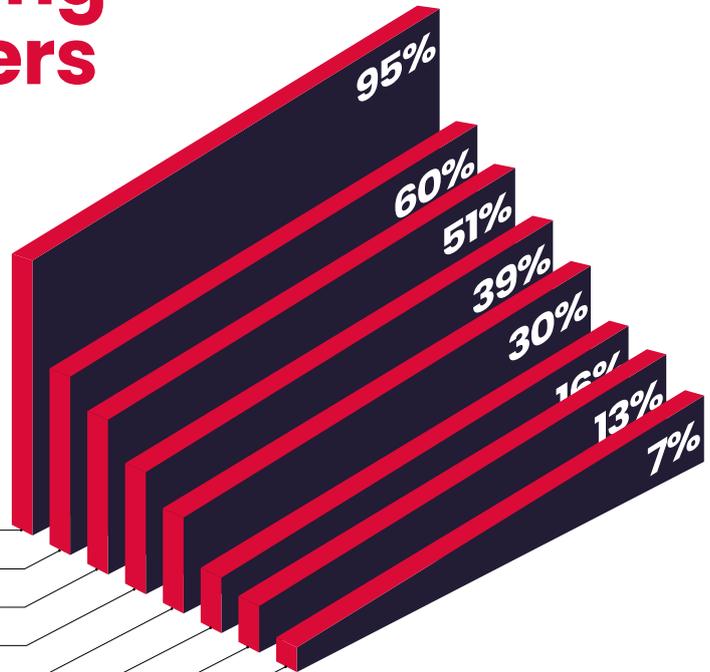
BASIC

Data managed in silos with ad hoc analysis

What data is L&D already collecting and what barriers do they face?

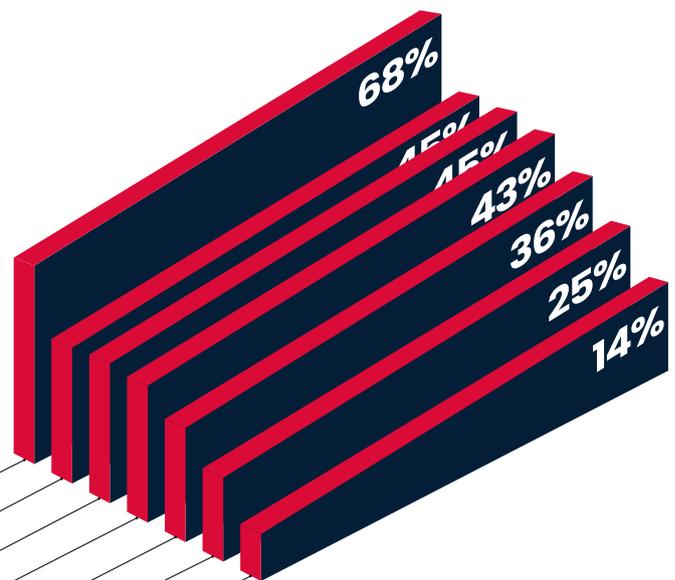
What data is L&D already collecting?

- Course completions
- Question attempts and answer choices
- User comments
- People certified in a skill/competency
- Manager evaluation
- Sharing of content
- Performance improvement from baseline
- Time to mastery



What barriers does L&D face when collecting data?

- Too complicated to collect – no single data source
- Haven't built a plan to gather data
- Lack of access to internal or external data
- Don't have the skills/knowledge to deal with data
- Takes too long to collect
- Concerns over privacy/security
- Data heavily regulated



Data from live poll of over 100 learning industry professionals during the seminar: 'Six inspiring ways to enhance the learning experience using data' (collected over two sessions) at Learning Technologies 2020

