

BECOME AN

L&D MASTER

IN

10

Easy steps

The way we learn is evolving so fast, it can feel hard to keep up. From the power of storytelling to the science of visualisation, we asked experts for their key lessons

WORDS CLAIRE CHURCHARD, CATH EVERETT, ROBERT JEFFERY, HAYLEY KIRTON, GRACE LEWIS, CATHRYN NEWBERY

1 Social learning's time has come

"Having been in the learning profession for nearly 20 years, I've witnessed the necessity to shift the focus away from a culture where learning is 'done to you' to a culture that encourages learning to be independently owned by the learner themselves," says Angela Cahill, learning manager at Barclaycard. And if results from a BT staff survey are anything to go by, employees would much rather take a collaborative approach to training: 78 per cent said they'd prefer to learn from their peers.

Social learning has become a powerful ideology, and early adopters are evangelists. Cahill has revamped Barclaycard's four-week induction programme to include buddying and online learning from peers alongside formal classroom training. Construction giant

Caterpillar launched its 'knowledge network' in 2009 to encourage collaboration among employees, and now opens it to dealers, suppliers and customers who want to add learning and interact.

But what does that mean for the L&D professional? "The notion that training is owned by the organisation is over," says Julian Stodd, author of *The Social Leadership Handbook*. "Training departments should be facilitating learning wherever it's happening, rather than thinking they need to 'manage' it."

Handing over the responsibility for learning also comes with a genuine business case according to Accenture, which suggests companies can reduce training costs by leveraging employees to deliver personalised content that is both relevant and timely.

"Social learning differs from formal, classroom-based training in that the meaning is created within the group and is exercised over a period of time," says Stodd. But this doesn't mean you should prepare for mutiny during your next formal training session, adds Cahill: "The evolution from HR/L&D-led learning, to learners owning and pursuing their own development is still at an embryonic stage and the shift is still being driven by L&D," she says. "Social, open learning seeks to support the L&D function rather than undermine it."



Telling tales makes change stick

Storytellers have been part of our culture since the dawn of time, from cave-dwellers swapping tales by the fire to Bernard Cribbins pulling up a cosy chair. Stories embed facts and processes in our brains by creating compelling mental maps. And that means they can play a key role in sharing difficult or complex information.

"It's a way to make things relevant and interesting to your audience, and easy to remember," says Ann Booth-Clibborn, story coach at the Booth-Clibborn Creative Consultancy.

But stories really come into their own at times of difficult change. Booth-Clibborn recalls a large organisation that had to make widescale redundancies.

"The way they handled those redundancies was doom and gloom, and 'oh my god, I'm so sorry'. The people who were left had been given no story."

In the ensuing vacuum, employees assumed the organisation was locked in a downward spiral, and many of the brighter talents left. Had leaders framed a story around the need to make the organisation efficient and competitive in rapidly changing times, while retaining a core of expertise, such an outcome could have been avoided.

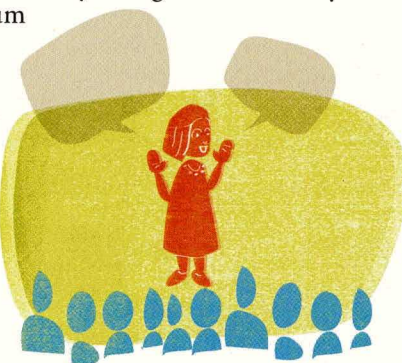
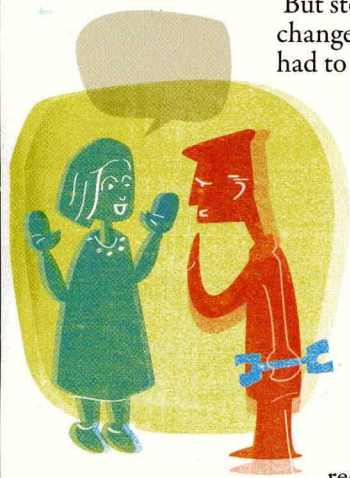
Booth-Clibborn used storytelling to solve a tricky recruitment conundrum

for BAE Systems. The business needed to identify specialist engineers, but found itself losing out in the war for talent.

"We found stories from people already working at the firm about why this was a great place for this sort of specialist to work," she says. "With recruitment, it's about getting your people to tell stories about why they work there, because that's the most real, personal, tangible way that others can imagine themselves there."

