

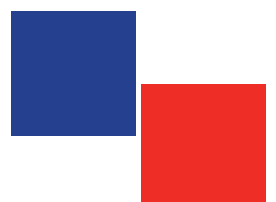
A woman with dark hair, wearing white over-ear headphones and a dark blue polka-dot shirt, is smiling slightly while looking at a silver laptop. She is sitting at a wooden desk in a bright, modern office environment. The background is softly blurred, showing a window and some indoor plants.

Adjusting to the
**NEW
NORMAL:**

Reimagining
workplace learning
during COVID-19



- Developing the right leadership skills during COVID-19 disruption
- L&D success online
- Measuring performance, engagement and productivity
- Protecting employee wellbeing



CONTENTS



05

The impact of the COVID-19 disruption



08

The right leadership skills in crisis



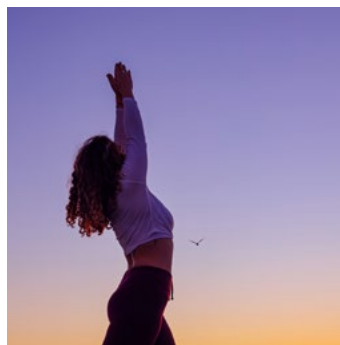
12

L&D - the time is now



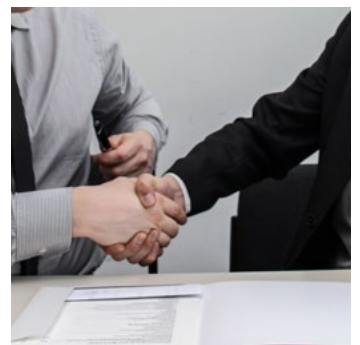
15

Productivity and performance



18

Supporting employee wellbeing



21

Get support



Executive Summary



Business leaders will have to be bold in protecting and investing in their people during these uncertain times.

They must learn a whole new range of skills in order to survive this crisis period, relying heavily on Human Resources (HR) to pioneer the road to stability and sustainability for

their workforce.

In this eBook we provide an overview of the critical points business leaders must be across right now, drawing on specific insight and advice from the Chief Human Resources Officer at ELMO, Monica Watt, from the recent podcast episode with Dynamic Business.



This guide centres on navigating the unknown territory we're facing, with particular attention paid to:



The importance of eLearning



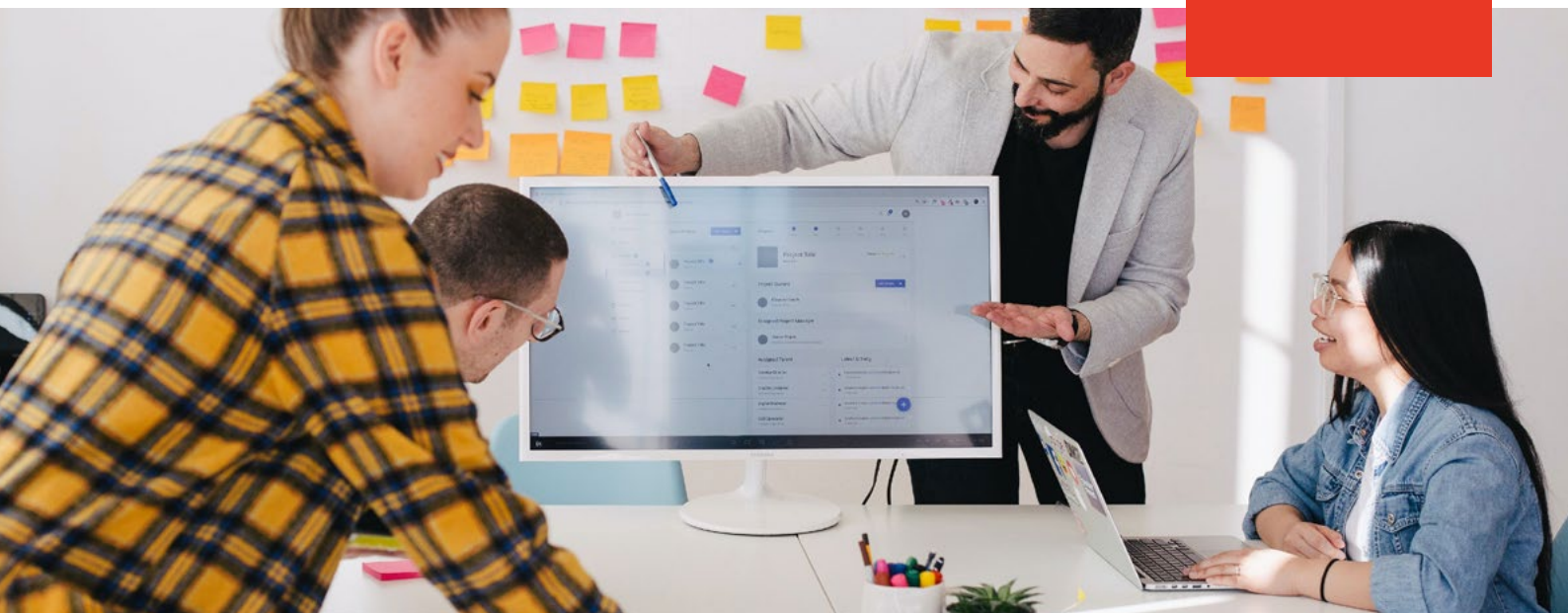
The skill shift and what skills are needed right now



