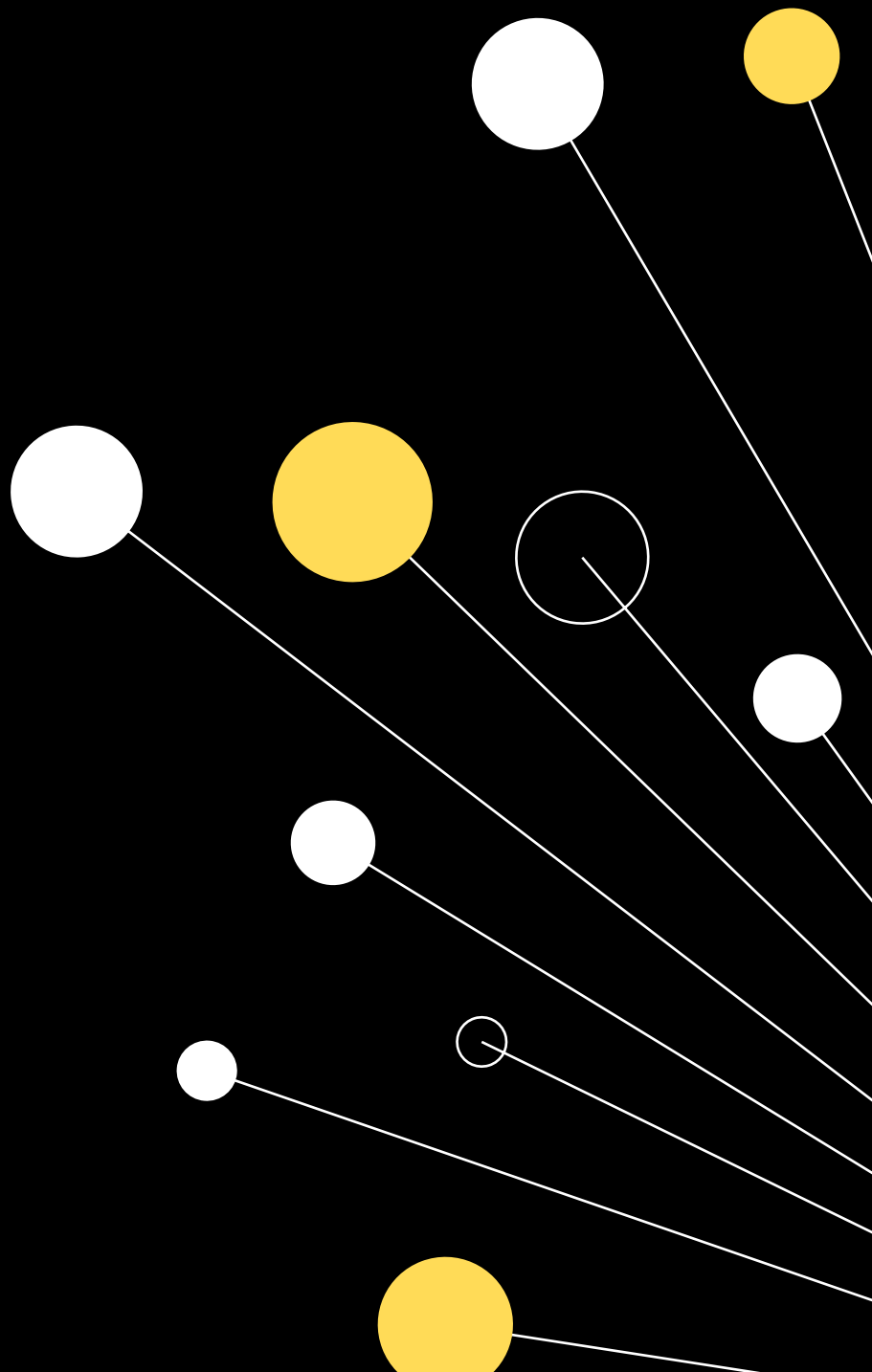




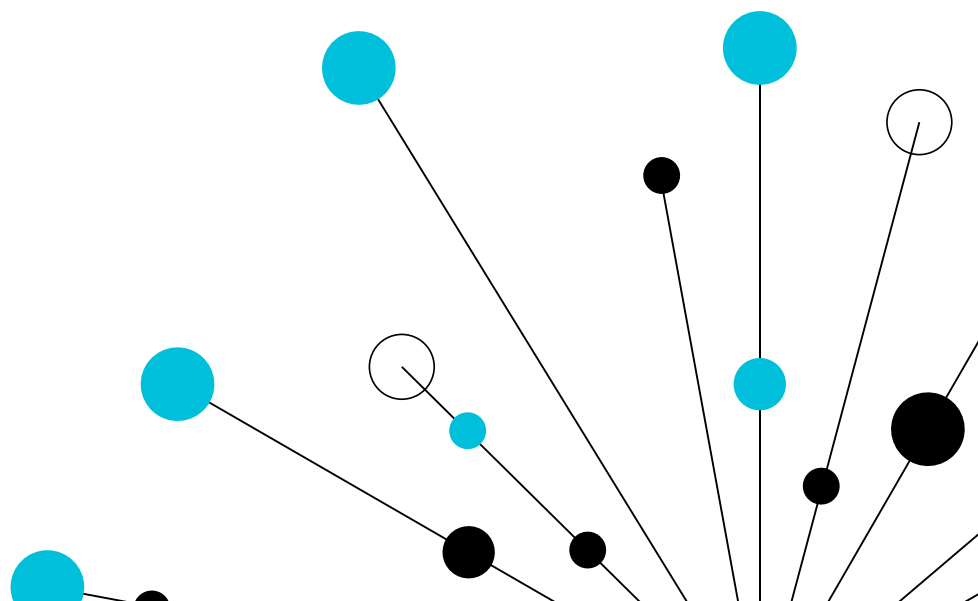
# Why skills alone are not enough

How continuity, connection, and collaboration  
are bridging the application gap and creating  
real business change.



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# Introduction

We believe that skills are just a proxy to real business change.

In today's economic landscape, new technologies are arriving fast and heavy. Our Data and AI Practice Director, David Pool, advises, "The world has seen 3 eras of general purpose technologies that have driven global growth and innovation - steam power, electricity and global digital communications. We are now entering the fourth - Artificial Intelligence and what economists are calling the age of intelligent machines." These new advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud, and data can be a boost to business—but only if organisations learn to use those technologies and convert those learnings into applied business change.

"Success rests on the ability of people to progress in their capabilities and collaborate," says Julia Dear, our Chief Product Officer at QA. "When every company has the same shiny tools upgrading at sci-fi speeds, businesses will suffer, unless their talent learns to use that technology and convert those lessons to real-world value."

The problem? Corporate learning, in its current form, is broken.

We believe there is a way to improve corporate learning. This short ebook shares a few things that we've discovered during our nearly 40 years partnering with FTSE 100 and Fortune 1000 organisations to transform their talent through applied learning. Some of them may surprise you.



## Skills vs. business change

Most corporate learning programmes aren't cutting it. Almost 60% of employees say they're interested in upskilling and training, but 57% of workers are bored and take learning into their own hands.

Harvard Business Review

Technology changes quickly, but learning programmes often lag behind – not just in content, but in format. Learners are isolated, often taking courses alone, and they miss out on real-world collaboration and application. Employees seeking to grow and adopt new change are often compelled to endure long, monotonous training videos with uninspiring graphics, half-listening to droning voiceovers and retaining only a fraction of the information.

In this environment, measuring the success of the modules against a business's success — an increase in sales, boosted customer satisfaction, better brand awareness — is nearly impossible. Instead, the rubric hinges on isolated key performance indicators (KPIs), like completion rates and certificates earned.

Yet learning is more important than ever. More organisations than ever are looking to digitally transform, upgrade, and grow – in order to avoid losses amounting to some \$5.5 trillion caused by product delays – impaired competitiveness, and loss of business.

