



# The new age of L&D

L&D strategies must be developed to fill the skill gap in the current workforce, opines **Rishabh Misra**, Lecturer-Food Production, Nutrition & Hygiene, IHM.



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**L**earning and development (L&D) has emerged as an important practice in organisations worldwide. Hospitality leaders are now understanding the need for L&D while facing challenges and opportunities within and outside the industry. L&D comprises a set of practices concerned with ensuring organisations have knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged employees who can contribute to achieving organisational objectives. As the Indian market is eyeing international tourists again after COVID-19, it has become important for us to cater to them as per their expectations and standards. Hence, L&D has to play a pivotal role in equipping and nourishing the current hospitality needs, helping to fulfill the rising demand for high-standard service and hygiene at hotels and workplaces.

To ensure that Indian hospitality businesses can compete on a global scale, L&D strategies must be implemented to fill the skill gap in the current workforce. Most of the Indian hospitality conglomerates expanding overseas have also invested heavily in training and development of employees. This has become a prerequisite for empowering them to sustain themselves in the global market. Most organisations have redubbed the term 'training' as 'learning and development' to make it more meaningful and not restrict it to just the induction or orientation

phase, but also impart hands-on skills, attitude building, and on-the-job learning. The past few years have seen classroom-based training in India evolve into a serious tool for developing specific skills, actively conducted by in-house L&D managers. Companies, in fact, have begun to invest in equipping their L&D managers.

L&D managers face different challenges, including language barriers, technological gaps, and a lack of skilled manpower. To overcome all these hurdles, a lot of time is invested in employee profiling by the L&D department and training blocks are formulated. The department must focus on both proactive and reactive training, which enables employees to handle guest issues in a better way. Proactive training is based on learning systems and standards to accomplish their daily tasks, whereas reactive training is formulated based on situations that have caused a negative impact on guest experience. Training single point of contacts (SPOCs) should be appointed in departments to become the eyes and ears of the L&D team. Training analysis is a must for all employees.

Therefore, it is imperative for hospitality leaders and L&D personnel to rethink strategies for designing work, enriching job profiles, and reskilling the workforce to support the ongoing evolution of the industry.