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Preface

For decades, learning and development has been measured by the wrong signals. We have counted completions, tracked attendance, and asked learners whether they enjoyed the food at a training venue. These approaches have given us data, but rarely insight. They have told us what learners did, but not whether learning changed anything of importance.

This has created a credibility gap. Business leaders want to know whether learning investments are driving cultural change, building skills, shifting behaviours, improving performance, or strengthening the networks that make organisations resilient. Traditional L&D measurement approaches have struggled to provide these answers, often reducing impact reporting to a handful of anecdotes or vanity metrics.

The truth is, learners leave digital footprints everywhere in the workplace, and those footprints tell powerful stories about what is changing. They show us whether employees are connecting differently, whether managers are leading better, whether people are producing more, or whether the organisation is adapting faster. But those footprints are scattered across HR systems, learning platforms, collaboration tools, performance dashboards, and employee surveys. Until now, L&D teams have lacked a framework for bringing them together.

The **GROWTH model** was designed to meet this need. It provides a simple but robust way to measure learning impact across five themes: Culture, Skills, Behaviour, Performance, and Human Networks. It guides practitioners to identify the right signals, in the right places, and to use them to tell stories that matter to the business.

This book is for anyone who wants to move beyond vanity metrics. It is for learning professionals who want to demonstrate value, for HR leaders who want to align learning with talent strategy, and for executives who want to see the real return on investment in their people.

The chapters ahead are structured to provide both theory and practice. We start by exploring why traditional measures fall short, then introduce the GROWTH model and its five themes. We look at where to find the most useful data, and how to capture the voice of learners through carefully designed surveys. We then show how to make sense of the data, communicate insights to stakeholders, and turn measurement into action. Finally, we share examples of the model in practice, and look ahead to the future of learning measurement in an AI-driven world.

My hope is that by the end of this book, you will feel equipped not just to collect more data, but to measure what truly matters: the impact learning has on people, performance, and the culture of your organisation.

Chapter 1: The Trouble with Traditional L&D Metrics

For as long as most of us can remember, learning and development has been measured by numbers that are easy to collect but hard to justify. Course completions, attendance rates, post-event satisfaction surveys, these have been the staples of L&D reporting for decades. They create dashboards and colourful charts, but rarely do they answer the questions that business leaders are really asking.

Executives don't want to know how many people attended training. They want to know whether the training helped people sell more, make fewer errors, innovate faster, or collaborate more effectively. They want to know whether a programme helped the organisation adapt to change or build resilience for the future. The metrics we have relied on tell us very little about any of this.

The limits of completions and attendance

Counting completions has become the default language of L&D. We tell leaders that 10,000 courses were completed last year, or that 95% of the salesforce attended product training. While these numbers may look impressive, they tell us nothing about whether the learners applied what they learned, or whether the organisation saw any tangible benefit.

A completion only proves that a learner reached the end of a piece of content. It does not prove that they understood it, remembered it, or acted differently because of it. Attendance tells us even less, being in the room is not the same as learning.

The smile sheet problem

Post-training satisfaction surveys, often called "smile sheets", have been another staple of L&D measurement. Learners are asked to rate the quality of the trainer, the relevance of the course, or even the food served at lunch. The results are presented as proof of success: if learners liked the training, then surely it must have been effective.

But enjoyment is not the same as impact. A charismatic trainer can leave participants smiling without changing their behaviours. Conversely, a challenging programme that pushes learners outside their comfort zone may be rated poorly, even if it delivers lasting impact. Relying on smile sheets risks confusing entertainment with effectiveness.

Vanity metrics and lost credibility

The reliance on these limited measures has created a credibility problem for L&D. When senior leaders see dashboards filled with completions and satisfaction scores, they are often left wondering: *So what?* If the only evidence L&D can provide is how many people attended and whether they enjoyed themselves, it is difficult to secure investment or influence strategic decisions.

This lack of credible measurement also hurts learners. Without evidence of impact, learning can be dismissed as "nice to have" rather than essential to performance and growth. Programmes risk being cut when budgets are tight, not because they lack value, but because they lack proof.

The business wants answers, not activity counts

At the same time, organisations are under more pressure than ever to adapt. They need cultures that support innovation, employees who build new skills at speed, behaviours that align with strategy, performance improvements that show up on the bottom line, and networks that strengthen collaboration. These are the outcomes leaders are looking for, and they are precisely the outcomes traditional L&D metrics fail to capture.

A need for a new approach

The gap between what L&D measures and what the business values has grown too wide to ignore. To close it, we need a framework that connects learning to outcomes that matter: culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks. We need to move beyond counting completions to demonstrating impact.

This is where the GROWTH model comes in. This book aims to introduce the framework, explain its five themes, and show how it helps L&D professionals speak a language the business understands.

Chapter 2: Introducing the GROWTH Model

If traditional learning metrics leave us stuck with vanity data, then what is the alternative? How can L&D demonstrate value in ways that business leaders will recognise and trust? This is where the **GROWTH model** comes in.

The GROWTH model was designed to give L&D professionals a practical framework for measuring what matters. It is built on a simple principle: Impact created by Employee developmental activity will manifest across at least one of five broad themes, *Culture, Skills, Behaviour, Performance, and Human Networks*. By focusing measurement on these themes, L&D teams can connect their work directly to outcomes that shape organisational success.

Why a New Model Was Needed

Over the years, many frameworks have attempted to move L&D beyond completions and smile sheets. Some, like Kirkpatrick's evaluation model, gave us a language for thinking about levels of impact, but left practitioners with little guidance on *how* to actually collect meaningful data in modern workplaces. Others have focused narrowly on ROI, reducing learning to financial return, which is often too simplistic for the complex environments organisations operate in.

The GROWTH model was created to bridge this gap. It is neither overly theoretical nor narrowly financial. Instead, it provides a structured but flexible way of linking learning to the outcomes leaders care about most.

The Five Themes of the GROWTH Model

Employee development activity should lead to change within the business. This change can be seen in the following areas

1. Culture Change

Learning has the power to shape organisational culture. This theme focuses on whether learning experiences are shifting values, norms, and mindsets. Are leaders modelling new behaviours? Do employees feel psychologically safe to take risks and learn from mistakes? Are teams embracing continuous learning as part of daily work?

Example: After a leadership development programme, are managers holding more frequent coaching conversations with their teams? Do employees describe the organisation as more supportive of growth and experimentation?

2. Skills Growth

At its core, learning is about building capability. This theme looks at whether employees are gaining the technical, digital, or soft skills they need to perform today and prepare for tomorrow.

Example: After a digital skills programme, can employees demonstrate competence in using new collaboration tools? Are they completing more advanced content in areas like data analysis or cybersecurity?

3. Behaviour Change

Knowledge and skills only matter if they translate into new actions. This theme focuses on observable changes in day-to-day behaviour. Are employees applying what they learned on the job? Are managers reinforcing and supporting those behaviours?

Example: Following sales training, are employees adopting new questioning techniques in client meetings? Are safety training participants following updated protocols consistently?

4. Performance Change

Ultimately, organisations invest in learning to improve results. This theme connects learning to measurable outcomes in productivity, efficiency, and quality. Performance metrics provide some of the clearest signals of impact when they are identified carefully.

Example: After process improvement training, do teams produce more units per hour? Do error rates decrease? Are customer satisfaction scores rising as employees apply new service skills?

5. Human Network Growth

In a world where work is increasingly collaborative, networks matter. This theme explores how learning influences the connections between people. Are employees building stronger networks across teams, functions, or geographies? Are communities of practice emerging?