To tell your own story, be clear about your audience and what might be interesting to them. Don't just offer facts: put them into a story or journey that will make them more relevant to the audience. The finished story should be something that's effortless to consume and easy to pass on. Tone is important, so imagine your piece being read.

"What I have learned from working with a lot of HR people is that they often imagine their audiences as very negative," adds Booth-Clibborn. "That's because quite a lot of the time they only meet the troublemakers." Instead, she says, direct your story to the most open-minded members of your audience and you'll soon have everyone spellbound.



Learning isn't just for leaders

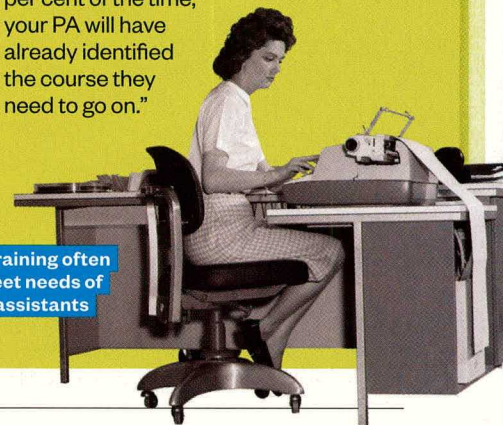
Looks like we've found the answer to the UK's dwindling productivity levels – we need more personal assistants. According to a survey of more than 4,500 CEOs conducted by job sites Reed and Totaljobs, PAs contribute as much as 40 per cent to their boss's productivity. And yet, when it comes to training, they're often bottom of the list.

That's a missed opportunity. Former PA and office manager Paul Pennant says the frustration of having to seek and pay for his own career development inspired him to design courses specifically for 'support' staff. "There are two things I help PAs with," he says. "Helping them say 'no' to people and be more assertive in the workplace, and using technology to help them save time."

Others are working with their peers to raise standards. Victoria Darragh, executive assistant at Hays, runs a group within the firm for fellow PAs. "From my experience of working with other companies, it is often the HR department itself that blocks us from developing and doesn't see the value in our profession," she says. "A number of HR departments don't have a good understanding of the PA role, and that has been the hardest part – getting their buy-in and teaching them about the role."

Administrators, receptionists, facilities staff and security guards are among those who are similarly missing from many development programmes. Pennant recommends training for support staff is linked to line manager development. "The problem with generic training courses is that they don't meet the needs of assistants," he says. And he suggests listening to the experts: "Eighty per cent of the time, your PA will have already identified the course they need to go on."

Generic training often fails to meet needs of personal assistants



4

Is gamification over-hyped?



YES

"It's extremely common for new technologies not to turn out to be the panacea that everyone hoped for, and gamification really is no exception. Right now, we're deep in what Gartner calls the 'trough of disillusionment'; people have tried to implement



NIR EYAL
EYAL IS AN ISRAELI-BORN AMERICAN AND AUTHOR OF *HOOKED: HOW TO BUILD HABIT-FORMING PRODUCTS*

gamification in their learning and training programmes, and they've been disappointed with the mixed results.

The fundamental problem has been the misapplication of gamification. Even the term is inherently problematic. Whenever we add '-ify' to a word, it implies that we're taking something that once didn't have that trait and adding it after the fact – whether we're 'beautifying' or 'gamifying' something.

That's a problem because gamification isn't just something you can bolt on to a training course. People might read the latest book or article on the subject and simply think it means putting points, badges and leaderboards into all kinds of activities. But really it should be one of the fundamental building blocks of the learning experience.

Gamification really equates to good, human-centred design of training courses. This requires thinking about people's deeper psychology to make a learning experience more enjoyable.

For gamification elements to be applied appropriately, you need to understand – at a macro level – what motivates the user, and what elements could make their learning experiences more enjoyable. L&D professionals should start by figuring out what problems they are facing, and what different solutions can be used to tackle them – only one of which might be sensibly applied gamified elements."

NO

"Gamification isn't really a new concept – games

have been a crucial part of learning for many years – but the term itself is relatively new and growing in popularity as people spend more and more time playing games online. How many people do you see playing *Candy Crush Saga* on their phones every day? That's why learning programmes are seeking to capitalise on that popularity by incorporating competitive elements such as leaderboards, points acquisition and badges.

You have to be careful to tailor the learning experience to the types of people taking your programme. Some people are really motivated by achieving a ranking compared to their peers, however others might be disheartened by a poor score and disengage with the course entirely.