According to a recent IDC report, "A widening IT skills shortage is dogging organisations in all industries and across all regions... Nearly two-thirds (62%) of IT leaders tell IDC that a lack of skills has resulted in missed revenue growth objectives. More than 60% say it has led to quality problems and a loss of customer satisfaction overall. IDC predicts that by 2026, more than 90% of organisations worldwide will feel similar pain, amounting to some \$5.5 trillion in losses."

But the truth is, you can't transform your company without first transforming your people. Fundamental change begins with showing employees how to apply new skills together and in context with training that actually works.

We believe effective training has several elements that are often missed: Continuity for the learner. Connection for the business. Collaboration for teams, to apply skills together. These "3Cs" join learning to the bigger business goals: true change through true transformation of your people.

**60%**

of employees are interested in upskilling

**62%**

of IT leaders cite lack of skills for missed revenue growth

**\$5.5 trillion**

loss worldwide by 2026 due to lack of skills

# Continuity for the learner

People crave practical application of knowledge. We're seeing rumblings of discontent that standard service management training is great at helping businesses and individuals understand the subject but fails to help people understand how to put that knowledge into practice.

**Paul Wigzel, QA Capability Lead in IT Service Management**

Today, much of corporate learning is piecemeal. Even if it exists inside a single Learning Management System (LMS or LMX), learning is probably sourced from multiple providers, who in turn use multiple external contractors. It's not designed to be seamlessly joined together, and as a result it is often not applied.

The missing element? Continuity.

Continuity protects against one of the biggest threats in corporate learning: the application gap. As learners move through different modalities, and as they go from learning to mastery, there's often a dissonance that gets in the way of applying knowledge back to real business problems.

"Too many organisations spend most of their time and effort on core learning," says Julia Dear. "While core learning is important, this stage has most to do with simple attendance and consumption of content without any application, assessment, or practice. The risk of this behaviour is an enterprise full of associates that learn in a silo, lack true experience that can only be built by implementing and practicing their skill, and simply 'check the box' that they have been 'trained'. This is the 'Application Gap' that we, at QA, address daily with clients to drive business outcomes and ROI through applied ideas."

