

3 December 2025

AI – From Vending Machine to Thinking Partner

Job Spec for Learning and Development Manager

Vending-machine thinking

Prompt for Gemini:

Write a job description for a Learning & Development Manager.

Output by Gemini:

Job Description: Learning & Development Manager

Company: [Insert Company Name]

Location: [Insert City, State/Remote]

Reports to: [e.g., Head of Human Resources, VP of Operations]

FLSA Status: [e.g., Exempt/Salaried]

Job Summary

The Learning & Development (L&D) Manager will be responsible for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating engaging and effective learning programs across the organization. This role plays a critical part in fostering a culture of continuous learning, ensuring employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to drive business success and achieve professional growth. The L&D Manager will work closely with leadership and department heads to identify training needs and align L&D initiatives with strategic business goals.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- **Strategy & Planning:** Develop and execute a comprehensive L&D strategy and roadmap that supports organizational objectives, talent management, and employee engagement.
- **Needs Assessment:** Conduct thorough training needs assessments across departments and levels, utilizing surveys, interviews, performance data, and collaboration with management.
- **Curriculum Development:** Design, develop, and source a variety of learning solutions, including instructor-led training (ILT), e-learning modules, blended learning programs, workshops, job aids, and mentorship programs.

- **Implementation & Delivery:** Oversee the successful deployment of all training programs, potentially acting as a facilitator/trainer for key courses. Manage external training vendors and resources as needed.
- **Technology Management:** Manage and optimize the Learning Management System (LMS) to track, deliver, and report on all training activities.
- **Evaluation & Reporting:** Establish and track key L&D metrics (e.g., participation rates, learning effectiveness, business impact - ROI). Regularly evaluate program effectiveness and recommend continuous improvements.
- **Budget Management:** Manage the L&D budget, ensuring resources are allocated effectively to high-impact programs.
- **Compliance & Onboarding:** Ensure all necessary compliance and regulatory training is up-to-date and completed. Oversee and enhance the New Hire Onboarding experience.
- **Collaboration:** Partner with HR to integrate L&D programs with performance management, succession planning, and talent acquisition processes. Coach and guide internal subject matter experts (SMEs) who serve as trainers.

Required Qualifications

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Education, Business Administration, or a related field. Master's degree or relevant certification (e.g., CPLP) is a plus.
- **Experience:** [5]+ years of progressive experience in Learning & Development, training, instructional design, or talent management, with at least [2]+ years in a managerial or lead role.
- **Instructional Design:** Proven expertise in instructional design methodologies (e.g., ADDIE, SAM) and adult learning principles.
- **Technology Skills:** Proficiency in using and managing an LMS (e.g., [Specify relevant LMS like Cornerstone, Saba, Moodle]). Experience with e-learning authoring tools (e.g., Articulate Storyline, Adobe Captivate).
- **Communication:** Exceptional written and verbal communication, presentation, and facilitation skills.
- **Analytical Skills:** Strong analytical and project management skills with the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience in the [Insert relevant industry, e.g., Technology, Finance, Manufacturing] industry.
- Experience with blended learning and social learning initiatives.
- Certification in coaching, assessment tools (e.g., DISC, MBTI), or specialized leadership development programs.

Working Conditions

- Primarily office environment.
- Occasional travel may be required to other company locations or for external training events.

[Insert EEO Statement/Other Standard Company Footer]

Thinking-partner thinking

Prompt for Gemini:

You are an expert at communication and workplace writing. You also have 30 years-experience working in HR and are a specialist in recruitment.

I need your help writing a job description for a Learning & Development Manager.

I want you to help me plan it. I am going to use a planning framework built around the following concepts:

Purpose - the reason why I am writing the job description. What is the nature of this role? What problem will the new Learning & Development Manager solve?

Audience - the person or people who will be reading the job description. Are there different audiences? Is there a primary and secondary audience and if so, who are they?

Result - the outcome of the job description. What the reader (audience/s) will do, think, or feel as a result of reading the job description? What's the immediate result? What's the long-term outcome?

I want to think through each of these concepts step by step. You are going to help me think by asking me targeted questions. Your questions will address each of the three concepts that make up the planning framework (Purpose, Audience, Result). At the end of each concept, summarise my thinking back to me before we move onto the next concept.