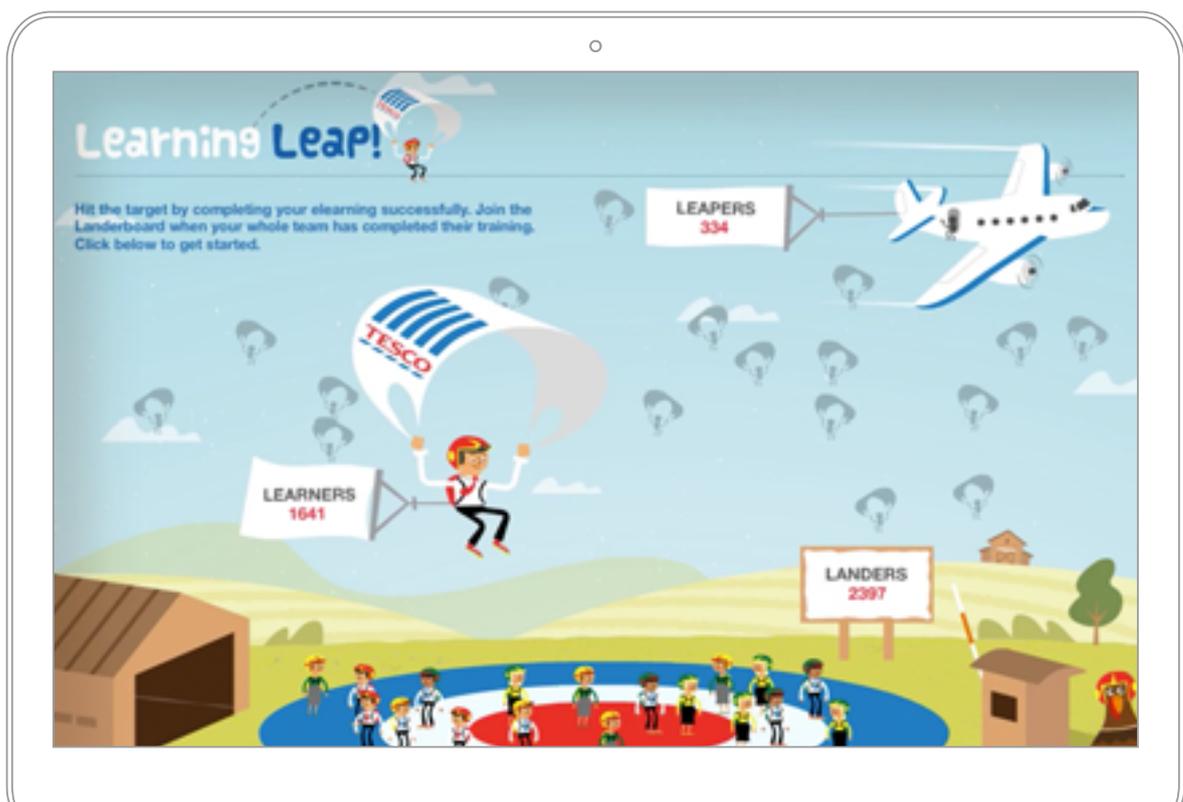
Six inspiring ways...

1. Real-time Leaderboards

TAKE COMPLETION DATA – 95% OF THE INDUSTRY IS COLLECTING IT ACCORDING TO OUR LIVE POLLS – BUT COULD IT BE WORKING HARDER?

This data could be used to help motivate people to participate in learning simply by exposing data to them in a way that allows them to feel like they're fulfilling a collective goal. We see this when we create live leaderboards and Learning Kingdoms using real-time data fed into a visual interface.

“Well-designed leaderboards promote the satisfaction of competence, relatedness, and autonomy for most users, most of the time.”*



At Sponge, we've seen this work successfully for several clients, resulting in faster completion of compliance initiatives and minimising disruption caused by removing people from the shop floor in retail. Tesco's Learning Leap is a great example - the above leaderboard motivated global employees to complete their training to deadline as part of a team initiative.