Example: After a mentoring initiative, do we see more cross-functional relationships? Are employees engaging more actively in enterprise collaboration platforms to share knowledge and solve problems together?

How the Model Works in Practice

The GROWTH model encourages practitioners to start with a clear theme, then identify metrics or data sources aligned to it. The process for an L&D practitioner is first to ask ‘which of the 5 themes will the training be designed to affect. Once a theme has been chosinen, the designer must ask ‘how will change within this theme be manifest within the business?’ this leads them to identify a metric. For example, if the goal is culture change, the

practitioner might measure shifts in employee sentiment or leadership behaviours. If the goal is performance change, they might track productivity ratios or sales conversions. It is imperative that a metric is identified BEFORE and learning design takes place.

This thematic approach helps L&D professionals move beyond generic metrics. Instead of saying “1,000 people completed training,” they can say “We saw a 15% improvement in cross-functional collaboration, measured by calendar data and survey responses, following our programme.” The difference is striking: one is a count of activity, the other is a story of impact.

Speaking the Language of the Business

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of the GROWTH model is that it helps L&D speak the same language as the rest of the business. Executives already think in terms of culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks. These are the levers they pull to drive change. When L&D frames its impact in these terms, it is no longer on the defensive, justifying its existence with vanity metrics. Instead, it becomes a strategic partner.

Chapter 3: Why the GROWTH Model, and Why Now?

Whenever a new measurement framework is introduced, the natural question arises: *How is this different from what already exists?* For decades, the most cited model in L&D has been **Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation**, and more recently, the **Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model (LTEM)** has gained traction as a modern alternative. Both frameworks have strengths and have shaped the way practitioners think about impact. Yet both also leave critical gaps, gaps that the GROWTH model is designed to address.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels: Enduring but Limited

Kirkpatrick's model, developed in the 1950s, organises evaluation into four levels:

1. Reaction, what learners thought and felt about the training.
2. Learning, what knowledge or skills they acquired.
3. Behaviour, whether they applied it in the workplace.
4. Results, the final impact on business outcomes.

Its enduring appeal lies in its simplicity. The four levels are easy to understand and provide a clear hierarchy. It has helped generations of L&D professionals think about going beyond reaction surveys and considering behaviour and results.

But the model also has weaknesses. It is largely descriptive, offering little practical guidance on *how* to measure each level, especially results. Many organisations stop at Level 1 (reaction) or Level 2 (learning) because Levels 3 and 4 are much harder to measure. The hierarchy also suggests that each level is more valuable than the last, which can lead practitioners to undervalue important insights at the earlier stages. Most critically, Kirkpatrick reflects the assumptions of its era: training was classroom-based, data was scarce, and culture and networks were rarely considered part of evaluation. In today's digital, connected workplaces, its scope feels narrow.

LTEM: A Step Forward, but Still Incomplete

Recognising these limitations, Robert Brinkerhoff and Will Thalheimer introduced LTEM as a more detailed and practical framework. LTEM sets out eight tiers of evaluation, ranging from attendance and activity (the weakest forms of evidence) through knowledge, decision-making, and transfer, all the way to sustained performance results. Its strength lies in making clear distinctions between weak, moderate, and strong evidence of learning. It challenges L&D to go beyond counting completions and to focus on whether learning is transferred and applied in meaningful ways.

Yet LTEM, for all its detail, remains primarily concerned with the process of learning itself. It is excellent at categorising evidence of transfer and performance, but it does not provide a

broader narrative framework that resonates with business leaders. Executives rarely ask, “At what LTEM tier are we measuring this?” Instead, they want to know whether culture is shifting, whether employees are gaining new skills, whether behaviours are changing, whether performance is improving, and whether networks are growing stronger. LTEM helps practitioners sharpen their evaluation methods, but it does not offer a language that connects naturally to organisational strategy.

The GROWTH Model: A Timely Alternative

The GROWTH model builds on the strengths of legacy approaches while addressing their gaps. Like Kirkpatrick, it is simple and memorable. Like LTEM, it emphasises evidence that is credible and actionable. But unlike both, it is designed for the modern workplace, where digital footprints, network analysis, and employee voice offer new possibilities for measurement, and where Content is becoming increasingly generated by AI.

In an AI age, we need structured data and a universal approach.

Where Kirkpatrick focuses on levels, and LTEM focuses on tiers, the GROWTH model focuses on **themes**, *culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks*. These themes map directly onto the priorities of organisations today. They capture the systemic nature of learning impact, recognising that culture and networks are as important as individual knowledge or behaviour. They also provide practitioners with a practical process: start by identifying the theme that matters most, then look for metrics and data sources that bring it to life.

Why Now?

The GROWTH model arrives at a time when expectations of L&D are higher than ever. Organisations face rapid change, skills shortages, and cultural challenges that cannot be solved by training alone. Leaders want evidence that learning investments are making a difference, and they want it in terms they understand. At the same time, the rise of AI and digital workplace tools means that the data needed to measure impact is more accessible than ever before.

Kirkpatrick provided a foundation, and LTEM sharpened the tools. But the GROWTH model provides a bridge: a way to connect modern data sources to themes that resonate with the business. It offers both a framework for L&D professionals and a language for executives, a way to measure what matters in the modern age.

Positioning the Models Together

It would be a mistake to see the GROWTH model as a rejection of earlier frameworks. Instead, it should be viewed as an evolution. Practitioners can use LTEM’s tiers to assess the strength of evidence within each theme, and they can map Kirkpatrick’s levels onto parts of the model. But GROWTH provides the organising principle, the narrative that ties everything together. It is not just about evaluating training; it is about demonstrating learning’s role in

shaping culture, growing skills, changing behaviours, improving performance, and strengthening networks.

Chapter 4: Understanding the Five Themes

The GROWTH model is built on five themes: **Culture, Skills, Behaviour, Performance, and Human Networks**. Each theme represents a different way in which learning can shape an organisation. Understanding these themes in detail is essential, because they provide the foundation for identifying the right metrics and telling the right stories about impact.

Rather than treating learning as a one-dimensional activity, the model recognises that impact happens in multiple ways, sometimes subtle, but always measurable, and always meaningful.

1. Culture Change

Culture is often described as "the way we do things around here." It is the shared values, norms, and assumptions that shape how people behave and interact. Learning plays a critical role in influencing culture, whether by reinforcing existing norms or creating space for new ones.

Measuring cultural change can feel intangible, but it is possible when we look at the right signals. Engagement surveys, sentiment analysis of employee feedback, and leadership behaviours all provide useful insights.

- **What to look for**:
    - Do leaders demonstrate learning behaviours such as curiosity, coaching, and knowledge sharing?
    - Are employees reporting greater psychological safety, the freedom to ask questions, make mistakes, and learn from them?
    - Do people describe the organisation as a place where growth is valued and supported?
- **Example**: After launching a leadership development programme, one organisation measured the frequency of coaching conversations reported by employees. Within six months, the number of employees saying their manager "regularly coaches me" increased by 22%. This signalled not just new skills for managers, but a cultural shift toward more supportive leadership.

2. Skills Growth

Skills are the most obvious outcome of learning, but they are also the most often misunderstood. It is not enough to know that employees completed a course; what matters is whether they actually gained new capabilities and can use them in practice.

Skills can be measured through self-assessments, skills inventories, role requirements, and manager feedback. Increasingly, organisations are also using skill taxonomies and digital credentials to track capability development more systematically.