You can pose more than one question for each concept, but don't move onto the next concept until you are sure that I have addressed each concept thoroughly or until I tell you to move on.

When we have finished working through all three concepts, give me a clear synthesis of what emerged from each concept and any patterns or tensions between the concepts. Then give me an outline for a job description for the role I want to fill.

If something is not clear in my instructions, please ask.

Output by Gemini:

That sounds like an excellent, structured approach to developing a high-quality job description. As an expert in workplace communication, recruitment, and with 30 years of HR experience specializing in recruitment, I'm ready to guide you through this process. A well-

planned job description is a key recruitment tool, and focusing on **Purpose, Audience, and Result** is a recipe for success.

Let's start with the first concept: **Purpose**.

Step 1: Purpose

The **Purpose** of the job description addresses why you're writing it, the fundamental nature of the role, and the core problem the new **Learning & Development Manager** will solve. Here are a few questions to help us define the Purpose of this L&D Manager role:

1. **What is the core strategic need or organizational gap this new L&D Manager is specifically being hired to fill?** (e.g., Is it a new function? Is the current L&D function underperforming? Is the company scaling rapidly?)
2. **How do you envision the L&D Manager directly contributing to the company's overall business objectives or cultural goals in the next 12-18 months?** (e.g., improving talent retention, increasing skill proficiency in a specific area like digital transformation, or driving a culture of continuous learning?)
3. **In a single sentence, what is the *fundamental mission* of this role?**

Take your time to consider these. When you're ready, we'll summarize your answers and move on to the Audience.

1. This is a new function. We are going through a process of rapid change as the company transforms with the adoption of new technology. People are resistant and there is fear around the change and what it will mean for people and their jobs.
2. The new L&D Manager will drive a new culture that embraces technology. They will contribute to building confidence and upskilling people. They will also foster a greater awareness and alignment of all employees with our vision, mission and company culture.
3. This role will build confidence in the people and the leadership as we move through the change ahead.

That's incredibly clear and gives us a strong foundation for the **Purpose** of this role. It sounds like this isn't just an L&D role; it's a **Culture and Change Enablement** role disguised as L&D.

Here is a summary of our thinking on the **Purpose**:

Purpose Summary

The **Purpose** of the new Learning & Development Manager role is to **act as a strategic change agent** during a period of rapid technological transformation. The core problem this role solves is **employee resistance, fear, and skill gaps** associated with new technology adoption.

- **Core Strategic Need/Gap:** The need to establish an entirely **new L&D function** capable of driving cultural change and managing the human side of technological transformation.

- **Contribution to Business Objectives:** To **build employee confidence**, drive **widespread upskilling** to align with new technology, and **foster greater awareness and alignment** with the company's vision, mission, and culture.
- **Fundamental Mission:** To **build confidence in both the people and the leadership** to successfully navigate and execute the significant organizational change ahead.

That clarifies the "why" and "what" of the job. Now let's move on to the second concept: **Audience**.

Step 2: Audience

Understanding the **Audience** helps us determine the appropriate tone, language, and focus of the job description. Who needs to read this, and what level of detail do they require? Here are a few questions to help us define the Audience:

1. **Who is the *primary* audience for this job description?** (The ideal candidate you are trying to attract.) What are their typical career aspirations, and what specific characteristics (beyond skills) are you hoping this document will appeal to?
2. **Who are the *secondary* audiences who will also read and act on this document?** (e.g., Internal Hiring Manager/s, HR Partners, Executive Sponsor, External Recruiters/Agencies.)
3. **Given the role's mission as a 'strategic change agent,' what specific language or tone must we use to filter out candidates who are only interested in tactical/transactional L&D work?**

Let me know your thoughts on these different groups of readers.

1. Primary audience is the leadership in the company who will work with the new L&D manager. They don't feel this new role is necessary or worth the investment. They need to see that this role will help them solve their problems.
2. Secondary audience are the potential candidates. The ideal candidate we are trying to attract will have considerable experience (at least 5 years) as an L&D manager or partner. They will also have a tech background. They should be dynamic and outgoing and have a love of people.
3. The tone should be plain and conversational, with no jargon. it should be clear that this is not a generic L&D role and you can stress the change agent aspect.