Managing remote teams in terms of engagement and productivity



Looking after employee wellbeing



The Impact of the COVID-19 Disruption

COVID-19 has changed almost everything in our lives and of course one rather large aspect within that is our way of working.



The extraordinary health crisis has forced a subsequent economic crisis, with many businesses hard hit by the lockdown restrictions.

This has inevitably led to huge change across workplaces... Quick restructuring, reduced hours, stand downs, staff lay-offs, less than ideal remote working situations – to name just a few.

Aside from these rather obvious changes, there are also more intricate changes that have taken place as a result of the COVID-19 disruption.

There has been a sudden shift in skill appreciation and necessity, with soft skills now taking centre stage ahead of technical ones, for example. Attitudes towards remote working and what's possible within roles have also shifted. These kinds of changes must

These kinds of changes must be considered and acted upon by business leaders, otherwise the success of the organisation going forward is at stake.

be considered and acted upon by business leaders, otherwise the success of the organisation going forward is at stake.

In these uncertain times, all senior managers are pioneers, having to rethink and implement all aspects of work process - from communication and productivity, to culture and wellbeing.





The Right Leadership Skills in Crisis

■ ■
This crisis is one of the biggest challenges that leaders across the globe have ever had to face, and those in leadership roles will be very tested in this time.

Now is when an organisation's survival depends on more than just profit; there must be a clear purpose and 'why' other than margins, and a rally of employees who are inspired by a greater purpose to collectively work through the uncertainty.

As Monica explains in the podcast episode, more than ever before, CEOs and other C-suite leaders must not only display technical competence, but must also lean heavily on soft skills. In a working world where technical skills have always placed higher on the priority list, this sudden and crucial change in leadership is a huge challenge in itself.

In this period, difficult decisions will need to be made and applying emotional and social intelligence is vital in handling those decisions successfully.

Emotional and Social Intelligence and Soft Skills Include:

- Self-awareness
- Authenticity
- Motivation
- Self-management
- Organisational awareness
- Empathy
- Social skills

All of these are imperative in order to protect your people and adopt a 'people first' approach, which should be a leader's top priority at the moment. [▶](#)



When difficult decisions are made, and when times are incredibly uncertain both professionally and personally, people need to be dealt with honesty and compassion.

A transparent approach will be most appreciated and remembered in these times, and each leader should reflect on the soft skills at their disposal to communicate change.

In the podcast, Monica recommended that leaders should be offering their most human traits right now, prompting people to focus on what they can offer as a person, not just as a manager. We all have a value proposition as a human being, and we can build relationships in our work environment just like any other.





As a leader, you should be using this time to invest and connect with your people, bring teams closer together and communicate decisions and strategies with empathy.



Monica's advice for leaders is to be open, honest and transparent. No-one knows the answers right now, but by practicing this type of communication strategy, your employees and teams will feel more reassured, more part of the team and more empathetic to the business's difficulties.

As a leader, you should be using this time to invest and connect with your people, bring teams closer together and communicate decisions and strategies with empathy.

If you are unsure on the effectiveness of your soft skillset right now, it's something you should be actively working on.

ELMO has a [course library](#) that leaders can use to develop their soft skills, as well as many other skills and tools which are particularly helpful in this crisis period. ■■■



Learning & Development (L&D) - The time is Now

In terms of L&D, there is undoubtedly no better time to do it than right now. Companies are ramping up their training and professional development scale as we adapt and pivot to new ways of working.