- **What to look for**:
    - Are employees developing skills aligned with strategic priorities (e.g., digital, sustainability, leadership)?
    - Can learners progress from foundational to advanced levels of skill over time?
    - Are employees demonstrating transferable skills, such as problem solving or collaboration, in new contexts?
- **Example**: A global bank tracked completions of advanced data analysis content against its internal skills taxonomy. Within a year, the proportion of employees rated as "skilled" in data literacy rose from 15% to 37%. This growth in capability was then linked to improved adoption of analytics tools across business units.

3. Behaviour Change

Skills only matter if they are applied. Behaviour change is about what people actually do differently after learning. It is the bridge between capability and performance.

Measuring behaviour change often requires combining different data sources, observation, productivity tools, peer feedback, and learner self-reports. The goal is to see whether people are embedding new habits and approaches into their day-to-day work.

- **What to look for**:
    - Are sales teams using new questioning techniques in client meetings?
    - Do employees follow updated safety protocols consistently?
    - Are managers holding more frequent and constructive performance conversations?
- **Example**: After introducing inclusive leadership training, one organisation analysed transcripts from employee feedback platforms. They found a 40% increase in references to managers "seeking input from everyone," suggesting a tangible shift in how leaders engaged with their teams.

4. Performance Change

For many business leaders, performance is the most compelling theme. This is where learning translates into outcomes that can be expressed in ratios, percentages, or financial results.

Performance change is best measured using existing business metrics, sales conversions, error rates, customer satisfaction, productivity per hour, rather than creating new L&D-specific measures. The key is to align learning programmes with metrics that already matter to the business.

- **What to look for**:
    - Are error rates falling after technical training?

    - Are new hires becoming productive faster after onboarding?
    - Is employee output increasing in line with new skills or processes?
- **Example**: A retailer introduced a product knowledge programme for store staff. By linking completion data to sales system data, they found that staff who completed the training achieved 18% higher sales per transaction than those who had not yet completed it. This was direct evidence of learning driving performance.

5. Human Network Growth

Organisations do not succeed through individual effort alone. Collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and social connections are critical drivers of performance and resilience. This theme focuses on how learning fosters stronger and more effective networks.

Network growth can be measured through collaboration tools, organisational network analysis (ONA), mentoring programme data, and even social platform activity. The goal is to see whether learning creates stronger ties between people and accelerates the flow of knowledge.

- **What to look for**:
    - Are employees forming more cross-functional connections after participating in programmes?
    - Are communities of practice becoming more active?
    - Do mentoring relationships lead to new opportunities for growth and mobility?
- **Example**: A technology company analysed Slack data before and after launching a peer-to-peer learning initiative. They found that cross-functional message volume increased by 30%, and that employees were more likely to seek help outside their immediate team. This demonstrated that learning was not only building skills, but also expanding the organisation's social capital.

Why All Five Themes Matter

Each theme offers a different lens on learning impact. On their own, they are valuable. Together, they provide a holistic picture. An organisation that only measures skills, for example, may miss whether those skills are being applied. A company focused only on performance may miss the cultural and network factors that make performance sustainable.

By considering all five, L&D can tell richer stories. A leadership programme might increase skills (coaching capability), shift behaviours (more feedback conversations), strengthen culture (psychological safety), improve performance (higher engagement scores), and grow networks (peer mentoring). Each theme reinforces the others, creating a fuller picture of learning's value.

Chapter 5: Where to Find Data

Once we understand the five themes of the GROWTH model, the next challenge is knowing where to look for evidence. Learners leave digital footprints in almost every system they touch, and these footprints tell important stories about what has changed. The difficulty is not that data is scarce, but that the most useful data is often scattered across the organisation, and rarely sits within the control of the learning team.

Learning platforms will often claim to provide "rich analytics," but what they usually report is completions, time spent, or test scores. These are signals of activity, but they tell us little about whether learning has shaped culture, built skills, influenced behaviour, improved performance, or strengthened networks. To measure those outcomes, we need to look beyond the learning system and into the wider organisational data landscape.

HR Systems

HR systems such as Workday or SuccessFactors provide valuable context about who learners are and the roles they occupy. They hold demographic data such as age, tenure, gender, seniority, and location, along with job descriptions that give an indication of expected skills. When combined with learning data, these insights allow us to segment results and identify patterns across different groups.

For example, if we want to measure **culture change**, HR data can help us compare whether employees at different levels of seniority report the same perceptions of psychological safety after a leadership initiative. When examining **skills growth**, job descriptions can be mapped to a capability framework, then aligned with learning content to show whether employees in specific roles are building the skills the organisation expects. **Behaviour change** can be explored by comparing self-reported application of learning across demographics, while **performance change** might be examined by looking at whether productivity shifts are consistent across locations. Finally, HR systems can also help us track **network growth**, for example by identifying whether certain roles act as hubs in collaboration networks before and after learning programmes.

Learning Systems

Learning platforms such as Degreed, LinkedIn Learning, or Area9 capture what content has been consumed, how long learners spent on it, and sometimes the difficulty level of the material. On the surface, this data only provides evidence of participation. But when used within the GROWTH framework, it can be connected to real outcomes.

If the focus is **skills growth**, completions can be mapped to a skills taxonomy, showing whether learners are progressing from basic to advanced levels in a capability that matters to the business. For **behaviour change**, microlearning completions can be compared with survey data to see whether confidence and application rates are improving. Learning data can also contribute to measuring **culture change**, for example if we see a growing preference for

collaborative or peer-generated learning content, signalling that employees are engaging with learning in new ways. And while learning platforms rarely hold direct **performance** or **network** data, they can act as the "link", identifying who has engaged in relevant training before connecting that engagement to business outcomes in other systems.

Workplace Social Platforms

Collaboration tools such as Viva Engage or Slack provide a window into informal learning and social interaction. They show what topics employees are interested in, who they turn to for help, and how knowledge flows across the organisation.

In terms of **culture change**, social platforms can reveal whether employees are discussing learning more openly or whether leaders are role-modelling learning behaviours by engaging in communities of practice. For **skills growth**, we might observe emerging technical topics being shared peer-to-peer, indicating that employees are building and teaching each other new capabilities. **Behaviour change** can be tracked through the language of support and collaboration, for example if more employees are asking for feedback or offering coaching to colleagues. **Performance change** may show up indirectly, as problems are solved faster when employees use these platforms to crowdsource answers. Finally, **network growth** is perhaps most clearly visible here, as social graph analysis can reveal whether cross-functional relationships are strengthening after collaborative learning initiatives.

Productivity Tools

Everyday productivity tools such as Outlook, SharePoint, or Viva Insights tell us how employees actually work. They capture meeting patterns, communication flows, document collaboration, and even how managers interact with their teams.

When analysed through the GROWTH lens, this data becomes particularly valuable. For **behaviour change**, it might reveal that managers are holding more regular one-to-one meetings after leadership training. For **culture change**, it could show that after a time management programme, employees are sending fewer after-hours emails, suggesting healthier boundaries and a shift in norms. For **skills growth**, we might track whether employees are increasingly using SharePoint to create or edit documents related to newly learned competencies. **Performance change** can be demonstrated if meeting durations are reduced following training in collaboration tools, leading to measurable productivity gains. And for **network growth**, calendar and email data can be used to assess whether employees are broadening their collaboration patterns beyond their immediate teams after cross-functional development initiatives.

Employee Opinion

Employee surveys and feedback mechanisms provide the voice of the learner, an essential complement to the digital traces left in other systems. Traditional engagement surveys, pulse

checks, or course evaluations all have value, but the GROWTH model's structured surveys (described in the next chapter) offer a more reliable way to capture perceptions.

