

Learning Needs Analysis



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Learning needs analysis - Contents

This guide is intended to support you in planning and developing your own Learning Needs Analysis (LNA).

Here is what we cover for you:

Why will a Learning Needs Analysis help your organisation?	Page 3
Training Needs Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis – which do you need?	Page 4
How do you create strategic alignment?	Page 4
Mapping, engaging and managing your key stakeholders.	Page 5
What approaches can you use to get meaningful output from your stakeholders?	Page 6
What other sources of information can you use?	Page 8
What will your output look like?	Page 9
Summary	Page 9
Your reflections and actions	Page 10
A little more about us	Page 11

Why will a Learning Needs Analysis help your organisation?

The idea behind a LNA is to give you a full understanding of the learning needs for your organisation. It explores the immediate needs, and the longer term development required. It will support you in creating a development strategy and plan that is aligned with your strategic goals as an organisation. It creates a pathway and framework for development for each individual and employee.

By having this plan in place, it will help you:

- ▶ Make the best decisions for development from your research
- ▶ Understand how to maximise budgets and return on investment
- ▶ Explore the best development methods for your organisation
- ▶ Measure your progression and success in each area of development
- ▶ Align resources and teams effectively

Its worth noting that an effective LNA will help you:

- ▶ Avoid missing opportunities for real development
- ▶ Create a full understanding of needs of all of your stakeholders
- ▶ Reduce your internal bias and assumptions on learning needs
- ▶ See your real, not perceived learning needs
- ▶ Create short, medium and long term development plans
- ▶ Fully engage your teams in their own development discussions

In short, a great LNA will provide the strategy for your organisations long term development. This will help you identify and proactively manage gaps in skills and abilities. It will help you take a proactive approach to development (rather than focusing on short term training) that aligns all your development work with your organisation's strategy.

Organisations who get this right can use it as a tool to attract, retain and develop their teams.

Training Needs Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis – which do you need?

It is important to know the difference between the two and know which tool to apply. In short here is a summary of both approaches:

Learning Needs Analysis – this is the long term strategic development strategy that your organisation needs to achieve it's goals through your people. It aligns all of your stakeholder needs, considers short, medium and long term development goals and is directly linked to your organisations long term strategy.

Training Needs Analysis – this digs into the specific development needs from a (shorter term) training programme. It looks at the skill level of the people on the training, the skills they need and the learning outcomes it needs to create. It's a short term focused plan and one that is critical to ensure each training programme delivers a key part of your larger LNA.

How do you create strategic alignment

It is key to ensure your LNA aligns with your organisation's strategic goals. Here are a few things to think about and to be aware of:

Getting clarity on long terms goals – there needs to be input and insight from your senior team to ensure all of your activity links to the strategic goals and planning.

Link to performance gaps – data and insights will help you spot the gap between the required skills and attributes versus what you already have in place. This gap analysis will help you shape your longer term learning and development strategy.

Not a box ticking exercise – it needs to be engaging at all levels and one that seeks to proactively identify your needs and help you plan your resources accordingly.

Nudge for alignment – once you know where you need to be you can put a plan in place and use micro nudges to ensure that your plan and your strategic goals are constantly aligned. This means you need to review performance and outcomes on a regular basis.

Look at current and future capability needs - it's not a short term fix, it is a long term strategic review. It will help you understand your current capability and put together a plan for development to help you reach your future goals.

Formal and informal approaches – both are needed to give you a full insight. Manager input, Personal Development Plan (PDP) feedback, performance management information and all of your people data that you currently collect will help you get the true picture and starting point.

Data and analysis is key – what data do you already have, how accurate and useful is it, and how can use this as the basis for your discovery of current capabilities.

When your L&D strategy is completely aligned with business needs, it means:

- ▶ The right people doing the right things at the right time
- ▶ Learning opportunities to build your organisations effectiveness and efficiency are identified
- ▶ Individuals can achieve their personal and career goals
- ▶ You have clarity on performance
- ▶ You can easily measure effectiveness
- ▶ You can see the impact and transfer/embedding of learning

Overall, it should answer the question: What is the best way to fill capability gaps for now and future of your organisation?

Mapping, engaging and manging your key stakeholders.

It's a key point that you identify and engage key stakeholders, these might include:

- ▶ Subject matter experts
- ▶ Operational managers
- ▶ Employees
- ▶ Suppliers and clients
- ▶ Senior team

The starting point of this process is for you to identify all of your stakeholders. Once you have mapped them out, you need to answer the question, “who are our key stakeholders and how well engaged are they?”