Reaching a 'new normal' requires a lot of collective learning, and as Monica puts it, a "cross-pollination" of ideas.

With many people now working from home, we are more connected than ever before, and the learning possibilities have increased tenfold because of it. eLearning opportunities are absolutely everywhere, and geographical distance to a course is no longer an obstacle or excuse.

Leaders should be actively encouraging and providing opportunities for employees to level-up their skills and learn new ones.

If leaders don't invest in L&D, then they will likely be losing their best talent to competition sometime soon. ▶





At all levels, employees are now more empowered than ever to grow their knowledge, share advice and innovate.



This is a key point that Monica warns against in the podcast. Start with an assessment of where you or where your teams currently are – what skills, knowledge and attributes you or they have – and then ask yourself what needs building on from there, with specific regard to the skills needed in this crisis period.

At all levels, employees are now more empowered than ever to grow their knowledge, share advice and innovate. eLearning is a great flexible and versatile option and ideal for many businesses in the current climate in order to achieve that empowerment.

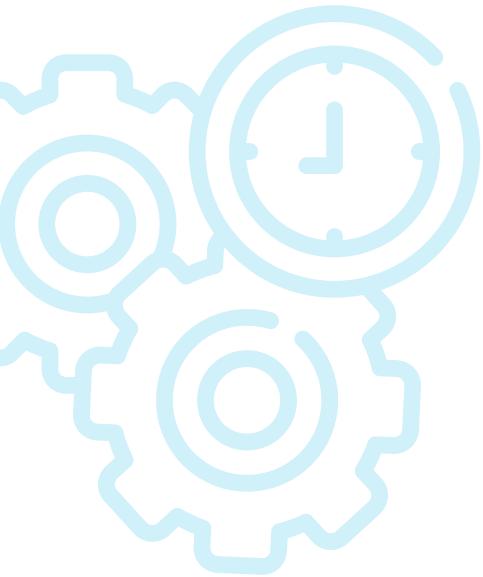
[Online Learning Management Systems](#) are a fantastic resource for providing personalised, manageable learning and leaders should be making the most of them. ■■■



Productivity and Performance

If an employee is not performing in their role, whether in this crisis period or more generally, then that is the fault of the organisation, not the employee.





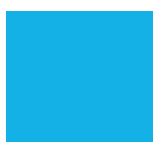
Technology is now absolutely critical to monitor how employees and teams are performing. Without it, you are blind in making decisions for the business.

It is the responsibility of the business to ensure that employees are performing, that they are well and that they are engaging.

As discussed in the podcast episode, companies should already have tools in place to measure productivity and performance. Therefore, it is a case of transforming these tools for digital use.

Technology is now absolutely critical to monitor how employees and teams are performing. Without it, you are blind in making decisions for the business.

It's important to have an easy display of your metrics in real-time during this remote working period, as you can no longer rely on spontaneous one-to-one catch ups or reviews in the office. Visibility and real-time data are key not just for performance, but also for culture and communication. ▶