Opinion data is particularly useful for assessing **culture change**, as it can reveal whether employees feel more supported in their learning or whether psychological safety has improved. For **skills growth**, self-reported confidence levels can act as strong predictors of application. When exploring **behaviour change**, open-text feedback about barriers often points to systemic issues such as lack of time, tools, or managerial support. For **performance change**, learners can tell us directly whether they believe their productivity has improved following a programme. And for **network growth**, surveys can surface whether mentoring, collaboration, or peer learning are seen as accessible and effective.

Performance Systems

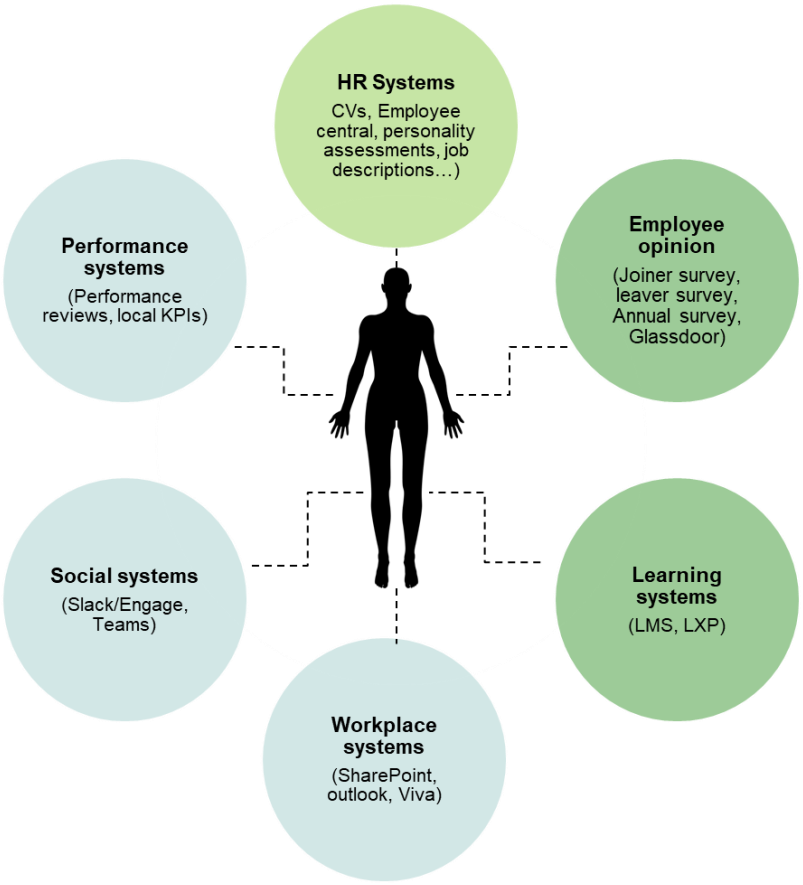
Performance systems provide some of the clearest and most compelling evidence for business leaders. They vary widely, from basic spreadsheets to sophisticated analytics platforms, but their value lies in the fact that they track outcomes the business already cares about, sales per call, error rates per transaction, widgets produced per hour, customer satisfaction scores, or time to productivity for new hires.

In the GROWTH model, performance systems are most directly linked to **performance change**, but they can also evidence other themes. For instance, **skills growth** may be reflected in reduced error rates after technical training. **Behaviour change** may be visible if adoption of a new process shows up as increased throughput. **Culture change** might be connected to performance if teams that report stronger learning mindsets also show higher productivity. And **network growth** can sometimes be observed through outcomes that require collaboration, such as co-authored deals or cross-functional project delivery.

Bringing the Sources Together

No single system tells the whole story. HR data tells us who learners are, learning systems show what content they engaged with, social platforms reveal how they collaborate, productivity tools show how they work, employee opinion explains what they think and feel, and performance systems demonstrate the outcomes that follow. The power comes when these sources are woven together through the five themes of the GROWTH model.

For example, a leadership programme might draw on HR data to segment participants, learning system data to confirm content engagement, survey data to capture confidence and barriers, productivity tools to show whether managers hold more regular one-to-ones, and performance systems to measure changes in team engagement scores. Looked at separately, each of these datasets is interesting. Looked at together, they form a coherent story of culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks, a story that business leaders recognise as evidence of impact.



The GROWTH Model builds a data ecosystem around the learner

Using the Learner ID (employee number, email address) as the common key across systems allows a relational data structure to be built by your Analytics team. Gallus Insight can also help organisations shape the model based on any individual companies needs

Chapter 6: Using the GROWTH Model Approach to Surveys

System data provides hard evidence of what learners do, but it often leaves us guessing at *why*. Why did confidence rise in one group but not another? Why are behaviours shifting in some teams but not across the organisation? Why are some employees applying new skills while others struggle?

Surveys fill this gap. They give learners a voice and add context to the digital footprints left in systems. However, surveys in L&D have historically been poorly designed and poorly used. Too often, they are long, inconsistent, or focused on trivial details. They gather answers but not insights.

The GROWTH model addresses these weaknesses by introducing two standardised, AI-ready survey formats: the Learner Experience Survey and the Learning Culture Survey. Together, they provide a reliable, low-effort way to capture meaningful feedback across the five themes.

The Problem with Traditional L&D Surveys

Surveys have long been part of the L&D toolkit, but their reputation has suffered because of the way they are used. Many organisations design different surveys for different programmes, meaning that no two datasets can be compared. Others fill their surveys with questions about catering, parking, or trainer style, issues that may influence the learner's day, but not the impact of the learning itself. When the responses come in, large volumes of comments are reduced to a few positive quotes to decorate a slide deck, while the rest are ignored.

Even when learners are asked substantive questions, they are often forced to choose from drop-down lists. This simplifies analysis for the L&D team but limits what learners can say. In reality, our assumptions about what matters are rarely complete, and when learners are restricted to our categories, we risk missing the very insights we need most. In the age of AI, this approach is outdated. Modern text analytics tools make it easy to analyse large volumes of free text quickly and reliably. The challenge is no longer about processing responses; it is about asking the right questions.

The Learner Experience Survey

The first GROWTH survey format focuses on specific programmes or learning activities. It is intentionally short, with just five questions:

1. Describe the experience in a single word.
2. How confident are you in applying what you learned? (1–10 scale)
3. Why do you say that?
4. What is going to stop you performing to your best in the area covered?
5. What else would you like to tell us?

At first glance, these questions may look simple, but they are designed to generate rich insight with minimal burden on the learner. The single-word descriptor is low effort to provide, but enormously useful for analysis. It can be quickly categorised into positive or negative sentiment, compared across programmes, or sliced by demographic group. If one group consistently describes an e-learning module as “boring” while another group calls it “clear,” we gain actionable intelligence about how different audiences experience the same content.

The confidence question is particularly powerful. Unlike test scores, which measure recall in a controlled environment, confidence predicts whether knowledge will transfer into the workplace. A learner who scores themselves as an eight or nine out of ten is signalling readiness to apply new skills. By contrast, a learner scoring three or four is telling us that barriers remain, whether in their own understanding, their work environment, or both.

The follow-up question, “Why do you say that?”, ensures we do not just collect numbers without context. It invites learners to explain their reasoning in their own words, producing rich qualitative data that AI can analyse for recurring themes. Similarly, the question about barriers acknowledges that learning does not happen in isolation. A perfectly designed programme may still fail if managers do not support it, if time is scarce, or if tools are missing. By capturing these systemic blockers, L&D gains evidence that can be fed back to the business to drive change.