What approaches can you use to get meaningful output from your stakeholders?

RAM approach for key stakeholders

There are several approaches that will help you get this meaningful output. One really useful approach is the RAM approach, it helps you explore:

- ▲ Relevance
- ▲ Alignment
- ▲ Measurement

Relevance

How will existing or planned development meet new opportunities or challenges for your organisations?

Alignment

Linking wider stakeholders needs with strategy. Ensuring a clear link to your organisation's strategy.

Measurement

Effectively and continuously measure the impact, engagement and transfer embedding of the learning.

MSCW approach for key stakeholders

These facilitated sessions engage a range of stakeholders who come prepared with their thoughts and ideas on strategic development. Groups are encouraged to share, discuss and map their output to four simple and powerful questions:

What Must we do?

What Should we do?

What Could we do?

What Won't we do?

With any approach you will have an opportunity for some immediate actions (often because there are small barriers or challenges you weren't aware of). As part of the process you can often spot simple quick wins that you can put in place to create immediate momentum as part of your LNA.

World café for team engagement

Running a hands on, interactive event to engage your teams in this discussion is key. One method we recommend is a “World Café” approach.

This approach asks individuals to prepare some thoughts and ideas on development (theirs and the organisations) before they attend a world café facilitated session.

This short session is run at a set of tables with disposable paper tablecloths on. One different key question is on each table. As groups congregate and spend time at one table they discuss their ideas and answers to specific questions, noting their output on the tablecloth.

The room rotates several times so each group get to discuss, review, share their thoughts and makes notes on each tablecloth, answering the key question posed at each table.

This relaxed, fun and engaging environment is helpful in getting individuals to open up and creates a whole list of ideas, thoughts, perspectives and answers to key questions on development.

Three key statements for team engagement

A simple questionnaire is sent in advance to individuals. Each question asks them to think about three key statements in a given area. They are encouraged to make notes, confirming that they will not be shared, they will be discussed at a facilitated event.

When the facilitated event is run, groups are formed to identify the three best answers and thoughts to each question. Then we run a “cascading actions” approach, involving groups coming together to refine and negotiate to the best three answers in the room. All answers and ideas are captured, and this facilitation also allows you to prioritise the actions and answers.

What other sources of information can you use?

There are a few other areas you may wish to explore to help you get a fully rounded picture of your current position. These can include:

Capability analysis (skills need)

- ▶ Which capabilities are needed per role (the current and future view)?
- ▶ Which already exist in your organisation?
- ▶ Where are the gaps?

This approach creates a clear link to your competency frameworks for individual job requirements. It helps you identify what work is needed to update your competency frameworks.

Data led approach

Here are a few data sources and approaches for you to consider:

- ▶ What data already exists (and how accurate is it)
- ▶ Formal interviews
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Informal discussions
- ▶ Team meetings
- ▶ Observations
- ▶ Questions based / survey led
- ▶ Information from existing competency framework
- ▶ Performance management data

Note – you will need to think about personal sensitive data (skills gaps etc.) and how this is uncovered, shared and handled.

Learning Needs Analysis Output

A great LNA will give the following outputs for you:

- ▶ A report on your overall needs (this is the basis for your learning and development strategy)
- ▶ Priorities, focus areas and any quick wins
- ▶ Learning and development plans for short and medium term gaps
- ▶ Clarity on how to maximise budget, where, when and how to invest
- ▶ An understanding of return on investment in any gaps you have identified
- ▶ A refresher on how you manage Personal Development Plans
- ▶ An updated competency framework (aligned to short, medium and long term goals)

Summary

Going beyond the day to day and working to aligning all of your development activity your organisations goals is critical. Taking time to “Zoom out” and look beyond the short and medium term plans to achieve real long term strategic alignment is key.

