Faster Glass
See clearer. Create better.

The Slow Fade

How L&D Functions Can Lose Relevance Without Realizing It

1. What signals are we seeing that our value to the organization might be shifting?

2. What forces might be eroding our traditional value proposition?

3. How might we enhance our value proposition?

Value Proposition Erosion

Hard-to-detect forces that can make your value proposition less compelling

Expectation Shift

Expectation shift happens when customer standards evolve faster than your offering. The dangerous part is that your core service may still be excellent — customers haven't left because you got worse, but because the world around you changed.

- What expectations do customers now have that we do not fully meet — not because we can't, but because we weren't built for them?
- What aspects of our current model exist because they serve us (operations, tradition) rather than because they serve the customer?

Segment-Specific Erosion

Value proposition erosion never hits all customers at once. It starts at the edges — with segments that have the least loyalty, the lowest switching costs, or the highest exposure to alternatives.

- Which customer segments are we losing or underperforming with, and how are we explaining that to ourselves?
- What assumptions are we making about our “core customer” that would have to be true for our current strategy to work indefinitely?

Silent Substitution

Silent substitution is erosion before defection. Your customers haven't left — they've just started splitting their time, attention, or wallet with alternatives.

- What are customers quietly substituting us with, even if they still buy from us?
- What are customers spending time or money on that they used to spend with us?

Friction Intolerance

There is a critical moment in every industry when friction flips from "cost of doing business" to "why would I put up with this?" Once that flip happens, your value proposition is already damaged — even if nothing about your service has changed.

- If a competitor eliminated our biggest friction point tomorrow, what would our response be — and how long would it take?
- What would a customer who has never used our service before find shocking about our process that we consider normal?

Workshop Takeaways

1 Don’t assume you know what your stakeholders value today or will value tomorrow. **Find out.**

Ask your stakeholders directly: What problems are you trying to solve right now that touch talent, capability, or culture?

2 Competence ≠ relevance

Blockbuster maintained its level of operational excellence right up until it filed for bankruptcy. Getting better at something stakeholders start to value less is a path to obsolescence.

3 The same lens you turned on yourself works on the whole business. **Become the people who see what others miss.**

Think strategically about how you can help your organization detect talent-related non-obvious risks and opportunities. Strategic partners help their customers see where the puck is going and how best to get there at the right moment.

> “What we see shapes how we change.
> Where we look shapes what we see.”
> \- William C. Taylor

Want to learn more? Scan the QR code for additional info about:

- Strategic Clarity Framework™
- PDF of handout

Or reach out directly to:

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Strategic Clarity Framework™

A leadership lens for spotting non-obvious risks and opportunities

Value Proposition Erosion

Your offering was built for a market that may no longer exist, at least not in the same form. Customer expectations shift, alternatives emerge, and what once set you apart quietly becomes table stakes.

Core Question: For which customers is your value proposition becoming less compelling, even if they haven't left yet?

Organizational Drift

Culture, priorities, and practices shift gradually. Each change makes sense in the moment. But over time, the gap between who you say you are and how you actually operate widens, often without anyone noticing.

Core Question: What practices, norms, or priorities that once defined you have quietly shifted, and what risks have you stopped seeing as a result?

Capability Atrophy

Skills, knowledge, and institutional memory quietly degrade when they're not actively used or renewed. What you could once do well, you may no longer be able to do today, sometimes without realizing it.

Core Question: What could your organization do five years ago that it can no longer do today? Was that loss a conscious choice or gradual neglect?

Assumption Hardening

Every organization operates on foundational premises about its market, customers, and competitive position. Over time, the ones that prove useful harden into strategy, structure, and decision-making until they're no longer treated as assumptions — they're treated as givens.

Core Question: What are the "everyone knows that" statements in your organization, and when did each one last get checked?

Feedback Loop Decay

Organizations need accurate signals to course-correct. Over time, these mechanisms degrade: surveys become routine, complaints get filtered, bad news gets softened before it reaches leadership.

Core Question: When was the last time you heard something from customers or employees that genuinely surprised you, and what did you do about it?