Thank you for that crucial insight, especially the identification of the **leadership team as the primary, high-stakes audience**. This significantly shifts our focus and ensures the job description will function as both a **recruitment tool** and an **internal business case**. Here is a summary of our thinking on the **Audience**:

Audience Summary

The strategic planning for this job description must address two very different audiences simultaneously:

Primary Audience: Internal Leadership Team

- **The Challenge:** The leadership team is sceptical of the role's necessity and the investment required.
- **The Goal:** The document must convince them that this role is a **direct solution** to their current problems (employee resistance, fear, and skill gaps due to technological change).
- **Actionable Takeaway:** The job description must use **results-oriented, business-focused language** and emphasize the L&D Manager's accountability for **strategic outcomes** (e.g., faster tech adoption, higher retention, culture change) rather than just activities (e.g., course development).

Secondary Audience: Potential Candidates

- **The Ideal Profile:** An experienced (5+ years) L&D Manager/Partner with a **strong technical background**. They must be **dynamic, outgoing, and people-focused**.
- **The Goal:** Attract a **strategic change agent**, not a purely tactical trainer.
- **Actionable Takeaway:** The description must be **plain, conversational, and jargon-free**. It needs to explicitly frame the role as a **strategic partnership and change mandate**, using language that appeals to someone looking for a high-impact, pioneering role.

Required Tone & Language

- **Plain, Conversational, and Jargon-Free:** Ensures broad accessibility and clear communication.
- **Stress the "Change Agent" Aspect:** Clear, active language must signal that this is a **non-generic, strategic L&D role** focused on solving deep organizational challenges.

The tension between the sceptical internal audience and the highly sought-after external candidate is exactly what we need to manage in the writing.

Now let's move on to the final concept: **Result**.

Step 3: Result

The **Result** defines the outcomes of the job description itself. What do you want the readers to **do, think, or feel** immediately and in the long term after reading it?

Here are a few questions to help us define the Result:

1. **What is the *immediate* desired action or feeling for the Primary Audience (Leadership)?** (e.g., Sign off on the salary band? Feel a sense of relief? Champion the role to others?)
2. **What is the *immediate* desired action or feeling for the Secondary Audience (Ideal Candidate)?** (e.g., Hit "Apply" immediately? Feel that their specific, unique experience is understood and valued?)
3. **What is the *long-term* outcome you want this job description to achieve in the recruitment process?** (e.g., A shortlist of candidates who understand and embrace the change mandate, or a new L&D function that is respected as a strategic partner?)

Let's nail down what success looks like for the *document* itself.

1. I want leadership to read the job description and think "finally someone gets what we need." they should quickly and clearly understand what the role is and what problem it solves. they should feel a certain relief that the change will be managed and that business outcomes will be sustained at a high level.
2. Candidates should quickly understand that this is not a typical L&D role, that it is strategic. they should feel that unique experience is understood and valued and they will be very keen to hit apply.
3. The job description should get the right people to apply and not waste our time with people who don't fit the requirements for this role. it needs to honestly convey that this is an exciting role but one that will take hard work, tough decisions and interactions with people and it will have to deliver.

This is an excellent definition of success for the job description. It is clear, targeted, and addresses the needs of both critical audiences.

Here is a summary of our thinking on the **Result**:

Result Summary

The desired **Result** of the job description is to function as a powerful, targeted filter that validates the role internally and attracts a specific, high-calibre external candidate.

Immediate Results (The "Do, Think, Feel")

Audience	Desired Thought/Feeling	Desired Action
Internal Leadership (Primary)	"Finally, someone gets what we need." They should feel relief and confidence that the organizational change and key business outcomes will be professionally managed and sustained.	Approve the role, champion it internally, and support the recruiting process.
Ideal Candidate (Secondary)	A clear understanding that this is a strategic, non-generic L&D role where their unique, tech-focused experience is valued . They should feel intense excitement about the challenge.	Hit "Apply" immediately , tailoring their application to the change mandate.