If people are turned off a gamified learning experience in this way, it's likely to be down to a fault in the game's design rather than the concept of gamification itself. But start with understanding your audience and a gamified, immersive learning experience can really work.

A law firm I worked with wanted to help managers understand grievance procedures, but had little time to digest such complicated information. Creating a game for mobile devices that replicated these scenarios, enabling managers to dip in and out of stages or 'levels', both mirrored real life experiences and fitted in with managers' hectic schedules.

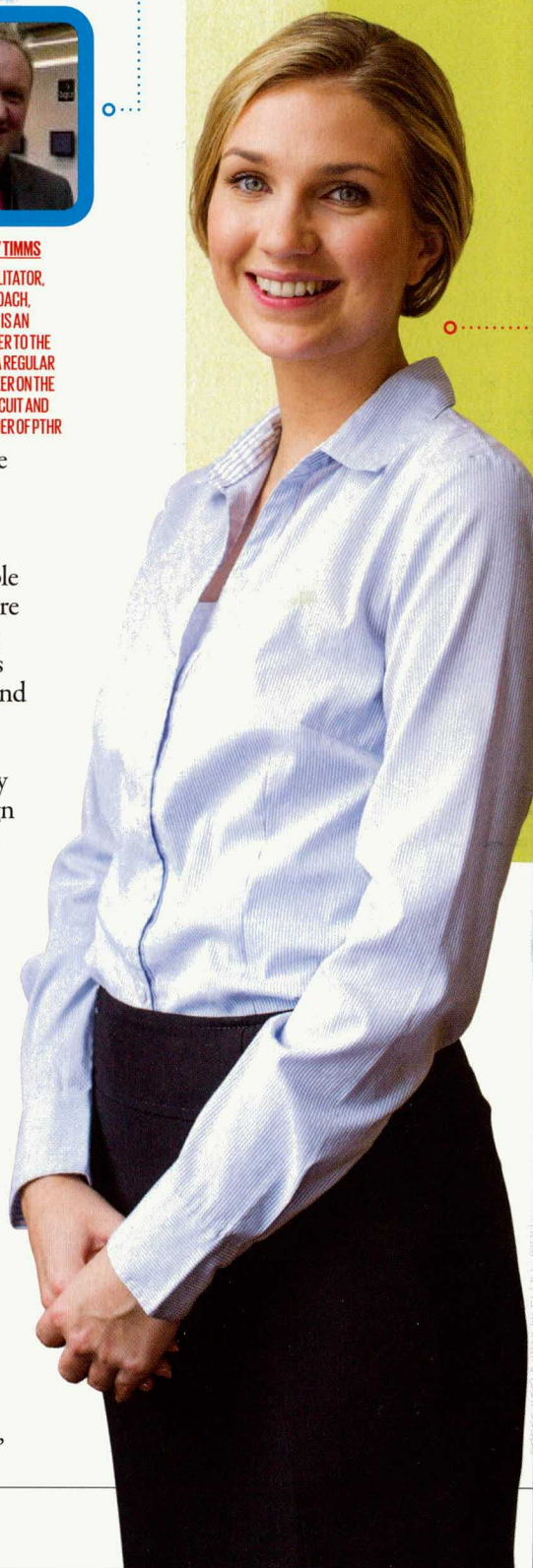
I can only see the sensible, selective use of gaming techniques to create effective training courses gaining in popularity as gamification becomes a more integral part of life in and outside of work."



PERRY TIMMS
A FACILITATOR, AND COACH, TIMMS IS AN ADVISER TO THE CIPD, A REGULAR SPEAKER ON THE HR CIRCUIT AND FOUNDER OF PTHR



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Turn your staff into video stars

When Lisa McCandless, learning and development business partner at United Biscuits, was

presented with a quote for employing actors to perform in a training video, she faced a classic dilemma: could she justify the expenditure?

In the end, she decided the answer might lie closer to home. "Using two of our own HR team to role-play in the video – which aimed to demonstrate how to have difficult conversations, especially around appraisals – seemed like the obvious thing to do," she says. "Some of the videos I'd seen that used actors seemed very disingenuous, almost patronising."

For McCandless, that just didn't sit with the Club biscuit-maker's renewed emphasis on cultivating an honest and transparent culture at work. "And it was up to us as an HR department to lead the way and demonstrate that we live and breathe those values."