Continuity ensures both the organisation and the learner benefit from a cohesive experience. A consistent, end-to-end, fully-tailored approach to learning not only creates greater speed and efficiency in learning, but also elicits more workplace application and business impact.

The Learning & Development world is now able to use AI to draft, update, and manage courses. But AI cannot bridge the application gap. Nor can it foster real change. That's where human intelligence and machine intelligence work together to create a continuous, connected, and collaborative learning system that drives real change.



## Connection for the business

80% of senior executives believe coordination across functions was crucial to growth – but “only 25 percent of respondents described their organisations as ‘effective’ at sharing knowledge across boundaries.

**McKinsey study**

We believe that connection across the business starts with corporate learning.

Isolated learning initiatives fall short without integration into the broader organisational framework. At QA, we engage comprehensively across all sectors of the organisation, from engineering and technology to marketing and sales, leadership, strategy, and change management. We understand the dynamics between these diverse teams and work to develop integrated solutions that transcend silos. We foster a cohesive, system-relevant approach.

Skills and learning need organisational context and connection. Otherwise they remain in a silo and nothing happens. This effect is amplified in the AI era, as it becomes increasingly important for people to work together to truly understand our increasingly-rich data sources and make impactful, deeply human decisions. Karima Boulahoual, our Marketing Curriculum Manager, explains it this way. “AI in Marketing could turn customers to mere data points if efficiency is prioritised over empathy. Truly impactful customer experiences are built by combining data insights with authentic human connections and understanding.”

At the end of the day, learning has one purpose: change.

Programme success should be measured by business outcomes such as increased sales, enhanced customer satisfaction, and improved brand awareness, rather than traditional learning metrics. This outcome-based evaluation ensures that learning supports organisation-wide goals, connecting people.

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but only...

**25%**

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# Collaboration within and across teams

80% of companies plan to accelerate their digital transformations. But only 30% of digital transformations succeed.

**Data from Boston Consulting Group**

Successful organisations are collaborative: their people and teams learn together and work together. In the face of digital disruption and the new AI era, collaboration becomes even more important. Collaboration must occur both within teams, and across them.

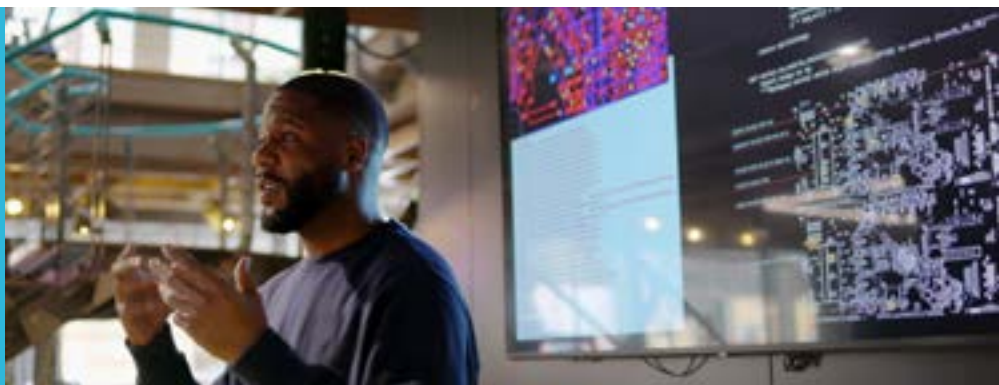
Within the Information Technology (IT) space alone, IDC states that “the three domains that are core to GenAI engineering — data, models, and technology use cases — are traditionally ‘owned’ by distinct teams that do not always work together ... Collaboration is essential, because the key decisions that GenAI engineering focus on must be heavily influenced by multiple perspectives.” In other words, teams must learn to collaborate in order to innovate together – that is, to truly connect a business problem with a solution.

Collaboration is equally important across departments, because digital transformation requires an integrated strategy. The Boston Consulting Group identifies that this integrated strategy, along with leadership commitment and high-calibre talent, are critical to increasing the likelihood of success.

Learning new skills and adapting them to your organisation is key, but real change happens when your teams take ownership of that knowledge and start to work together. We believe we need to get your teams collaborating, while they are still in a learning environment. Allowing them to start to apply their knowledge, work with others to synthesise their new skills, to create new ideas and start the transition back into the workflow

## 80%

of companies plan to accelerate their digital transformations



# Conclusion

Process and people are going to beat technology every time.

**Katrina Redmond, CIO at Eaton**

It has never been more important to get learning right. IDC predicts that by 2027, 40% current roles will be redefined or eliminated across G2000 organisations due to advancing applications of GenAI. Thus, we believe the future belongs to learning organisations that are able to learn, master and apply new skills at speed and scale, combining the power of human and machine intelligence.

Our consistent, connected, and collaborative approach to end-to-end learning has uniquely positioned us as a best learning partner to harness digital disruption through the power of people. Our modalities – apprenticeships, self-paced, instructor-led, and blended/tailored learning – are designed to work in concert. Our deep bench of experts and highest partner status with key technology experts means we're the first to know of new advancements, so your business is first to gain the benefits.

Over 4,000 organisations trust QA for learning that creates real business change. Find out why today.