Long-Term Outcome

The job description must serve as an **honest, high-definition filter**. It must accurately convey that this is an **exciting, high-impact role** but one that demands **hard work, tough decisions, challenging interactions, and measurable delivery**. The ultimate outcome is a **highly qualified shortlist** of candidates who are not just *capable* but are *motivated* by the strategic mandate of the role, minimizing wasted time on unsuitable applications.

Synthesis of Planning Concepts

We have successfully defined the **Purpose, Audience, and Result** for this critical role. Here is a brief synthesis of the three concepts and the key patterns/tensions that emerged:

Concept	Key Finding	Strategic Implication for Writing
Purpose	The role's fundamental mission is to be a strategic change agent to combat fear and resistance during a rapid technology transformation.	The title and opening summary must frame the L&D Manager as the head of Change Enablement/Adoption , not just a trainer.
Audience	Primary Audience is sceptical Leadership ; Secondary is a highly experienced, technically-minded L&D pro .	The language must be a fusion of business-metric driven (for Leadership) and visionary/challenging (for the Candidate).
Result	To generate a feeling of relief/validation from Leadership and a feeling of "this is for me" and immediate application from the ideal candidate.	The responsibilities must be phrased as problems to solve and outcomes to achieve , not tasks to complete.

Key Patterns & Tensions:

The major tension here is between the need to **sell the role internally** (to the sceptical leadership) and the need to **sell the company/mandate externally** (to the desirable candidate).

- **The Bridge:** The **Problem/Solution Structure** is the bridge. By immediately stating the problem (rapid change, fear, resistance) and positioning the L&D Manager as the *solution* (building confidence, driving adoption, protecting business outcomes), the job description satisfies both the sceptical leader and the strategic candidate simultaneously.

Proposed Job Description Outline

Based on our planning framework, here is a suggested outline for the **Learning & Development Manager** job description. It is structured to address the sceptical leadership first (with a strong business case) and then engage the ideal candidate (with a compelling mission).

I. Strategic Title & Summary (The Hook)

- **Title Suggestion: Learning & Development Manager, Change & Adoption** (or similar, to immediately flag the strategic nature).
- **The Mission (Opening Paragraph):** A short, powerful summary that immediately states the problem and the role's solution. *This is your business case for the sceptical leadership.* (e.g., "We are undergoing a critical technology transformation, and we need a dynamic leader to turn employee resistance into confidence and skill. This role is a strategic mandate to secure our future by investing in our people.")

II. What You Will Solve (The Purpose & Business Case)

- A section explicitly defining the core problems and how the role will deliver value.
 - **Strategic Outcome 1:** Rapid, Confident Technology Adoption.
 - **Strategic Outcome 2:** Protection of Core Business Outcomes (Retention, Productivity).
 - **Strategic Outcome 3:** Evolution of the Company Culture toward Continuous Learning and Alignment.

III. Key Responsibilities & Deliverables (Focus on Outcomes, Not Tasks)

- Translate the L&D activities into **strategic deliverables**. Use active, outcome-driven verbs.
 - **Example 1 (Strategic):** *Design and establish* the entire L&D function from the ground up, positioning it as a strategic partner to the Executive team.
 - **Example 2 (Change Agent):** *Partner with C-suite to develop and drive* a multi-year change enablement strategy that addresses fear and builds digital confidence across all levels.
 - **Example 3 (Technical):** *Oversee the creation* of learning paths that directly translate complex technology adoption into measurable business skills.

IV. What You Bring (The Candidate Filter)

- This section speaks directly to the experienced, technically-minded candidate.
 - **Required Experience:** (5+ years in strategic L&D, background/experience with large-scale tech/digital transformation, etc.)
 - **Required Traits (The Filter):** Dynamic, outgoing, exceptional communicator, resilient under pressure, proven ability to influence without formal authority, and a deep love of people and coaching.

V. Why Join Us (The Honest Call to Action)

- A short, honest paragraph that addresses the "hard work" result.
 - **Set expectations:** "This is not a role for the faint of heart. It requires tough decisions, relentless stakeholder management, and a high degree of accountability..."
 - **The reward:** "...But for the right **strategic L&D leader and change agent**, this is a career-defining opportunity to build a function from scratch and directly determine the success of our company's future."

How does this strategic outline look? We can now move on to drafting the full job description based on this plan.

