

# Cognyte Unlocks Its Talent Potential with Tailored Development Experiences

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# An Investigative Analytics Software Company

Cognyte is an investigative analytics software company offering solutions to help law enforcement and intelligence organizations detect, prevent, and investigate crimes and terrorism. Headquartered in Israel and with a headcount of more than 2,000 employees, Cognyte has offices in Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria, Brazil, India, and the United States. Its customer base is also global, with more than 1,000 government and enterprise customers across 100 countries.

By leveraging big data and artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze and visualize disparate data sets, Cognyte helps organizations identify and neutralize threats. Founded in 2020, Cognyte was spun off from its former parent, Verint, and the newly formed company immediately began reinventing its global employee offerings. Career opportunities and employee development are now central to the organization's reimagined brand as drivers of retention and engagement.

## Reinventing L&D for an Agile Organization

Demand for talent is highly competitive and volatile in the security technology industry, which faces a shortage of technical talent coupled with quickly evolving technology skill demands. Given the challenging talent market in which Cognyte competes in, attracting, developing, and retaining highly skilled talent is imperative. "Building an employer brand that drives retention and engagement while minimizing attrition is a strategic imperative for Cognyte. Once we established that as our priority, our main question was, 'how can we leverage learning and development (L&D) offerings to move the needle in these areas?'" shared Nir Tidhar, Global Development & Learning Director at Cognyte. He was tasked with building the organization's L&D philosophy parallel with the infrastructure and learning offerings.

Cognyte believes strongly in developing talent, providing a broad range of experiences, and squarely positioning L&D as a key component of the overall HR strategy. The company sees L&D as a strategic enabler helping drive all talent priorities

### Summary

#### Challenge

- Upskilling employees on cutting-edge technologies. As an investigative intelligence company, winning the technology race against terrorists and criminals is imperative.
- Offering agile and scalable L&D solutions in multiple languages that can adapt to continuously evolving security standards.
- Incorporating customized experiences into employee development to support individual and business growth.

#### Solution

- Selected GrowthSpace, a learning and development outcome-driven platform, to deliver personalized talent development experiences at scale.
- Institutionalized a high-performance culture by rewarding top performers with carefully crafted and objective-driven experiences to support its growth.
- Launched 12 workshops that blended online experiences with cohort-based, expert-facilitated learning sessions focused on accelerating functional and technical skills.

#### Results

- The seamless experience of matching talent with the right specialists and employee-preferred development opportunities empowered Cognyte to meet its internal KPI of creating individual development plans for 90% of its high performers.
- In an engagement survey, employees who participated in these experiences reported favorably on retention, growth, and career development indicators. The reported satisfaction levels were 7% higher than the organizational average.
- The administrative effort required to offer customized L&D experiences was significantly reduced.

and employee experience and takes a measured approach to developing L&D programs. While flashy new learning tools may be tempting, the real drivers behind learner engagement and KPI achievement are effective program design and implementation. Additionally, armed with the knowledge that traditional L&D programs would not suit its fast-paced technology organization, management sought to advance an agile, efficient approach that would enable them to maintain quality across delivery formats and regions. With employees in many countries, L&D interventions had to be available in local languages, easily accessed, and scalable.

## Continuous Skilling and Building of Internal Talent

The security technology industry constantly innovates new technologies and methodologies to get ahead of security threats, giving the sector a perpetual sense of movement. Demand for the continuously changing skills and knowledge that Cognyte requires has focused the L&D team on leveraging learning as a business success strategy. From an employer brand and organizational strategic perspective, attracting top talent is imperative, but Cognyte also understands it can't simply hire its way out of skill deficits. While many skill sets are unavailable externally, identifying and reducing internal skill gaps strengthens employee and customer satisfaction. Upskilling internal talent is, therefore, a critical factor for remaining competitive, especially because a large part of the Cognyte workforce is involved in research and development pursuits—pursuits that are foundationally driven by knowledge-building.

“In today’s world, we have two customers—the employee and the organization,” explained Tidhar. L&D at Cognyte serves both. Employees are looking for learning opportunities that advance their skill set, allow for internal mobility, and grow their careers, all while being highly personalized. The organization is looking to structure affordable, scalable, and efficient programs that advance strategic agendas. “When you’re in an arms race against terrorists and criminals, the technology must move at a very, very fast pace. Reskilling continuously, evolving our products rapidly, and keeping pace with new technologies and methodologies is critical,” elaborated Tidhar.