Staff members Francesca Paulley and Ian Drummond stepped up to the plate to take the lead roles. And filming the video, produced in conjunction with e-learning provider Sponge UK, was "fantastic – one of the best things I did last year," says McCandless. "We didn't have to script it – we just gave Francesca and Ian direction on the concept, the type of conversations we wanted them to have and the required outcomes, and off



Using real employees in a training video proved a big hit



they went. It was actually like watching Francesca having a real performance review with a member of her team."

Featuring employees in the video was a big hit with staff. "People were curious to watch it and learn from their colleagues," says McCandless. Although pseudonyms were used in the film, the stars "can't go anywhere on site without being recognised."

The video has had a measurably positive impact on how tricky conversations are handled at United Biscuits' eight UK sites. Key to its success, says McCandless, was making it very much an optional tool – "we found people's curiosity got the better of them" – and making it accessible on mobile devices.

When it was initially shared by email with 1,200 employees who might be taking part in difficult appraisal conversations, 63 per cent of staff started to watch, with 70 per cent of those employees viewing the entire 40-minute video. Carefully targeted reminders – sent out around the time of half- and full-year appraisals – also boosted uptake, says McCandless.

"People told me they watched parts of it on their smartphones just minutes before going into an appraisal meeting," she says. "They could get the advice and support exactly when and where they needed it."

The video's success has proved the doubters wrong, and McCandless is hoping to use more of United Biscuits' employees in future training videos. "To anyone considering doing this themselves, I'd say 'go for it' – without a doubt," she says. "It's a great way of leveraging people's social skills – the ones they use all the time at home – and building up their confidence."

6 Don't be scared of ROI

Every L&D professional will be familiar with the scenario. You've identified a need for additional skills in the business, and have an innovative and appropriate solution that seems to work for everyone concerned. Until, that is, you're asked to demonstrate the return on investment (ROI).

The concept of ROI depresses many learning managers because it assumes everything has to be measured and monetised. But that's precisely the point, says Dr Max Blumberg, director of the CIPD's Valuing Your Talent project,

which is attempting to redefine and enhance understanding of human capital metrics.

The traditional Kirkpatrick Model of HR measurement suggests a five-point scale ending in an active measurement of "monetary benefits". In fact, says Blumberg, it's simpler than that: while a learning intervention should measurably enhance an individual's competence and performance, ultimately it must meet organisational objectives. "Let's say a leadership programme costs £20,000," says Blumberg,

"If you're spending that much money on an employee, presumably the only reason to do it is to contribute more to organisational objectives."

Of course, measuring that contribution isn't always straightforward. A salesperson's output is easy to capture (though Blumberg points out it can take 18 months for a new piece of learning to embed itself even then). If you're in R&D, it can be a tougher call. But, says Blumberg, even things that seem intangible can have a value attributed to them: reducing absence or stress ultimately saves money in lost output, and even the

value of engagement can be measured, say some.

Line managers are key. They're often the people who spot a need for learning, and they may help design a solution, but when it comes to measurement they're rarely involved. "They have to be involved in the process because they're the ones who understand what needs to be measured and valued," says Blumberg. "L&D is not just about delivering soft and fluffy outcomes. The message they need to get is that we're giving you a tool that will help you meet your targets – it's for your benefit, it's not an HR programme."

7

The smart L&D leader's toolkit

A range of books and digital resources to make your learning programmes shine, suggested by fellow L&D professionals

Software

Articulate

A suite of e-learning authoring tools, including the popular Storyline 2. Indispensable if you want to make interactive e-learning presentations.

Camtasia

Screen capture software but smarter, Camtasia allows you to make a film of what's happening on your computer screen, then easily edit and enhance footage.

Audacity

A fancy yet simple-to-use piece of sound software, which includes a background noise removal tool. Perfect for adding audio explanations to presentations.

Books

Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader by Herminia Ibarra
INSEAD's Ibarra has a growing reputation in leadership. In *Act Like a Leader*, she explains how routine tasks get in the way of planning for bigger goals.

Revolutionize Learning and Development by Clark Quinn
If your tried-and-tested tricks are no longer cutting it, the self-styled 'Quinnovator' will teach you how to rethink your training plans. He employs concepts from neuroscience, alongside the latest technology.

Neuroscience for Leadership by Tara Swart, Kitty Chisholm and Paul Brown

Much neuroscience writing is either too generalist or too theoretical. This new book, from this month's *PM* columnist Swart and co, avoids that trap, with concise but convincing sketches of important concepts.



Gadgets

Microsoft Hololens

Google Glass? Forget about it. These virtual reality glasses can stream a live video of what the wearer sees through Skype. How long before they're the gadget *de rigueur* for high-tech trainers?