Finally, the open “What else would you like to tell us?” question recognises that learners will often raise issues we had not anticipated. It keeps the door open for unexpected but valuable feedback, whether it is praise for an exceptional trainer, criticism of a delivery method, or reflections on how the content could be improved.

Together, these five questions give us both quantitative signals and qualitative insight. They are short enough to respect the learner’s time, yet rich enough to enable analysis across the five themes: cultural perceptions through word choice, skills growth through confidence ratings, behavioural barriers through reported obstacles, performance potential through links to system data, and network growth through mentions of collaboration or peer support.

Further, these questions are designed to solicit answers useful for AI content design engines.

The Learning Culture Survey

The second GROWTH survey format looks beyond individual programmes to assess the organisation's overall learning culture. It typically contains 25 multiple-choice questions, grouped evenly across five areas: leadership, collaboration, psychological safety, importance, and accessibility. Each question offers four response options, representing increasing levels of maturity.

For example, under leadership, respondents might be asked: *"How actively do managers encourage and support their team members' development?"* The least mature response is that managers do not actively encourage development at all. The most mature response is that continuous, rich development conversations are the norm. Each response is scored on a 1–4 scale, providing a clear, quantifiable picture of maturity levels.

Every theme also includes a free-text question. In the leadership example, respondents might be asked: *"How can leadership better support and champion learning in your organisation?"* This combination of quantitative and qualitative input ensures both comparability and depth. Scores allow us to benchmark and track progress over time, while free-text reveals what matters most to employees themselves.

Conducting this survey confidentially rather than anonymously adds further value. When demographic data can be linked to responses, analytics teams can explore differences across department, seniority, or location. This allows the organisation to see not only where its culture is strong or weak, but also how experiences vary across different groups.

Why the GROWTH Approach Works

Both survey formats share three important characteristics. First, they are low effort for learners. Answering five questions or choosing among four maturity levels is far less onerous than the long, unfocused surveys many employees are used to. Second, they are standardised, which means results can be aggregated and compared across time, programmes, and demographics. This is essential for meaningful analysis. Third, they are designed for the modern age of AI. By deliberately including free-text responses, the surveys provide material for automated thematic analysis, making it possible to detect patterns and insights at scale without losing nuance.

Most importantly, the surveys produce insights that are actionable. If learners tell us they lack manager support, this is not a trivial complaint but a systemic barrier to impact. If cultural maturity scores show low psychological safety, the implication is that learning cannot thrive until deeper organisational issues are addressed. By bringing these insights to senior leaders, L&D can move from reporting activity to influencing change.

Combining Surveys with System Data

On their own, surveys provide valuable perspective. But their true power emerges when combined with system data. Imagine comparing confidence ratings from the learner experience survey with productivity data from performance systems. Or cross-referencing culture survey scores on collaboration with Outlook data on cross-team meeting patterns. By

bringing together the voice of the learner and the digital footprint of their work, the GROWTH model provides a 360-degree view of impact that is both credible and compelling.

This is where the GROWTH model stands head and shoulders above other methodologies.

Chapter 7: Making Sense of the Data

Collecting data is only half the battle. The real challenge lies in making sense of it. Too often, L&D teams report numbers without meaning: completions, attendance, or survey averages that fail to tell a compelling story. What matters is not the data itself, but the insights it provides and the actions it enables. The GROWTH model is designed not only to help practitioners identify the right signals but also to connect them in ways that create a credible narrative of impact.

Moving Beyond Numbers

It is tempting to focus on the quantitative. Numbers are easy to count and easy to display on a dashboard. Yet numbers without context are easily dismissed. If you tell a business leader that 3,000 people completed training, they will ask, “So what?” But if you tell them that the same 3,000 people went on to reduce error rates by 20% in the following quarter, the number suddenly has weight.

The reverse is also true: qualitative feedback without structure can be equally unhelpful. A folder full of learner comments may capture the “voice of the learner,” but without analysis it risks becoming anecdotal evidence rather than actionable insight. Making sense of data requires us to blend the quantitative and the qualitative, using each to explain and reinforce the other.

Triangulating Across Sources

One of the strengths of the GROWTH model is that it encourages triangulation, drawing from multiple sources to create a fuller picture. For example, HR data might tell us which employees took part in a leadership programme, survey data might reveal that their confidence in coaching has increased, and productivity data might show that their teams are holding more one-to-one meetings. Looked at individually, each dataset is interesting but incomplete. Together, they tell a clear story: the programme increased skills and confidence, those skills were applied in new behaviours, and those behaviours are beginning to shift the culture of team leadership.

Triangulation also helps reduce bias. Self-reported confidence might be inflated, but when it is supported by behavioural signals from productivity tools and outcome measures from performance systems, it becomes more credible. Conversely, if performance data improves but survey comments highlight persistent barriers, this may suggest the improvement is not sustainable unless those barriers are addressed.

Making Use of AI

In the past, one of the biggest obstacles to meaningful analysis was the effort required to handle free-text data. Organisations relied on drop-down lists and fixed categories simply because analysing thousands of open comments was too costly and time-consuming. Today, advances in AI have changed that. Modern tools can process large volumes of text rapidly, identify themes, and even detect sentiment with a high degree of accuracy.

This is particularly valuable for the GROWTH surveys. A question such as “Why do you say that?” generates insights that would once have been overwhelming to analyse. AI can now highlight recurring themes across demographics, surface unexpected issues, and even track how certain words cluster around specific programmes. Combined with numerical confidence scores, this creates a rich, multidimensional view of learner experience.

AI also helps L&D teams move from reactive to predictive. By analysing patterns over time, we can begin to anticipate where barriers are likely to arise, which programmes are most effective for specific demographics, or which cultural factors predict stronger performance outcomes. This does not replace human judgement, but it enhances our ability to tell stories backed by evidence.

Building Dashboards that Matter

Many L&D functions pride themselves on the dashboards they create, but too often these are designed around what the systems can report rather than what the business needs to know. A dashboard filled with completions and hours spent is unlikely to impress a senior executive. What leaders want are signals connected to outcomes: is culture shifting, are skills growing, are behaviours changing, is performance improving, are networks strengthening?

An effective GROWTH-aligned dashboard might show, for example, that after a leadership programme, managers reported a 30% increase in confidence in coaching, employees reported greater psychological safety in surveys, and productivity data showed more frequent one-to-one meetings. Presented together, these indicators create a coherent story across three themes: skills, behaviour, and culture. This is far more persuasive than any single metric on its own.

The design of dashboards should always start with the audience. Senior leaders may want high-level outcomes linked to strategy, while learning teams may need detailed data on specific programmes. The GROWTH framework provides a structure that allows both: a strategic view across the five themes, supported by the ability to drill down into the underlying data sources.

Telling the Story

Data on its own rarely changes minds. Stories do. The role of analysis is to create narratives that link learning to outcomes the business recognises. For example:

- “Following the onboarding redesign, new hires reached full productivity two weeks faster, saving the business the equivalent of 3,000 working days per year.”
- “After the inclusive leadership initiative, employees described their managers as ‘more open’ and ‘more supportive,’ and employee engagement scores rose by 12 points in teams where managers participated.”
- “The mentoring programme not only increased participants’ skills in project management but also expanded their networks, cross-functional collaboration messages in Slack rose by 25% in the six months following.”

Each of these statements combines quantitative evidence with qualitative insight, mapped clearly to the GROWTH themes. This is the kind of language that resonates with executives because it answers the questions they care about: how are people changing, how is culture shifting, and how is performance improving?