*[How to Motivate With Leaderboards - Practical Motivation Science](#)

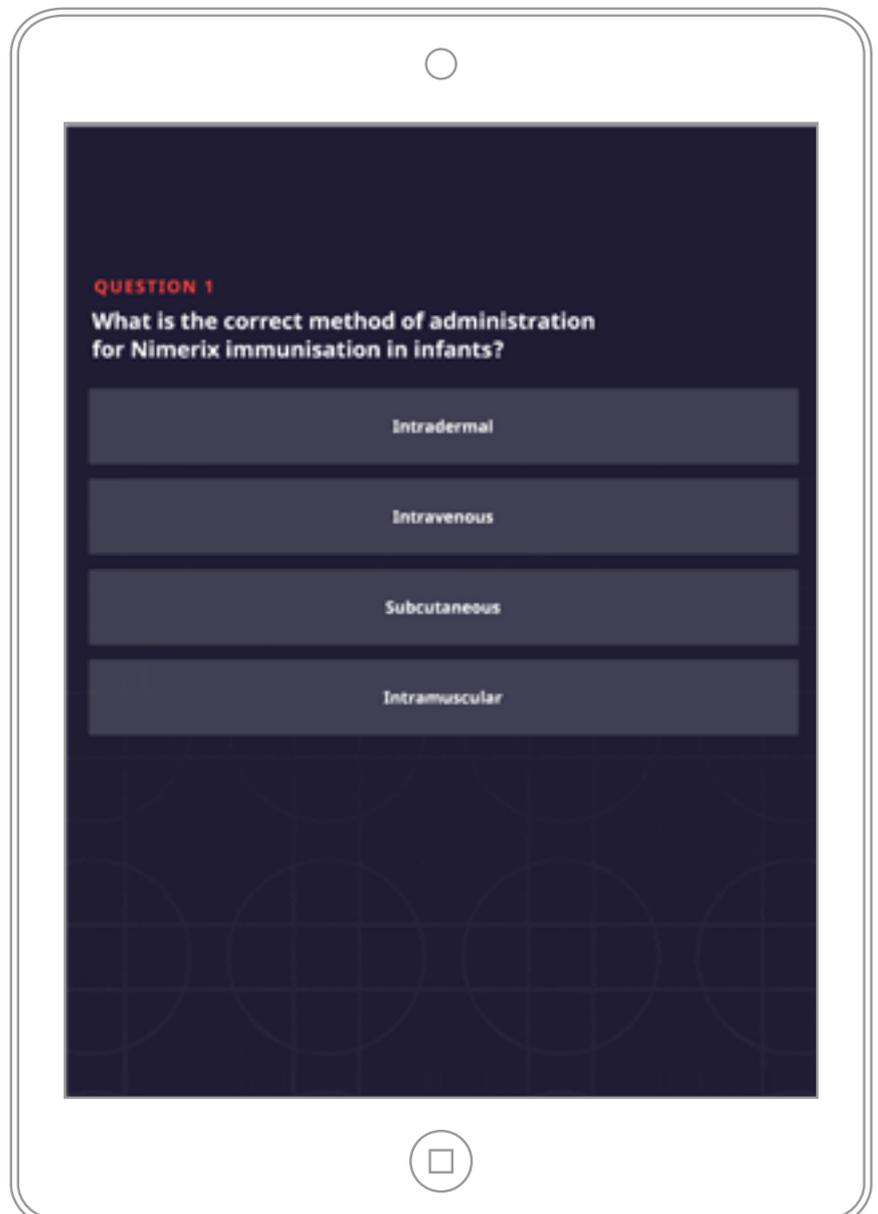
2. Social Benchmark

BUILDING ON THE IDEA OF WORKING TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE GOAL, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE INTRODUCE THE ABILITY TO COMPARE OUR KNOWLEDGE AGAINST THAT OF OUR PEERS?

Until fairly recently, an elearning experience was a one-way engagement with limited scope for learner feedback or input. Today we're able to introduce crowd-sourced data via social questions and polls into modules to enable learners to evaluate their knowledge against others.