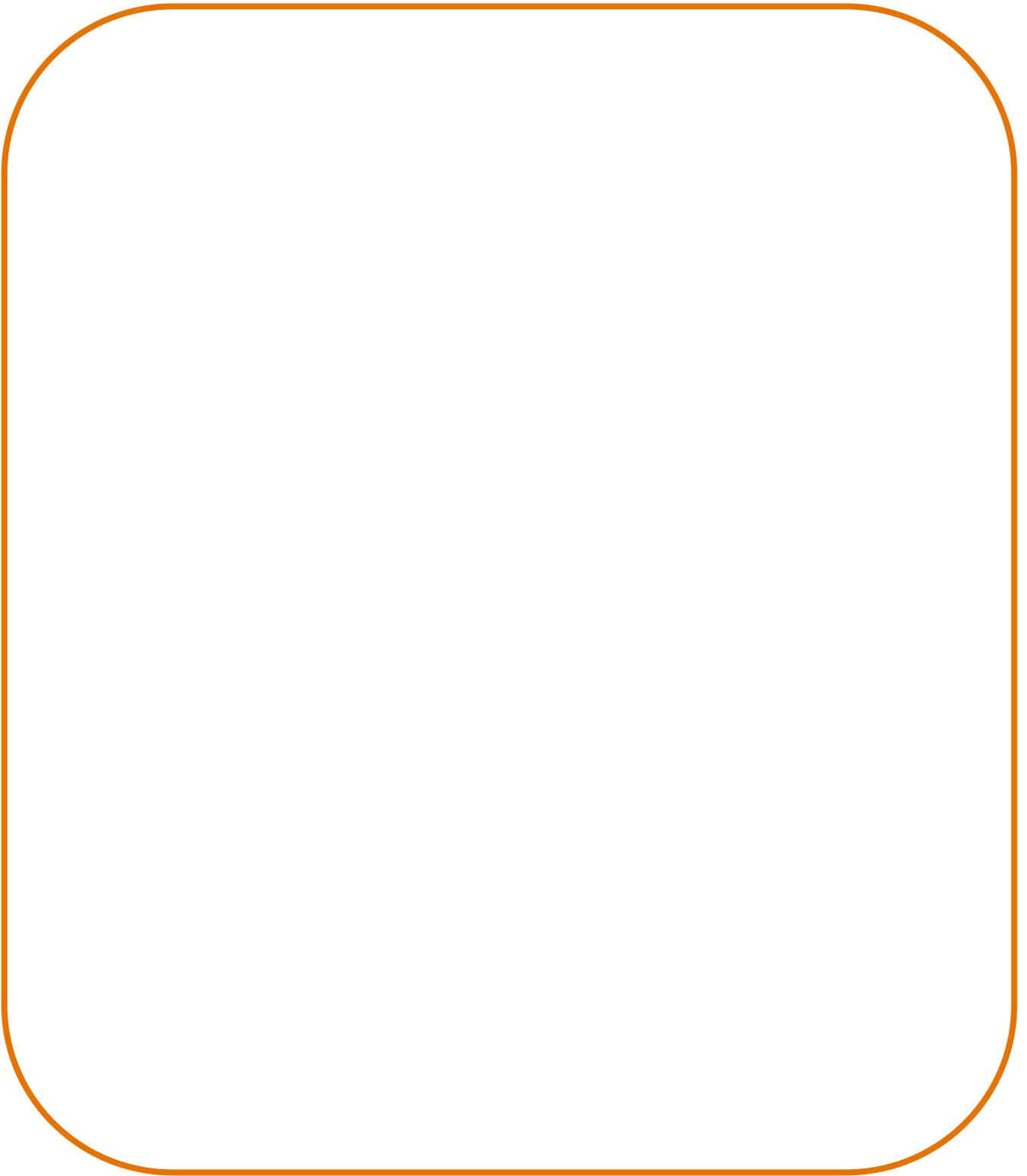
Taking time to fully understand all of your stakeholders needs and mapping this against your organisation’s strategy will help you identify and address priorities.

Ensuring you engage your teams and stakeholders gives you a rounder view of current capability and insights to the gap between the current and desired state.

Ultimately your LNA will help you clarify the gap between the knowledge and skills your organisation has and supports you to build a long term strategy and plan to fill this learning and development gap.

Your reflections and actions

What key actions do you need to note and progress for you and your organisation?



A Little More About Us (and how we can help you)

We are New Results

A comprehensive training agency committed to supporting you and your teams on your professional development journey. By focusing on your own unique learning needs, we aim to unlock your teams strategic potential. Our expertise spans across:

- ▶ Leadership & Management Development.
- ▶ Personal & Professional Growth and Development.
- ▶ Business Growth Strategy and Operational Development.

How we work with you

Our services are flexible, dynamic, and also partnership focused to be aligned with your unique needs. Whether it's through direct programme delivery, enhancing your internal training programmes or offering licensable content for your platforms. We're here to adapt and grow alongside you as a committed learning partner.

Learn more

If you're interested in learning more about New Results and how we can help you, please visit our website: www.newresults.co.uk . Or explore our client testimonials and case studies – [New Results Case Studies](#).





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