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

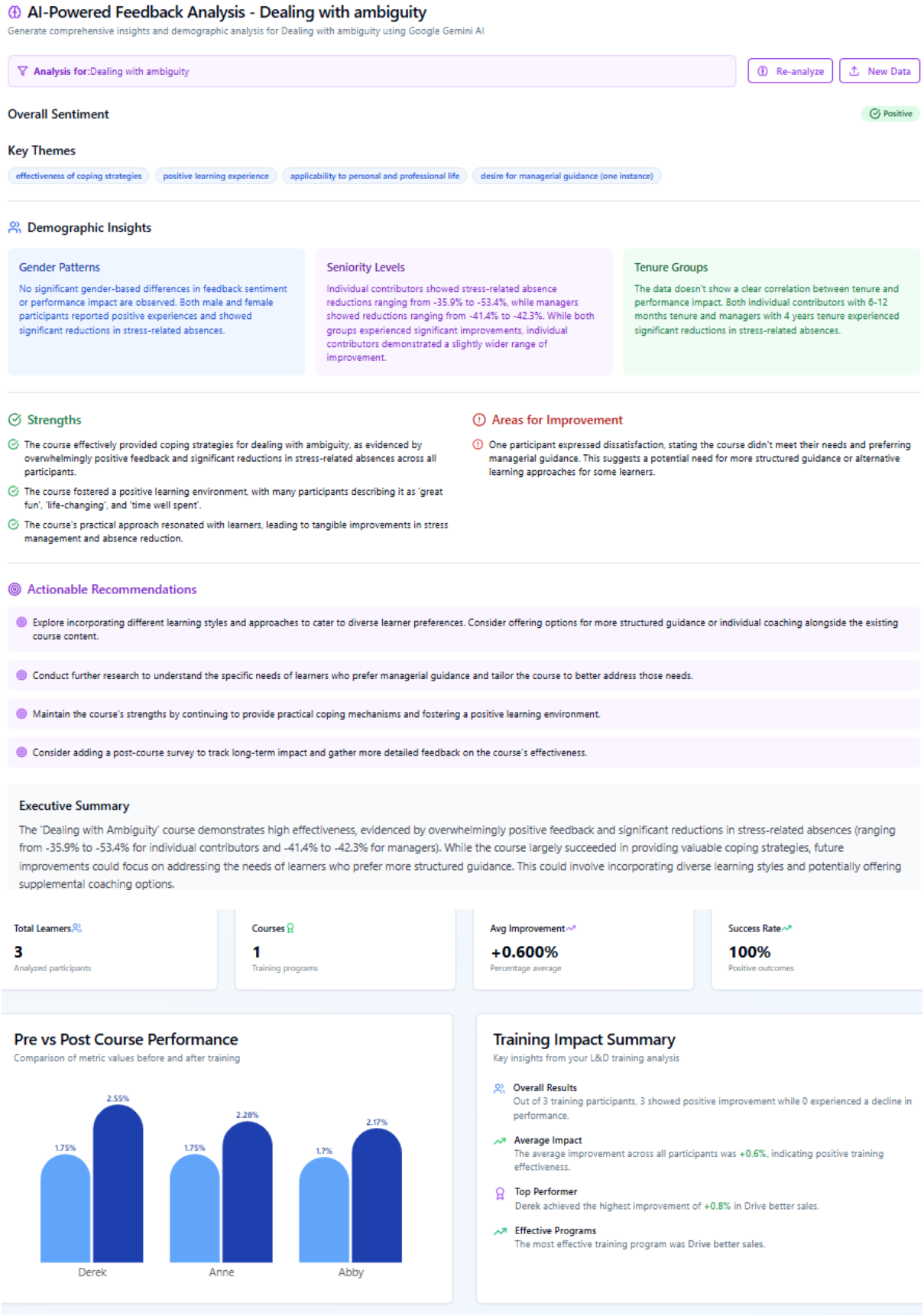
As with any analysis, there are risks. One common mistake is over-claiming causality. Just because sales increased after a training programme does not prove the training caused it, other factors may be at play. The GROWTH model encourages us to be confident but careful, presenting learning as a contributing factor alongside other influences. Another pitfall is focusing only on what is easy to measure, rather than what matters. If we avoid culture or networks simply because they are harder to quantify, we end up with an incomplete picture of impact.

A third risk is presenting data without interpretation. Senior leaders are busy; they do not want raw data, they want meaning. L&D's role is to interpret the evidence, connect it to strategy, and propose the next steps.

From Data to Insight

Making sense of the data is about more than reporting; it is about enabling better decisions. The GROWTH model provides the structure to do this by focusing on the five themes and encouraging practitioners to connect multiple sources. When done well, data analysis moves L&D from being seen as a cost centre to being recognised as a strategic partner.

Example analysis from the GROWTH Model:



The GROWTH Model simplifies analysis as it is rooted in a data model rather than abstract concepts

Chapter 8: Analytical Rigour with the GROWTH Model

One of the greatest frustrations in learning measurement has been the trade-off between speed and rigour. Executives often want quick feedback to gauge whether a programme was well-received, while analysts and researchers argue for long-term studies and robust methods. L&D teams are caught in the middle, delivering surveys that satisfy neither camp: too shallow to prove impact, too slow to be actionable.

The GROWTH model changes this dynamic. Built on a relational data model, it allows for different levels of analytical rigour depending on the audience, the business need, and the resources available. Whether the requirement is for quick anecdotal feedback, medium-term trend analysis, or controlled trials that approach the standards of academic research, the GROWTH model makes these options available, without the need to reinvent the approach each time.

Quick Anecdotal Feedback

Sometimes, speed matters most. Senior stakeholders may want to know, within days of a programme's delivery, whether learners found it valuable and whether they feel equipped to apply it. The five-question learner experience survey provides exactly this. It produces structured, comparable insights while still giving learners the freedom to voice what is most important to them.

On its own, this feedback may not be enough to prove impact, but it is sufficient to make quick tactical decisions, whether to refine a piece of content, adjust delivery methods, or provide follow-up resources. The value here lies in agility: the ability to respond quickly to learner voice without compromising consistency.

Trend Analysis Over Time

For organisations looking to identify broader patterns, the same relational data structure supports trend analysis. Because questions are standardised and linked to themes, results can be compared across programmes, providers, business units, or demographics. For example, L&D can see whether confidence scores are rising over time, whether negative adjectives cluster around particular modalities, or whether one function consistently struggles more than others to apply new skills.

This level of analysis is particularly powerful when combined with system data. A trend showing steadily increasing confidence in digital skills can be matched against system logs of tool adoption. If both rise in tandem, L&D has strong evidence of skill transfer at scale.

Controlled Trials and Experimental Design

At the most rigorous end of the spectrum, the GROWTH model supports controlled trials. Because the data model links learning activity to outcomes across multiple systems, it becomes possible to construct experimental designs: for example, comparing two groups of employees who received different forms of training, or comparing trained teams with untrained teams over a given period.

This level of analysis provides the most credible form of causal evidence, showing not just correlation, but likely attribution. Few L&D functions have historically attempted this level of rigour, in part because their data lacked standardisation and connection. The relational design of the GROWTH model removes much of this barrier, making controlled comparisons a practical possibility.

Built for AI and Future-Proofed Analysis

Perhaps the most significant strength of the model is that it is future-proofed for AI-driven analysis. Because data within GROWTH is structured relationally and consistently, AI systems can analyse not just individual responses but relationships across themes, demographics, and time periods.

For example, AI could identify that learners who describe their experience as “long” are not just less satisfied but also less likely to show behaviour change in performance systems. Or it might uncover that network growth is a leading indicator of cultural change, insights that human analysts may not have thought to test.