"We engage in comparison...as a way of establishing a benchmark by which we can make accurate evaluations of ourselves."*

This can grow knowledge and mastery, encourage reflection, sustain engagement and boost recall. It's been shown that social rewards such as affirmations or praise trigger our brain's reward system, increasing our attention to the learning activity and improving memory recall. In turn, this helps grow skills and competencies, as well as improving application.



*Leon Festinger, Psychologist

3. Diagnostics

IF DATA PROMISES US ANYTHING, IT'S THAT WE CAN PROVIDE LEARNERS WITH TAILORED CONTENT MAPPED TO THEIR GROWTH AREAS.

At Sponge, we're excited about the power of data to individualise learning based on an assessment of employee ability.

We've created diagnostics, powered by self-report data, which signposts employees to specific assets that will help them plug a knowledge gap or grow a capability.

With machine learning on the horizon, we have the potential to learn about people's online behaviour and identify patterns, e.g. indications of disengagement, so we can offer up content in other ways.

This is really powerful for clients who have a more mature, foraging learner culture* and plenty of content (both curated and created).



*Check out our blog: [4 strategies to feed the foraging learner](#).

4. Data Stories

HOW DO WE USE DATA TO BRING STAKEHOLDERS ON A JOURNEY WITH US? THE USE OF 'DATA STORIES' ENABLES L&D TO SHARE THE IMPACT OF THEIR LEARNING PROGRAMME(S) WITH THEIR TEAM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE BUSINESS IN A WAY THAT'S EASY TO CONSUME.

These visual presentations could be an interactive site that uses journalistic narrative like you see here or it could be a dashboard – something you might create with tools with visualisation capability such as Tableau, Power Bi and Google Data Studio.



“L&D are describing rather than analysing, reporting rather than telling a story.”*

Image taken from:
Tampa Bay Times

Why take the time to do this? Because stepping back and looking at what you've achieved, and pulling it together enables you to achieve buy-in from stakeholders within the business, inform future decision-making and justify learning investment.