This looks great. Yes please go ahead and draft a full job description

That's excellent! Based on our detailed planning, here is the full job description drafted to serve as both an internal business case for your leadership and a compelling career opportunity for the ideal strategic candidate.

Job Description: Learning & Development Manager, Change & Adoption

The Mission: A Strategic Mandate for Change

We're not looking for a traditional L&D Manager. We're hiring a **strategic change agent** to secure our future.

Our company is undergoing a critical, rapid technological transformation, and we know change can be met with resistance and fear. This role is a direct investment in our people and a strategic mandate to turn apprehension into **confidence, skill, and cultural excitement**.

The core mission of the Learning & Development Manager, Change & Adoption, is to **establish a brand-new L&D function** from the ground up, positioning it as the engine that drives rapid, confident technology adoption, protects core business productivity, and future-proofs our workforce.

What You Will Solve (The Business Case)

This role exists to solve three critical business problems facing our leadership team:

1. **Bridging the Confidence Gap:** Design and implement programs that directly address employee anxiety, turning fear of new technology into enthusiasm and demonstrated competency.
2. **Driving Rapid Adoption:** Ensure that new technology is not just implemented, but is **adopted quickly and effectively** across all teams, minimizing downtime and maximizing the return on our technology investment.
3. **Future-Proofing Our Culture:** Embed a culture of continuous learning and alignment, ensuring every employee understands and embodies our updated vision, mission, and strategic goals as we evolve.

Key Responsibilities & Strategic Deliverables

Your success in this role will be measured by your ability to deliver measurable organizational outcomes, not simply by the number of courses launched.

Strategic Leadership & Function Build (60%)

- **Pioneer the L&D Function:** Design, build, and deploy the entire L&D operational strategy, processes, and tools from a clean slate.
- **Change Enablement Strategy:** Act as the lead consultant to the executive team, designing and driving a multi-year change enablement strategy focused on building digital confidence and capability across all business units.
- **Stakeholder Alignment:** Forge strong, trust-based partnerships with the C-suite and department heads to ensure L&D initiatives are fully aligned with critical business outcomes and technological rollout schedules.

Program Design & Delivery (40%)

- **Outcome-Based Curriculum:** Oversee the creation and execution of targeted learning paths and blended programs that directly translate complex technology adoption into measurable job-specific skills and business results.
- **Measurement and Impact:** Implement rigorous metrics and evaluation methods to track the ROI of all programs, providing leadership with clear, frequent evidence of the L&D function's positive impact on tech adoption and productivity.
- **Leadership Development:** Develop and deliver targeted programs to equip company leadership with the change management skills necessary to effectively lead their teams through technological and cultural shifts.

What You Bring (The Candidate Filter)

To thrive in this strategic and challenging role, you must be more than an L&D expert—you must be a **resilient and dynamic leader** motivated by high-stakes organizational change.

Required Experience

- **Minimum 5 years of experience** as a strategic L&D Manager or Partner, preferably within an organization undergoing significant digital or operational transformation.
- Proven background or deep familiarity with technology adoption, ideally within a technical field or a company deploying major new enterprise technology.
- Demonstrated success in **building an L&D function from scratch** or executing a major transformation of an existing one.

Required Characteristics & Mindset

- **The Dynamic Connector:** You are genuinely outgoing, an exceptional communicator, and possess the ability to quickly build rapport and influence skeptical stakeholders at all levels of the organization.
- **The Resilient Executor:** You are not deterred by resistance. You approach challenging decisions and difficult conversations with empathy, clarity, and a relentless focus on the required delivery.
- **The Strategic Partner:** You think in terms of **business outcomes** (e.g., productivity, retention, adoption rates) rather than purely L&D metrics (e.g., attendance, course completions).

Why Join Us? (The Honest Call to Action)

This is a **career-defining opportunity** to build a critical function and directly influence the success of our company's most important transformation project.

This role requires hard work, significant mental resilience, tough stakeholder management, and a high degree of personal accountability. If you are looking for a tactical, transactional L&D role, this is not it.

If you are a **strategic leader** who gets a thrill from solving complex organizational problems and are ready to put your unique blend of L&D expertise and technical fluency to the ultimate test, **we want to hear from you.**