As generative AI and predictive analytics become mainstream, models like GROWTH will provide the fuel these systems need. Without standardisation and structure, AI delivers noise; with them, it delivers genuine insight.

Tailored to the Audience

What sets GROWTH apart is its adaptability. Executives who want headlines can receive a narrative based on learner voice and simple ratios. Analysts who want depth can run regressions, longitudinal analyses, or experimental comparisons. AI engines can be given the underlying data to surface connections humans might miss. And because all of these analyses draw from the same relational model, they remain consistent and connected.

This flexibility is what makes the GROWTH model a credible long-term solution. It does not lock organisations into one level of rigour, nor does it force a choice between speed and depth. It provides a single framework capable of serving multiple audiences and evolving alongside technology.

Rigour Without Paralysis

Analytical rigour is not about complexity for its own sake. It is about ensuring that evidence is credible enough to inform decisions. The GROWTH model recognises that different decisions require different levels of proof. A decision about refining a module may only need quick learner feedback. A decision about scaling a programme globally may require trend analysis and comparisons. A decision about investing millions in leadership development may require controlled trials and performance metrics.

By making all of these options available within one coherent framework, the GROWTH model provides rigour without paralysis. It empowers L&D to meet stakeholders where they are, with the right level of evidence, at the right time.

Chapter 9: From Insights to Action

Data has no value if it sits in a dashboard, a slide deck, or a report that no one acts upon. The purpose of measurement is not to produce charts; it is to drive decisions. Too often, learning teams stop at the point of analysis, presenting numbers without translating them into actions. The result is that insights go unused, and the opportunity to shape business outcomes is lost.

The GROWTH model helps ensure that this does not happen. By organising evidence across the five themes, practitioners can provide leaders with a structured, credible narrative of impact. More importantly, it equips them to recommend next steps, highlight barriers, and influence change.

Closing the Feedback Loop

One of the most important roles of L&D is to close the loop between what learners experience, what the data shows, and what the organisation does next. For example, if survey data reveals that employees feel confident in new skills but also report lack of manager support as a barrier, it is not enough to note this in a report. L&D should take this insight back to leadership, highlighting that without managerial reinforcement, the investment in training may not achieve its full potential. This creates an opportunity for targeted action: perhaps a parallel programme for managers, or guidance for leaders on how to coach their teams.

Closing the feedback loop builds trust with learners as well. When employees see that their survey comments lead to visible changes, whether in programme design, scheduling, or the tools they are given, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with future surveys. The act of listening, and acting on what is heard, reinforces the message that learner voices matter.

Designing Interventions Around Barriers and Enablers

Data often reveals not just what worked, but what stood in the way. These insights should inform the design of future interventions. For instance, if a time management course led to a reduction in after-hours emails but employees still report overwhelming workloads, the issue may lie in resourcing rather than skills. L&D's role is not to fix everything directly, but to highlight where organisational barriers are blocking the transfer of learning into practice.

At the same time, data can identify enablers worth amplifying. If survey comments show that peer support was a major factor in applying new skills, future programmes can be designed with stronger peer-learning components. If performance metrics improve fastest in teams where managers hold frequent one-to-ones, those practices can be formalised and spread. By designing around both barriers and enablers, L&D maximises the likelihood that learning leads to sustained change.

Communicating Insights to Senior Stakeholders

For data to influence decisions, it must be communicated in ways that resonate with the audience. Executives are not interested in the mechanics of surveys or the technicalities of system data. They want to know what the evidence means for strategy, performance, and culture.

This requires translating insights into the language of the business. Instead of saying, “Eighty percent of participants rated their confidence as seven or above,” say, “Participants who felt confident applied the new process twice as fast as those who did not.” Instead of reporting, “Employees described the training as ‘long,’” say, “Newer employees are struggling with content length, which is delaying their time to productivity. Shortening modules could bring them up to speed faster.”

The GROWTH themes provide a helpful frame here. Senior leaders can immediately understand stories about culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks because these are the levers they themselves use to drive change. By structuring insights in these terms, L&D ensures that the message lands.

Building Credibility and Influence

Perhaps the most powerful outcome of moving from insights to action is the credibility it brings to L&D. When business leaders see that learning data not only describes what happened but also informs what should happen next, they begin to view L&D as a strategic partner rather than a service provider. This credibility creates influence.

For example, if performance data shows that a sales enablement programme improved conversion rates but survey data reveals barriers around pricing flexibility, L&D can bring this insight to the commercial team. Instead of simply reporting on the training, L&D becomes a voice in the broader conversation about sales strategy. Similarly, if a cultural survey reveals low psychological safety in a specific region, L&D can partner with HR and leadership to design interventions that address not just skills but systemic cultural issues.

Each time L&D provides evidence that leads to a tangible action, its role within the organisation strengthens. Over time, this builds a reputation not just for delivering learning but for driving change.

Turning Measurement into a Cycle

Insights should not mark the end of the measurement process but the beginning of a cycle. Once actions are taken, new data should be collected to see whether those actions made a difference. Did manager training increase support for learners? Did shorter modules improve time to productivity? Did network-building initiatives expand collaboration across teams?

By measuring again, organisations create a continuous loop of improvement. This cycle, learn, measure, act, measure again, is what transforms measurement from an administrative task into a driver of organisational growth.

From Insight to Impact

Ultimately, the goal of the GROWTH model is not to produce better reports but to produce better outcomes. Insights only matter if they lead to change: new behaviours, stronger cultures, improved performance, richer networks, and deeper skills. L&D's role is to ensure that the data it collects is translated into stories that influence decisions and into actions that make a difference.

Looking Ahead

In the next chapter, we will move from principles to practice. We will explore real-world examples of organisations applying the GROWTH model, showing how different data sources, survey formats, and analysis techniques come together to demonstrate impact. These case studies will illustrate the model in action and provide practical lessons for applying it in your own context.

Chapter 10: Example Use Cases

The power of the GROWTH model is best seen in practice. By linking themes to real-world organisational challenges, we can demonstrate how data and surveys come together to tell stories of learning impact. The following examples are fictionalised but grounded in realistic scenarios. They show how organisations might use the model to understand what has changed and why.

Example 1: Leadership Development and Culture Change

A global professional services firm launched a leadership programme aimed at strengthening coaching behaviours among its managers. For years, the firm's engagement surveys had shown that employees wanted more feedback and development from their leaders. The programme combined classroom workshops with digital modules and peer coaching circles.

Using the GROWTH model, the firm measured impact across several themes. Survey data showed that managers' confidence in their coaching skills rose significantly, with many describing the programme as "practical" and "insightful." Productivity tools such as Outlook and Teams revealed that managers were scheduling more one-to-one meetings after the programme. Most importantly, follow-up engagement surveys showed that employees felt their managers were "more supportive" and "more approachable."

Taken together, these signals provided a clear story: skills had grown (coaching capability), behaviours had changed (more regular one-to-ones), and the culture was shifting (employees reporting greater psychological safety). The firm used this insight to expand the programme to additional business units and to train managers in how to sustain feedback conversations over time.

Example 2: Technical Training and Performance Improvement

A large manufacturer introduced new digital machinery on its production lines. Employees needed to learn how to operate the technology safely and efficiently. The company delivered a blended programme combining hands-on sessions with online technical modules.

Performance data was the key to understanding impact. Before the programme, error rates in machine operation were high, leading to costly downtime. After training, errors fell by 35%, and throughput increased by 12%. This was strong evidence of **performance change** directly linked to learning.