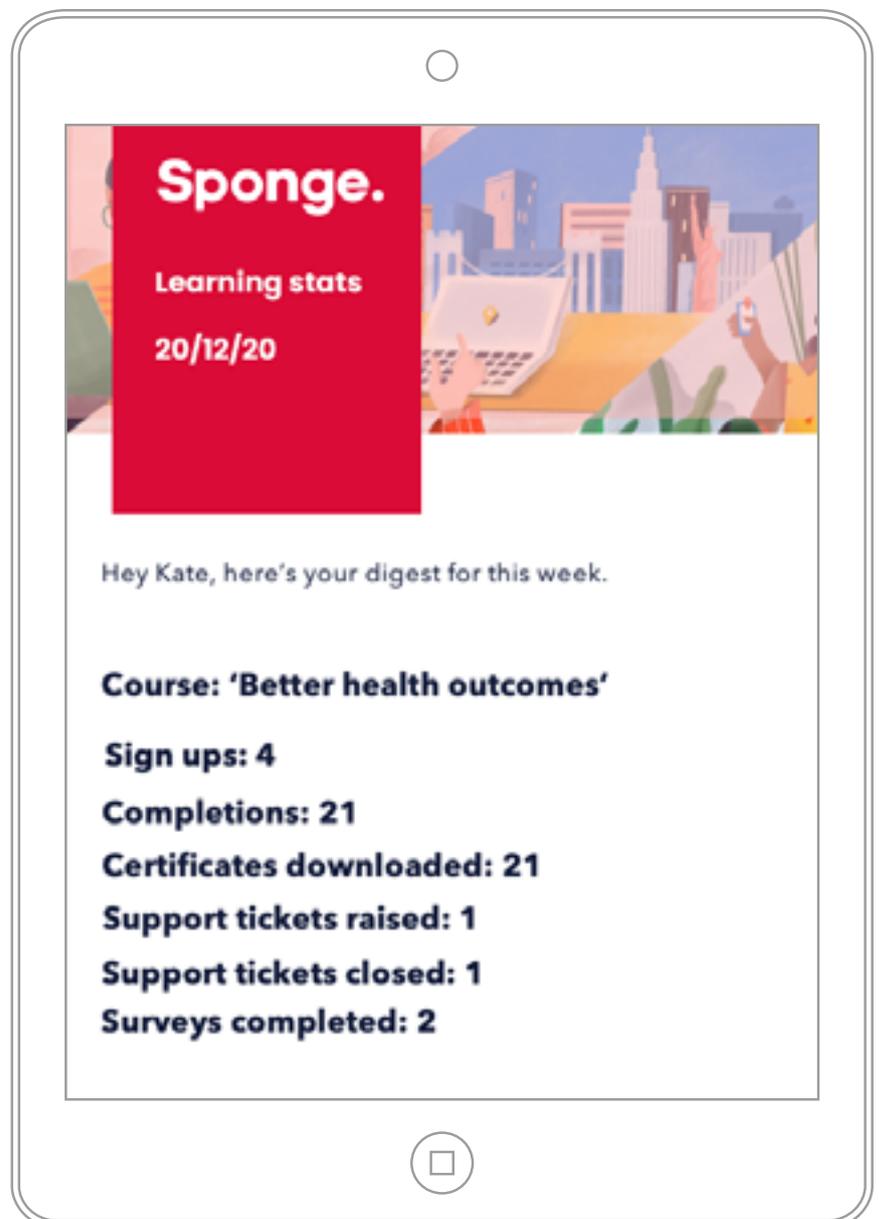
*Towards Maturity

5. Email Digests

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING ACTIVITY IS RARELY FOUND IN ONE SOURCE. EMAIL DIGESTS ARE ESSENTIALLY WEEKLY EMAILS THAT COLLATE DATA FROM DISPARATE SOURCES TO PROVIDE A SNAPSHOT IN TIME.

In the digest on the right, data sources include the website where the learning is hosted, sign-ups, certificates and completions from Zendesk, the support ticket system we're using to monitor user issues, and Survey Monkey, where we gather user feedback.

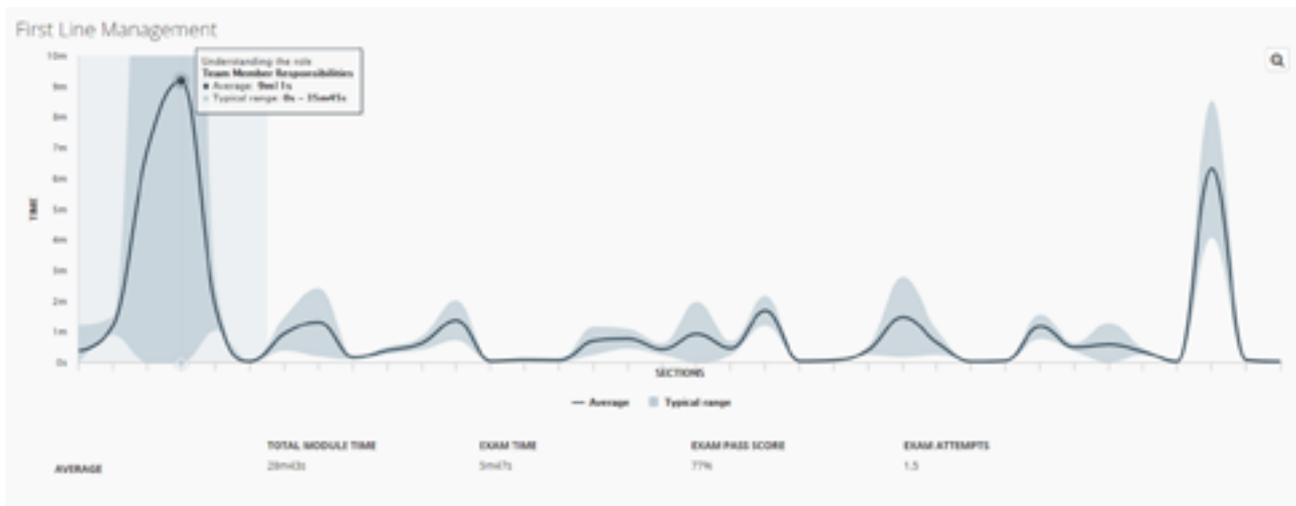
API feeds from products you are already using, including your LMS, are an affordable way to see a snapshot of data in one place. And the impact is powerful: L&D not only get their time back to spend more productively, but snapshots trigger proactive responses.