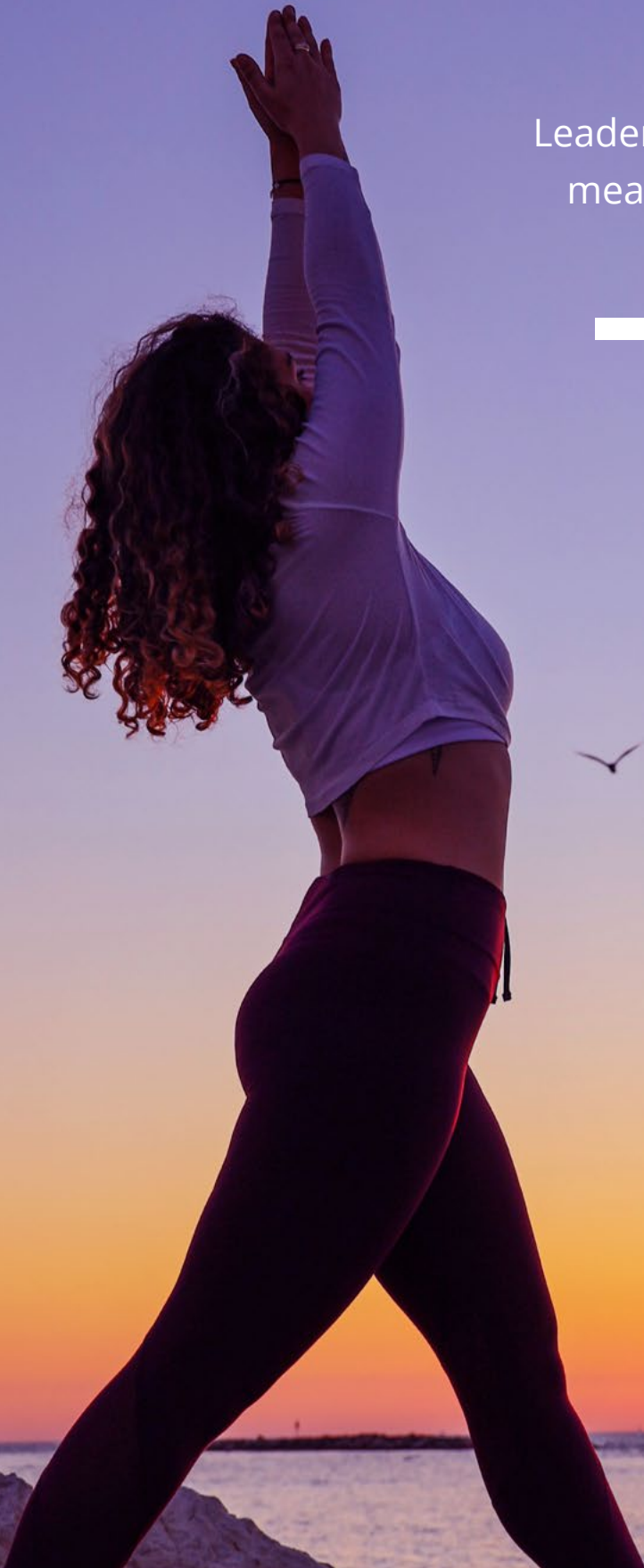
Regular company and team updates regarding performance are vital, mimicking a similar routine to that which was happening pre-crisis – in the “old normal”.

If you do not have clear performance measures in place as a manager, it is time to re-think your processes and invest in a reliable, easy-to-use tool or [performance management](#) software platform.

The success of your organisation depends on it. ■■

Supporting Employee Wellbeing

Leaders will be fiercely judged and measured on their ability to look after their staff in this time.



Today more than ever, employees are heavily focussed on wellbeing and what that will look like in the future of work. They will either look back at this time and be proud or they will be disappointed.

Those businesses that already had solid wellbeing practices in place will be in a good starting place. Those that did not will have a steep learning curve.

There are a multitude of things that companies can be doing for their employees in order to protect their wellbeing. Using ELMO as an example from Monica's insights, the social opportunities are unlimited. The ELMOnian culture has not faltered through the use of initiatives such as these:



Learning cafes



'Lunch and Learns' allow staff to deep dive into a topic. Alternatively, 'A day in the life' learning enables employees to discover what other team members do in their organisation. This helps with building relationships as well as operational efficiency when everyone knows everyone's name, skills and responsibilities.



Activities and hobbies

Monica was attending a 'Wine and Paint' session for painting enthusiasts at the company. There were also Slack channels dedicated to hobbies such as running, cooking or gardening, and support groups for ELMOnian parents. The possibilities for bringing people together are endless.

Virtual morning tea

Over morning teabreaks, groups of staff are getting together to build relationships, share stories and have fun engaging in the day's activity.



In other organisations there are examples of "buddy systems", virtual yoga classes and free counselling sessions.

The organisations doing well throughout COVID-19 are the ones looking after their people.

Employees are the most vital aspect of a business, and they will perform best when they supported, listened to and recognised.



Get Support



Do you need further support with leading and learning during this time and in the “new normal” future? ELMO’s dedicated [COVID-19 Resources Hub](#) has lots of invaluable content that aims to help HR leaders navigate through these times.

[ELMO Cloud HR & Payroll](#) can help HR professionals manage their workforce, even while operating remotely. As a cloud-based solution, ELMO helps employers manage their teams from anywhere at any time from a secure, centralised location. All employee-employer touchpoints are covered by ELMO’s suite, from ‘hire to retire’. This includes recruitment, onboarding, performance management, payroll, rostering / time & attendance, learning & development, and more. For further information, [contact us](#).