But the story did not end there. Learning system data showed that employees who completed advanced modules were more confident and performed even better than those who only completed the basics, a sign of **skills growth** at different levels. Survey feedback revealed barriers too: while employees valued the training, many reported that a lack of supervisor support slowed their ability to apply new techniques. This insight was taken to plant managers, who responded by assigning experienced "floor champions" to mentor newer operators. In doing so, the company strengthened both **behaviour change** and **network growth**, ensuring that improvements in performance were sustainable.

Example 3: Peer Learning and Human Network Growth

A technology company wanted to encourage innovation and faster problem-solving across its global teams. Instead of launching a traditional training programme, it created a peer-learning initiative where employees could share knowledge and support one another through an internal platform. Communities of practice formed around topics such as data science, design thinking, and agile project management.

To measure impact, the organisation looked at collaboration data. Analysis of Slack and Teams showed a 25% increase in cross-functional communication within six months. Employees were no longer working in silos; they were reaching out across regions and disciplines to solve problems together. Survey comments reinforced this picture, with participants describing the initiative as "connecting me to people I never would have met otherwise."

The company also examined the link to business outcomes. In one product group, time to resolve complex technical issues dropped by 18% after engineers began using the peer-learning community to share solutions. This demonstrated not only **network growth**, but also meaningful **performance change** supported by cultural shifts towards collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Connecting the Dots

These examples illustrate how the GROWTH model provides a structured way to measure and explain impact. In each case, different data sources combined to tell a more complete story: HR data for segmentation, learning system data for engagement, productivity and performance tools for outcomes, and surveys for context.

The key lesson is that no single data point is sufficient. A leadership programme cannot be measured by completions alone, nor can technical training be understood solely through error rates. It is the combination of skills, behaviours, culture, performance, and networks that shows the full value of learning.

Looking Ahead

In the final chapter, we will look to the future. As AI, automation, and predictive analytics become more widespread, the possibilities for measuring and improving learning will expand even further. We will also consider the ethical questions this raises, and how the GROWTH model can evolve to ensure measurement remains credible, human-centred, and aligned with organisational values.

Chapter 11: The Future of Learning Measurement

Measurement is changing. The tools and methods available to us today are already far more advanced than those used even a decade ago. AI can analyse millions of data points in seconds. Collaboration platforms can map networks in real time. HR systems can generate predictive models of turnover and performance. Yet with these advances come new challenges: questions of privacy, ethics, and how to ensure that measurement remains meaningful rather than overwhelming.

The GROWTH model provides a stable foundation for this future. By anchoring measurement in five timeless themes, culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks, it ensures that no matter how technology evolves, we focus on outcomes that matter to people and organisations.

AI and Predictive Analytics

Artificial intelligence is already transforming how we handle survey data, extracting themes from free-text responses that would once have required days of manual coding. In the future, this will extend further. Imagine being able to predict, with reasonable accuracy, whether a learner will apply new skills based on their confidence rating, their engagement with collaboration platforms, and their past performance data. AI can help identify which learners may need additional support, which programmes deliver the greatest return for specific demographics, and which cultural factors are most strongly linked to performance outcomes.

Within the GROWTH framework, predictive models might show that:

- Employees who describe their training with positive adjectives are more likely to demonstrate behaviour change.
- Teams with higher psychological safety scores are faster to adopt new skills.
- Learners with strong cross-functional networks perform better in complex problem-solving tasks.

These insights allow L&D to move from reporting on the past to shaping the future.

Real-Time Measurement

Traditionally, L&D measurement has been slow and retrospective. Programmes are delivered, data is collected, and results are analysed weeks or months later. The growing use of integrated workplace tools means this is changing. Network analysis can show, almost in real time, whether collaboration patterns are shifting. Productivity data can reveal immediately if meeting habits are changing after a workshop. Sentiment analysis can capture cultural signals from employee platforms as they emerge.

This opens the door to more agile interventions. Instead of waiting for an annual survey to reveal low confidence, L&D teams can spot dips in real time and provide targeted follow-up support. Measurement becomes not just evaluative but adaptive.

Personalisation and Adaptive Learning

As measurement becomes more sophisticated, it also enables personalisation. By combining system data with survey insights, learning platforms can recommend content tailored to an individual's skills, behaviours, and networks. An employee who reports low confidence in applying new skills might be nudged towards practice exercises or peer mentoring. Someone with strong technical skills but limited networks might be encouraged to join a community of practice.

The future of measurement is therefore not only about proving impact to the business but also about shaping better experiences for learners. Data feeds directly back into the design of development journeys, ensuring they are relevant, timely, and impactful.

Ethics, Trust, and Transparency

With greater capability comes greater responsibility. Learners must trust that their data will be used ethically and transparently. If employees feel that their emails are being read or their social interactions monitored without consent, the result will be resistance, disengagement, and even reputational risk.

Organisations must therefore be clear about what data is collected, why it is used, and how it will benefit learners as well as the business. Confidentiality in surveys should be respected, and where possible, learners should see the results of their input and the changes it informs. Trust is not a "nice to have", it is the foundation for meaningful measurement.

The GROWTH model can play a role here by keeping the focus on themes that are both valuable and human-centred. Measuring culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks speaks directly to what employees care about and what organisations value, without descending into surveillance.

The Evolving Role of L&D

As measurement becomes more advanced, the role of L&D professionals will also evolve. They will need to be not only designers and facilitators of learning but also interpreters of data and storytellers of impact. They will need to work closely with HR, IT, and data analytics teams to connect sources and ensure integrity. And they will need to build the confidence to present evidence at the executive table, positioning learning as a driver of business performance and organisational health.

The future is not about replacing L&D professionals with algorithms. It is about equipping them to use new tools to enhance their insight and influence. The combination of human

judgement, business understanding, and technological capability will be the hallmark of high-performing learning functions.

Looking Forward with Confidence

The future of learning measurement is both exciting and challenging. With AI, real-time analytics, and personalisation, we can go further than ever before in understanding the impact of learning. But the fundamentals remain the same: organisations want to know whether learning is shaping culture, building skills, changing behaviours, improving performance, and strengthening networks.

The GROWTH model provides a compass for navigating this landscape. It ensures that no matter how technology evolves, L&D can remain focused on what matters

Final Reflections

Learning has always been about change, change in what people know, how they act, how they connect, and ultimately how organisations perform. For too long, however, the way we have measured learning has failed to capture this reality. We have settled for surface-level numbers, producing dashboards that reassure but rarely persuade.

The GROWTH model offers an alternative. By focusing on five themes, culture, skills, behaviours, performance, and networks, it provides both a structure for practitioners and a language for leaders. It helps us move beyond activity metrics to evidence that truly matters.

Yet the model is not just a framework for evaluation; it is a way of thinking. It challenges us to ask better questions, to seek out richer data, to listen to learners' voices, and to use insights not simply to prove impact but to improve practice. At its heart, GROWTH is about credibility and influence: giving L&D the evidence it needs to shape strategy and drive change.

The future of measurement will be shaped by AI, real-time analytics, and predictive models. But the fundamentals will not change. Organisations will always need to know whether their people are growing, whether their culture is evolving, whether behaviours are shifting, whether performance is improving, and whether networks are strengthening. These are the signals that matter most, and they are the signals that the GROWTH model brings into focus.

The invitation now is simple: put it into practice. Use the model to frame your conversations with stakeholders. Apply it to your next programme, your next survey, your next analysis. Start small if you need to, one theme, one metric, one insight, and build from there. Over time, you will find that measurement is no longer a burden but a source of credibility, influence, and, ultimately, transformation.

Because when learning is measured in the right way, it is no longer a cost to be justified. It becomes what it has always had the potential to be: a driver of growth.