6. xAPI Dashboards

THE BELOW COURSE ACTIVITY LEVEL ANALYSIS GRAPH IS FROM SPARK, OUR NEXT GEN LEARNING PLATFORM POWERED BY BOLT.

The X axis represents sections of the course and the Y axis represents time spent interacting with it. The blue line is an individual employee moving through the course. Consistent with learner journey trends, shown in pale blue, the employee is struggling. It's taking this individual over 9 minutes to complete a section.



So what's going on here?

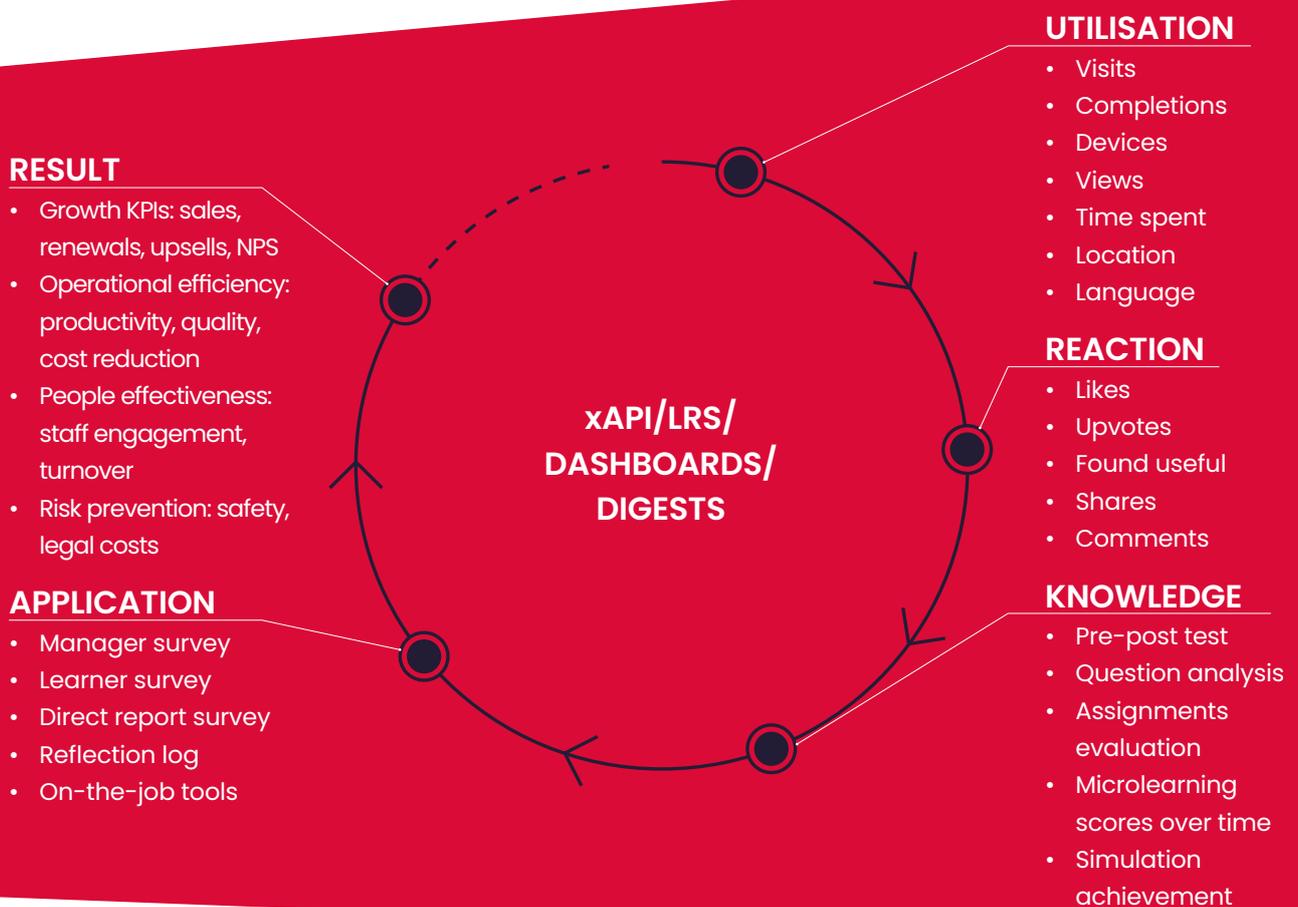
This graph represents the learning journey of a shop floor associate at a large UK retailer answering questions about age-restricted sales. The training included a drag and drop activity tasking employees with correctly categorising products. It was evident, via learner insights, that most employees could correctly identify alcohol as a challenge item. However, data also revealed that people were less clear on other age-restricted items such as matches, party poppers and scratchcards.