Double

Known as a telepresence robot, this iPad-on-wheels means you can present when you can't physically be present. Although it does look a tiny bit silly...

Apps & websites

Notability

Combine a variety of mediums, such as handwriting and photographs, to create interactive notes. Perfect for adding annotations and sharing.

Feedly

How do you keep learners interested when a course is over? With Feedly, you can create a news feed of relevant topics and share it with a select group.

Prezi

The pre-eminent online presentation builder, Prezi may lack bells and whistles when compared to some paid-for services, but its sharing capabilities are second to none.

Diigo

Like a bookmarks folder but better, Diigo lets you highlight your reading and archive pages for easy access later. An ideal way to mail a pre-reading list.

Yammer

Plenty of companies are investing heavily in social learning tools, while overlooking a free programme that could do the same job. Yammer is an internal chat facility and message board that encourages collaboration and information sharing.

Explain Everything

Although primarily aimed at schoolteachers, this whiteboard and screencast application is useful for anyone looking to give a simple presentation.

Kahoot!

Introduce friendly competition into any session. Kahoot! poses questions delegates can answer using a mobile device, then share results with the group.

Moovly

Jazz up your presentations with some animation, without a degree in computer science or graphic design.

Most experts agree the role of the L&D function is being transformed, with its focus shifting to a more proactive relationship with internal clients. Rather than professionals offering a core suite of training programmes from which learners pick and choose, they will use their deep understanding of the business to deliver targeted learning, aided by technology.

But what does that mean for the L&D professional of tomorrow? *People Management* asked the experts for the key skills and attributes they'll need:

1 Being a business consultant

Knowing which learning interventions are needed means having a clear handle on business requirements and upcoming challenges.

Ruth Stuart, the CIPD's research adviser for L&D, says: "It's about having a true understanding of business objectives and being able to develop and deliver targeted

learning interventions that are the right thing for both the business and the learner."

McDonald's has been rolling out a development programme to help boost the consultancy skills of its L&D team. The objective is to help them get to the root cause of issues, enhance relationships with learners and managers, and develop the confidence to initiate challenging conversations.

2 Being networked

As the pace of change mounts and the boundaries between work and personal life continue to blur, the ability to demonstrate flexibility in learning content will be vital. That means L&D professionals will need to adapt their own working practices.

Julian Stodd, author and founder of SeaSalt Learning, says: "The notion of all skills being held internally will be replaced by a core team that holds the company's values, supplemented by a group of individuals working with them in a wider ecosystem."

3 Being a curator

Rather than develop their own courses, trainers will become expert researchers, able to bring together pertinent content from numerous sources as and when required.

"Learning will increasingly be provided at the point of need rather than preparing materials six months in advance," says Stuart. On the one hand, this means using the most suitable vehicle to deliver more accessible content. On the other, it is about working with employees to help them study on their own terms. PwC is already heading down this route, introducing a digital learning academy to help upskill its L&D team in areas such as using and curating digital assets.

4 Being a learner

L&D professionals are so immersed in learning, they can often forget to keep their own skills up to date.

Metrics is just one area where developments can quickly overtake you:

Gary Miles, of the Roffey Park Institute, advises setting up peer coaching activity or reverse mentoring in data.

More broadly, the CIPD's revamped professional qualifications

reflect the future needs of L&D professionals, with a suite of 28 new qualifications at Level 3 and Level 5, including Level 5 courses specifically covering metrics, digital and blended learning and consultancy skills.

Find out more at bit.ly/CIPDqual



The future: not such a far-off place after all...

Make compliance training fun (sort of)

Staff are unlikely to ever turn cartwheels at the prospect of a day spent in mandatory training. "Most people regard compliance as a nuisance that gets in the way of doing remunerative work," says Stuart Blake, owner of Beacon Legal Management and Compliance. "That is not to say that staff believe they shouldn't comply with the law and the regulations, merely that the steps they must take to demonstrate compliance are tedious."

But there are always ways to ensure compliance isn't costly or wasteful – and can be mutually beneficial. One way is to bring out the stick. "You can explain how training helps protect the individual and the firm from dire consequences," says Blake. Examples aren't hard to find:



It often feels like mandatory training is stuck in a timewarp

banking giant BNP Paribas was fined US\$9bn last year for breaking trade sanctions, resulting in 13 dismissals. Every business will have lower-level examples of costly wrongdoing, which even the most strait-laced employee gets a vicarious thrill from delving into.