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Nir Tidhar, Global Development & Learning Director

## Learning that Addresses Individual and Organizational Needs

Developing the right L&D offerings required understanding the unique needs of the organization’s workforce and assessing which model made the most sense for the organization. The L&D team considered three models of delivery (see Figure 1):

1. An all-inclusive option provides employees unlimited access to a wide range of resources they can leverage for self-directed learning.
2. A facilitator-driven learning option designed by the L&D team to meet specific departmental/organizational training and upskilling needs for a wide range of employees.
3. An ultra-niche offering tailored to individual employee needs and goals.

## Bringing Scalability, Affordability, and Personalization into One Offering

Globally, the security technology industry has a 20% attrition rate. Training and losing any employee—particularly top talent—is a significant and valid concern. In pursuit of retaining and developing its top talent, Cognyte wanted a solution over and above these options—one that would offer a scalable, affordable and personalized all-in-one experience that would help employees grow in their careers and, in turn, help the business grow.

Figure 1: Learning Model Choices at Cognyte

All-Inclusive	Facilitator-Driven Learning	Ultra-Niche
Learning solutions that offer everything for everyone	Learning solutions tailored to organizational needs and challenges	Learning solutions tailored to individual needs and challenges
Pro: Scalability Relatively inexpensive, scalable, learn as much as you like as often as you like, course or module certificates	Pro: Affordability Measurable against internal KPIs and possibly industry metrics, upskills/reskills functions, industry-specific	Pro: Personalization Top talent and key employees truly build skills that impact the business, industry-specific
Cons: Generic offerings, not attached to KPIs or benchmarks, may not be industry specific	Cons: Does not address individual needs, expensive, moderately scalable	Cons: Expensive, typically not scalable

Source: Cognyte, 2022.

The L&D team knew that the new exclusive development experience for its top talent also needed to be efficient, streamlined, and cause minimal administrative workload so that the L&D team could truly prioritize understanding the needs of its top performers. Cognyte envisioned these programs as exclusive growth experiences for top performers—a reward for high performance that would reinforce a learning and growth culture. For Cognyte, partnering with GrowthSpace, an L&D industry disruptor, became its best option for crafting an ultra-niche offering that also met its scalability requirements.

A critical factor in the vendor decision-making process was the flexibility and ability to give people what they wanted and needed to succeed. The top talent at Cognyte were invited to sit down with their manager or HR business partner (HRBP) to align on whether they wanted to develop behavioral or technical skills, be assigned a coach or mentor, or participate in a functional workshop or technical training program (see Figure 2 for a sample of the skill categories.)

The ability to give people what is best suited for their needs, rather than standardized programs/modules that assume everyone has the same learning needs, is the flexibility that Cognyte was looking for in a partner.

**Figure 2: Skills Featured in L&D Program for Top Talent at Cognyte**

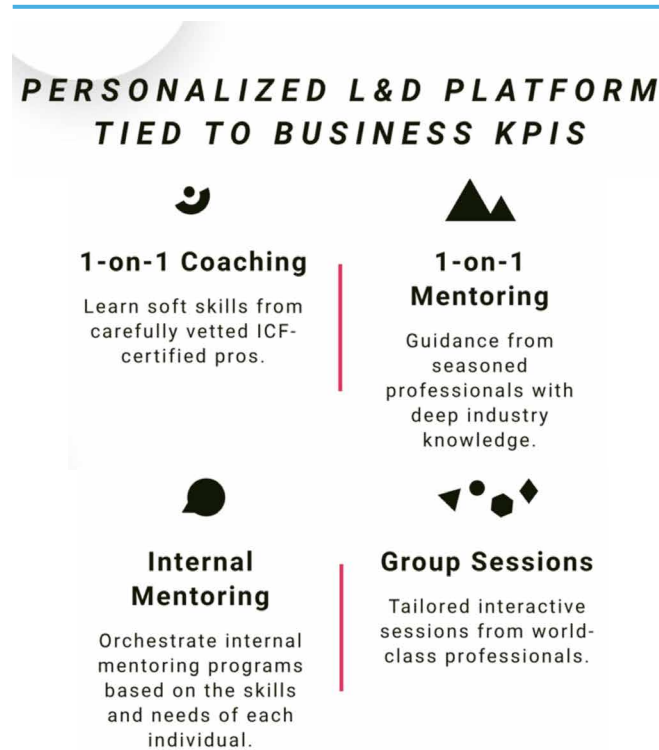
Skills Worked On	% of participants
Management	35%
Leadership	31%
R&D	9%
Productivity	6%
Client Management	5%
Communications	5%
Career Planning	3%
Other	6%

Source: Cognyte, 2022.