Based on these insights, Bolt changed the learning to include an explicit interaction to plug this employee knowledge gap. This not only led to a reduction in the number of fines for non-compliance with regulations, but also prompted better handling of challenge situations in stores.

A useful tool to support data gathering

At Sponge, we've created a handy tool to help us think about data collection and measurement at the start of a client project. We use this as a prompt to discuss goals and define up-front what data we want to collect and how. The data feeds into the LRS or digest; we can then define how to visualise it and pull out meaning.

We've mapped out data collection at five key points in the learning and performance journey: **Utilisation**; **Reaction**; **Knowledge**; **Application**; and **Result**. The tool draws influence from the Kirkpatrick Model and The Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model (LTEM) with a key difference - utilisation data.



UTILISATION includes all the data your users give you 'for free' – their visits, completion status, devices used and time spent on learning.

REACTION data is information that could be interpreted as a

valued opinion of the user – comments, upvotes and shares.

KNOWLEDGE is data that shows the knowledge difference between a pre- and post-learning state.

APPLICATION evidence we can gather from

the workplace, including on-the-job digital footprints, manager survey data and reflection logs.

RESULT is the data we gather that demonstrates impact, such as external measures.

About the author

Kate Pasterfield is Chief Innovation Officer at Sponge. Her contribution to learning has received industry-wide recognition. In 2016, Kate was named Learning Technologies' Learning Designer of the Year; she was also the bronze winner of the LPI's Learning Professional of the Year in 2017.

A 'creative powerhouse' within the digital learning industry, Kate's pioneering work with global clients, e.g. Tesco, Royal Mail, GSK and AXA, harnesses the latest technologies and thinking to address real-world people and business performance challenges.

With 16 years' digital learning experience, Kate is committed to driving innovation in the sector. She's passionate about deeply enhancing creative learning experiences with advanced platforms and analytics. In support of this, Kate created a team of Learning Experience Directors (LExDs) to deliver human-centered and cutting-edge work.



About Sponge

Sponge creates pioneering learning that empowers employees to perform better at work so organisations stay ahead of the game.

We apply human-centered design approaches to solve the thorniest performance challenges faced by a global workforce.

By combining the science of learning, powerful creativity and deep technical expertise, we build solutions for better retention, better recall and better transfer. Our approach drives real business outcomes improving growth, efficiency and risk mitigation.



Company of the Year
- 2018



Learning Developer of the Year - 2019



External Learning Solution of the Year
- 2020



Best Advance in Compliance - 2019



Learning Designer of the Year - 2019



Learning Provider of the Year - 2019



Best Commercial Programme - 2019

References

1: [Towards Maturity - L&D's relationship with data](#)

2: [Professionalising Learning and Development](#)

3: [Gartner's Data and Analytics Maturity Model 2017](#)

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