



Align Learn Do ensures Made Tech's culture of learning continues to attract talent whilst meeting the needs of The Board.

Background

Founded in 2002, Made Tech, a technology delivery specialist to the public sector, was a hundred strong organisation focused on growth and seeking to double its headcount in the coming year. Whilst learning and development had always been important and a core offering for employees, control of what was learnt, how, and when was entirely in the hands of individuals.

Employees were given protected learning time every Friday afternoon to take the courses or activities that they chose. Whilst the business was small, this worked extremely well and was viewed internally as an important element of the company's culture.

The Challenge

It was clear that a significant amount of learning was taking place, but Friday afternoon L&D time was too prescribed and restricted the business' ability to maximise hourly revenues.

In addition, it was hard to measure the efficacy and value of the learning that was taking place; it was nebulous and undocumented.

The leaders of the business recognised the need to review the whole approach to L&D and engaged the team at Align, Learn Do to undertake a thorough analysis and make recommendations based on the findings.

The Solution

Tasked with getting to know the business and its employees, Align, Learn, Do used its successful framework approach to meet the following objectives:

- Conduct surveys and interview key members of each function within the business to find out what and how they were learning, what worked and what needed to change.
- Highlight data themes and build a findings-based report.
- Identify resources required from the business, in terms of tools and budgets.
- Implement ways of measuring and quantifying the efficacy and value of learning and development. Agree on metrics and outcomes with the business.
- Develop a plan to recruit a suitable, permanent resource to oversee the learning and development function within the business after the engagement with Align, Learn, Do was complete.

The work was completed in two distinct stages.

Stage 1A – Discovery

The two-stage plan involved the discovery phase, consisting of an all-employee questionnaire and several in-depth interviews.

Align, Learn, Do set out to find out how the current offering was viewed amongst the senior leadership teams and how it might be improved to support an increasing number of employees, as per the wider business objectives.

The team identified how learning could be made specific to each role and function, the data in existence currently, and ways of improving it.

Stage 1B – Recommendations

Following the discovery exercise, the team at Align, Learn, Do produced a detailed report outlining recommendations for the short, medium and long term activities that would meet the core objectives:

1. Develop an employee-centric learning and development policy
2. Agree a learning and development budget
3. Learning and development platform
4. Review roles and recruit a learning and development lead

Stage 2 – Implementation

Align, Learn, Do was contracted to implement the recommendations for several days per week, over a six month period.

1. Learning and Development policy

The learning and development policy would govern informal learning and allow employees to choose 3 hours of protected learning and development time, at any point in the week to suit them. For those who still wanted to learn on a Friday afternoon, the choice was there, but for those who felt it wasn't working, they were able to book different days and times.

2. Learning and Development budget

The budget would be split into three main elements to cover informal learning, business-mandated learning and certifications. Each individual would be allocated £300 per year to spend on learning and development of their choosing, with some caveats around where this could be used. This became their personal learning budget. It could be used for any course/books/events, that would help them in role or prepare for another role. If the business asked someone to complete learning it would not come out of this budget, the same for certifications.

3. Learning and Development Platform

The recommendation was to implement a platform that would standardise and track employee learning, to allow the board visibility into trends and topics. Made Tech trialled LinkedIn Learning but found the content lacking for Made Tech's needs. Made Tech needed a platform that would allow for specific learning, while also offering the ability for individuals to use their personal learning budgets.

Align, Learn, Do recommended Learnerbly, a streamlined workplace learning and development platform that allowed employees to use their personal budget on a wide range of resources. Made Tech could curate suitable playlists for employees to easily find and consume the learning that suits them.

4. Learning and Development Experience Manager

Align, Learn, Do identified the need for a function lead and created a new position for a Learning and Development Experience Manager. The team, in conjunction with the in-house recruitment team, successfully recruited an experienced individual who is responsible for all learning and development activities.

The Outcome

Align, Learn, Do built a two-year plan outlining the revised learning and development function, what it would deliver to the business and the data it would generate. The team created a mock data dashboard showing the cost of learning against the benefit to the business, potential improvements to attrition rates arising from a new L&D strategy and a comparison of the cost of filling positions by training and promoting junior employees, versus recruiting for senior positions externally.

The team identified a £17,000 saving per position in Technology and Delivery Roles when developing and promoting internally, over external recruitment; game-changing for a rapidly growing business like Made Tech.

Almost all employees responded well to the employee-centric learning and development policy, with its flexible 3 hours of protected time per week. The changes and benefits were explained in a clear communications plan, designed by the team at Align, Learn, Do.

The CEO and board have a clear understanding of the L&D activity that happens within the business, they understand how much it costs and what value it brings.

Armed with an understanding of how and when teams are choosing to learn, the senior leadership team can plan resources more effectively and efficiently.

With a company-wide shift to operate solely in the public sector sphere, certifications became ever more important to the success of bids and tenders. Made Tech can now use its intelligence and budget to ensure employees complete the certifications it needs to win business.

Conclusion

Made Tech now has a defined L&D function, with an experienced leader who has designated responsibility for all L&D activities. There is a clear L&D budget and understanding of how to monitor and track outcomes to measure efficacy and value to the business.

The senior leadership team understands the learning experience and journeys between roles, where skills gaps may exist. This clarity means budget and focus can be pinpointed where it is most needed.

The potential cost savings identified by Align, Learn, Do in reducing staff attrition rates and by promoting junior employees can now be realized, as the structure, platform and budgets are successfully in place.