## An Agile Organization Requires an Agile L&D Solution

The multi-experience platform enabled Cognyte to build global learning offerings for its top talent, providing them with the content and industry experts they needed to learn effectively. Platform capabilities include one-on-one coaching, internal mentoring, and group sessions (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: GrowthSpace Use Cases**



Source: GrowthSpace, 2022.

The platform uses AI, machine learning, and natural language processing (NLP) to help organizations generate the best expert/participant pairing. L&D professionals can build programs from scratch (including the workflow, the topics, targeted skills, etc.), monitor and manage program progress, and evaluate program outcomes against business metrics and benchmarks. GrowthSpace leverages experts from its external pool (over 1500 and growing) to provide one-on-one coaching, mentoring, and group sessions. Every expert on the platform is tagged by skill and expertise with a full profile, and users have visibility into expert ratings overall and for specific use cases. Internal experts

can also be added to the tool for internal mentoring programs, giving users powerful skill-matching capabilities.

Enrollment in these programs is facilitated with a credit system, which allows the company to flexibly arrange and rearrange enrollment. For instance, if Cognyte planned for a 200-seat enrollment in the 1-to-1 mentoring program and only 180 enrolled (90% of the target), the remaining credits could be reserved for use at a future date and/or for different programs. The ability to shift L&D solutions on the fly is imperative for organizations in volatile sectors that are upskilling against rapidly evolving skill requirements.

## Tailored, Objective-driven Development

In the past, L&D vendor management and selection were time-consuming for Cognyte. “How does an L&D team efficiently and effectively offer programs while finding trainers or managing a list of 30, 40, or 50 global learning vendors?” said Tidhar. “It’s a lot of facilitation. You need to understand the needs of the individual, and then go through the vendors in your rolodex or ask for a recommendation from a peer, talk with three different trainers, mentors, or coaches and do the matching.”

The new platform has genuinely solved the dilemma with its bank of external vendors. L&D teams no longer need to cultivate or manage lists of providers, which can be especially helpful for organizations that do not have deep vendor contacts. Through GrowthSpace, Cognyte can seamlessly integrate internal and external experts into one common virtual space and distribute them across its top talent based on an individual’s development goals and needs.

### Key Platform Functions

Create talent-development programs

Monitor and manage programs

Evaluate, measure, and benchmark completed programs

Leverage the GrowthSpace external expert pool or the internal Cognyte expert pool

As of today, employees’ development areas are first identified with their manager at Cognyte. Then, in partnership with their HRBP, these priorities are translated into an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with specifically tailored development activities. Then the L&D team onboards employees onto the platform, where an AI-generated algorithm enables matching the individual’s development activity with an external expert in the same functional area, role, and industry. Employees can begin their development journey within days. The L&D team no longer needs to find a global vendor, check vendor referrals, connect an employee with a vendor, or even ensure the vendor is paid, as these tasks are all easily managed from the platform’s dashboard. The platform has also automated administration, offered program data reporting, providing real-time insights on program status, and visualized KPI benchmark metrics.

## Lessons Learned

As a global company in an industry that is continuously innovating, Cognyte faced several challenges in providing meaningful L&D programs. Primary hurdles included supporting a workforce that operates in multiple languages across the globe, addressing gaps in technical skills that require trainers with deep expertise, and moving beyond learning models that were not conducive to an agile environment.

To address these factors, the L&D team:

- **Developed group sessions** in the form of 12 workshops as part of a Talent Academy to support the development of standard learning needs by critical functional areas.
- **Created Individual Development Plans** for its top talent to cultivate a robust understanding of skill development needs and aspirations.
- **Developed tailored learning experiences** for the top talent by matching their development needs with 1-on-1 coaches, mentors, experts, or specialists in soft skills, functional or technical areas.

## Results and Next Steps

The new objective-driven tailored development approach is answering the organization’s need for scalability, efficiency, and affordability, while equipping its workforce with technical skill sets that are needed across the analytics software industry. Recognizing the agile L&D needs of Cognyte,

GrowthSpace enabled its L&D team to roll out programs for hundreds of employees quickly and in multiple languages. In its first year with the platform, Cognyte supported 90% of its top talent’s IDPs and achieved the organization’s KPI goal. HRBPs were able to track progress, provide encouragement to ensure completion, obtain feedback, and analyze metrics on the platform—all while ensuring participant confidentiality (see Figures 4 and 5 for the Top Talent program scorecard and participant feedback, respectively.) Cognyte also noticed retention, growth, and career development indicators within the 2021 engagement survey were 7% higher for talent who participated in the program than talent who did not.