Sending a signal from senior management can also be useful. "If it's

not driven from the top, then it's not made clear to people that it isn't just box-ticking and that there is a reason behind it," says Ben Cazin, head of HR and training at Imperative Training. Some firms link employees' mandatory training records to their wider performance management processes, says Blake, meaning you can't be promoted without up-to-date knowledge.

Good record-keeping is the backbone of making compliance training work. But pre-assessment testing – which recognises employees who already have up-to-date knowledge and don't need a refresher – is increasingly seen as transformative.

At the Learning Technologies conference in January, BT explained that it had halved the £10 million bill for annual staff time spent on mandatory training by deploying pre-assessment. "The pre-assessment approach focuses learning only where there is a knowledge gap," says Laura Reid, head of ethics and compliance learning and culture, though she points out maintaining quality of knowledge must always be the first priority for any business.

Stop fighting your brain

The explosion of interest in neuroscience has helped us to a new level of understanding about how the brain works. And yet we still often organise learning in counter-intuitive ways. *People Management* rights some of the wrongs:

1 Create a cognition-friendly environment

Science has long known that where we learn matters almost as much as what we learn. The concept of situated cognition suggests that where we are, who we're with and how we feel affects our ability to absorb information and make decisions.

And yet, says Jan Hills, author of *Brain Savvy HR*, many of the places we choose to learn are the worst possible environments for brain function. Leadership development, for example, often takes place in a plush hotel – but the conference room will probably be badly lit and poorly ventilated, while the snacks are likely to be sugary (bad for the brain) and the hydration breaks insufficient.

There's some evidence to suggest that the further a learning environment is from our regular work environment, the harder it is for our brain to place the learning in the correct context. Hills thinks there's still value in an off-site, as long as the content is related back to the workplace: "One of the things that helps us change is to sit back and reflect. A change in physical environment can help with that. But building Lego bridges and jumping off them probably doesn't help."

Proper simulation exercises, she says, have been proven to work for the military and airline pilots, but if you can't stretch that far, what matters is how quickly you put the learning into practice back at work: "Because most of what we do is hardwired, unless you've applied it where you use it, you're wasting your money."

For the same reason, asking people how they feel about a learning experience immediately after it happens

doesn't give you the right answers, says Lee Waller, director of the Ashridge Centre for Research in Executive Development. A few weeks later, they'll hopefully have had the chance to practice what they've learned and will be better placed to assess its relevance.

2 Close your eyes and imagine

When Cristiano Ronaldo concentrates intently before taking a free kick, it's easy to imagine he's worrying about whether the camera is doing his hair justice. In fact, he's picturing where the ball will travel and seeing the goalkeeper floundering as it nestles in the net.

Such visualisation techniques are gaining currency in professional sport, but we're still sceptical about their business value. And yet they work. "The brain doesn't really know the difference between doing and vividly imagining," says Hills. The same neurons light up under a brain scan during both thinking

and doing; most notably, people who've merely thought repeatedly about pumping iron at the gym have been shown to add muscle in the same place they would during real exercise.

Linda Tyler-Cagni employed visualisation when she was HR director of Italian luxury brand Zegna. After discovering her most successful sales staff mentally rehearsed their interactions with customers, then 'debriefed' in their heads afterwards, she trained employees in all 500 of the group's stores to do likewise. Tyler-Cagni believes the training led to a significant sales uplift, but she warns: "Visualisation can sound a little touchy-feely. It can come down to the terms you use, so we might say 'rehearse' or 'mentally prepare' instead."

3 Put danger in your training

Experiential learning works because your brain stores each new situation as a memory and applies the lesson when it encounters the same circumstances again. But to make sure the learning truly stick, says Waller, it's vital to provide participants with just the right level of challenge.

"An experience that gets you worked up enough to get your heart pumping pushes blood to the pre-frontal cortex," she says. That ensures what follows is committed to be memory. But if the challenge turns into stress, you can go into "fight or flight" mode, with blood rushing to the arms and legs in anticipation of a sharp exit. Learners ought to feel "challenged by choice in a supportive environment," says Waller, getting the sort of adrenaline kick you feel from realising you can do something new and difficult.

Cristiano Ronaldo:
there's a lot going
on under that
steely exterior...



Get ready for the CIPD L&D Show

The 2015 *Learning and Development Show* in London on 13-14th May explores the key issues facing the profession, from the application of neuroscience in L&D to the latest in learning technologies. For more information, visit cipd.co.uk/events/learning-development-show.

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