The L&D team was so encouraged by the program’s success that the company doubled its investment in the platform

solution, opening more opportunities for a broader range of employees. Additionally, an internal mentoring program launched in the second year of the relationship. This program targets internally identified key talent as well as managers.

With the help of platform data, the L&D team also identified the top ten technical challenges facing internal talent and proceeded to build a series of workshops under its ‘Talent Academy’ umbrella. Each workshop addresses a challenge through a small-group setting. The workshops have had a value-adding effect by helping to break down departmental and regional silos, reducing barriers to collaboration. Cognyte plans to create additional workshop learning opportunities and extend coaching offerings to expand the platform’s reach across all business areas.

Figure 4: Top Talent Program Scorecard

Metric	% Positive (4 or 5 out of 5) Internal KPI is > 80%	Avg. Score
“Would you recommend your peers to participate in a GrowthSpace program?”	96%	4.8/5
“I have made a significant progress towards the goal”	90%	4.5/5
“I had a great overall experience”	96%	4.8/5
“The program helped me be more effective in my role”	92%	4.6/5
“The program was a valuable use of my time”	90%	4.5/5
Coach/Expert Rating	100%	4.8/5

Source: Cognyte, 2022.

Figure 5: Top Talent Program Participant Feedback

“My mentor notices the details, is patient and attentive. They gave me tools to effectively learn and increase my confidence in being able to deal with my field.”

“She was a great coach. She managed to quickly identify what was holding me back and lead me towards possible resolutions. The meeting summaries that she sent were very helpful for me to be able to reflect on our discussions.”

**“The coach was perfect!”**

“Being paired with someone who had a wealth of knowledge and experience from which to provide meaningful insight and serve as an excellent sounding board for my areas of focus and discussion”

“i was very happy that i was able to implement what i have learned, and the we used real scenarios”

Source: Cognyte, 2022.

## About the Authors



### Josh Bersin

Josh founded Bersin & Associates in 2001 to provide research and advisory services focused on corporate learning. He expanded the company's coverage to encompass HR, talent management, talent acquisition, and leadership and became a recognized expert in the talent market. Josh sold the company to Deloitte in 2012 and was a partner in Bersin by Deloitte up until 2018.

In 2019, Josh founded the Josh Bersin Academy, a professional development academy that has become the "home for HR." In 2020, he put together a team of analysts and advisors who are now working with him to support and guide HR organizations from around the world under the umbrella of The Josh Bersin Company. He is frequently featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *HR Executive*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CLO Magazine*. He is a popular blogger and has more than 800,000 followers on LinkedIn.



### Nehal Nangia

Nehal is the director of research at The Josh Bersin Company. In this role, Nehal drives empirical research on key workforce-related topics and the development of actionable insights and powerful stories for today's talent executives. Nehal has over 15 years of professional experience in human capital, with a focus on learning and development; performance management; employment value proposition; workforce transformation; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). She is the research leader for learning and leadership at The Josh Bersin Company.

Prior to joining The Josh Bersin Company, Nehal was a global advisor for clients at Deloitte and published several studies on pertinent topics such as DEI, performance management, and bias. Nehal lives and works in India and has a master's degree in psychology. Nehal has also led deployments of benchmarking and diagnostic products at Gartner for clients across EMEA, APAC, and ANZ.



### Jordan Schmitting

Jordan Schmitting joined The Josh Bersin Company as a senior research analyst after interning through the organization's Big Reset Initiative. Passionate about the intersection between behavioral sciences and the workplace, Jordan pursued a neuroscience degree before obtaining her master's in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is a certified HR professional and brings experience from multiple industries, including commercial real estate, industrial process solutions, higher education, transportation and retail.

## The Josh Bersin Company Membership

The Josh Bersin Company provides a wide range of research and advisory services to help HR leaders and professionals tackle the ever-evolving challenges and needs of today's workforce. We cover all topics in HR, talent, and L&D. The Josh Bersin Academy—built on our research and powered by Nomadic Learning—helps HR practitioners grow key foundational skills. Our corporate membership program provides HR teams and senior leaders with the skills, strategies, and insights to build cutting-edge HR and people strategies through a combination of research, assessments, professional development, exclusive events, and community. In 2022, The Josh Bersin Company introduced the Global Workforce Intelligence (GWI) Project to guide market-leading businesses and their leaders through the challenges of industry convergence while remaining future-focused.

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