

ALIGNING L&D DATA WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S SCALABLE ANALYTICS STRATEGY



**CORPORATE
LEARNING
NETWORK**

AN EXCLUSIVE SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT WITH:

Madhuri Kumar

Vice President of Talent and Culture
Signify Health

INTRODUCTION

Data proves the value and worth of L&D departments to the greater organization. However, determining which data to collect, how to collect it, how to display it, how to utilize it to problem-solve and how to align it with company goals is a challenge for many learning executives.



Madhuri Kumar, Vice President of Talent and Culture at Signify Health and speaker at the November CLO Exchange in Chicago, gave us valuable insight into how to address this issue and others.



Q: WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND AND EXPERTISE?

I'm the Vice President of Talent and Culture at Signify Health. We are a mid-market healthcare tech firm focused on driving Value-based Care, including in-home health evaluations. Serving Medicare Advantage members, we have created a vast network of providers (aka clinicians and care facilities), and payors (aka insurance providers) thereby driving down cost and increasing the quality of care delivered. We're really trying to make sure that Medicare stays solvent. It's a really exciting mission to be working for.

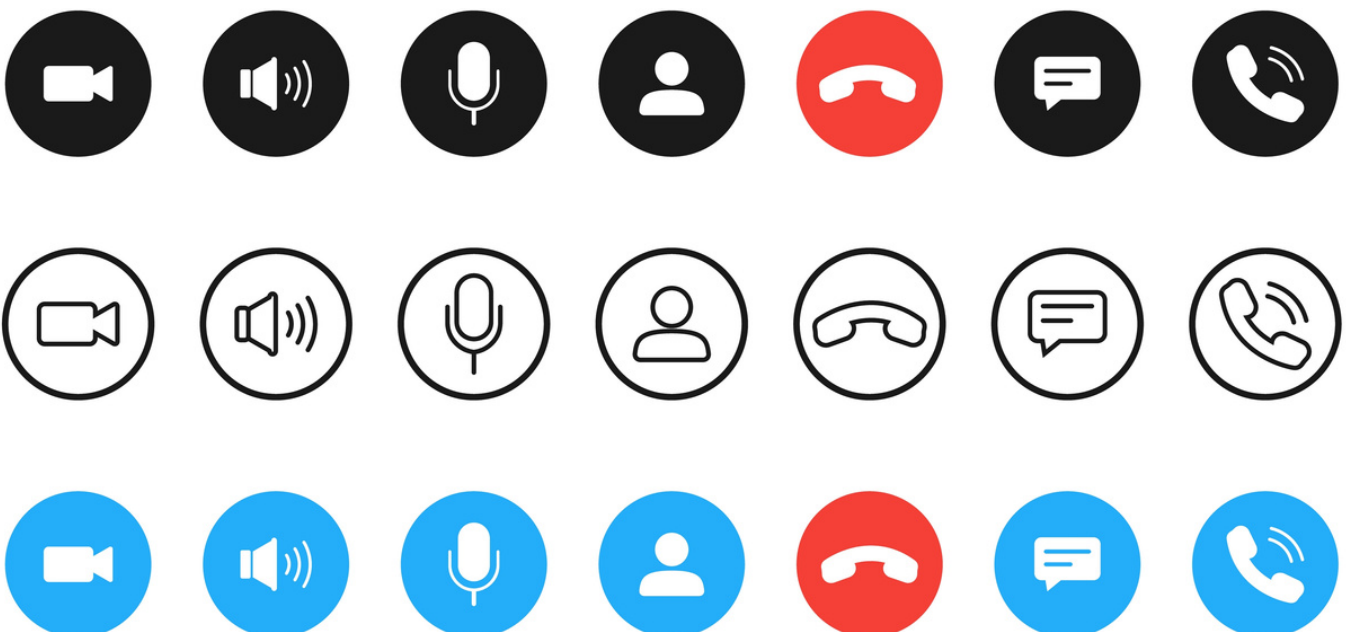


I've worked for close to 20 years now in the talent space. I started with very traditional L&D – I was in higher ed for the first decade of my career. It was a very exciting time when most universities were trying to use technology to “hybridize” their curriculums to increase access and improve quality. Then, I got recruited into successive corporate roles, including Fortune 500 companies like GE and Halliburton. Thereafter, I have led Talent and L&D teams in tech, healthcare and a non-profit. All of which involved leading transformation work around L&D. Each time, I was hired into a new role to fix something or build teams, functions and processes, so I'm basically a builder.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THAT YOU'RE FACING IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY WHEN IT COMES TO L&D?

I don't think I find any unique issues – the challenges are universal. Most of them stem from the massive shifts that we experienced during and after the pandemic. I'm a big believer that L&D is the biggest driver of culture in an organization, and the reason I say that is that the areas you invest in to help your employees grow and thrive signal what is important to the organization, and that drives culture.

During the pandemic, leadership skills were put to the test with the move to remote work and having to manage people via Zoom windows. What I learned was that we didn't need anything new. We needed to go back to basics, and we needed to get really good at feedback. We needed to get really good at coaching, because that's what was needed most at a distance. Leaders doubling down on the basics became very important, and that's what we've been doing at Signify Health: doubling down on that. We have brought in programs that were either refreshers or that helped build those basic skills for leaders who may have never received that foundation in the first place.



Q: SPEAKING OF L&D ALIGNING WITH COMPANY CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, HOW DOES DATA PLAY INTO THAT?

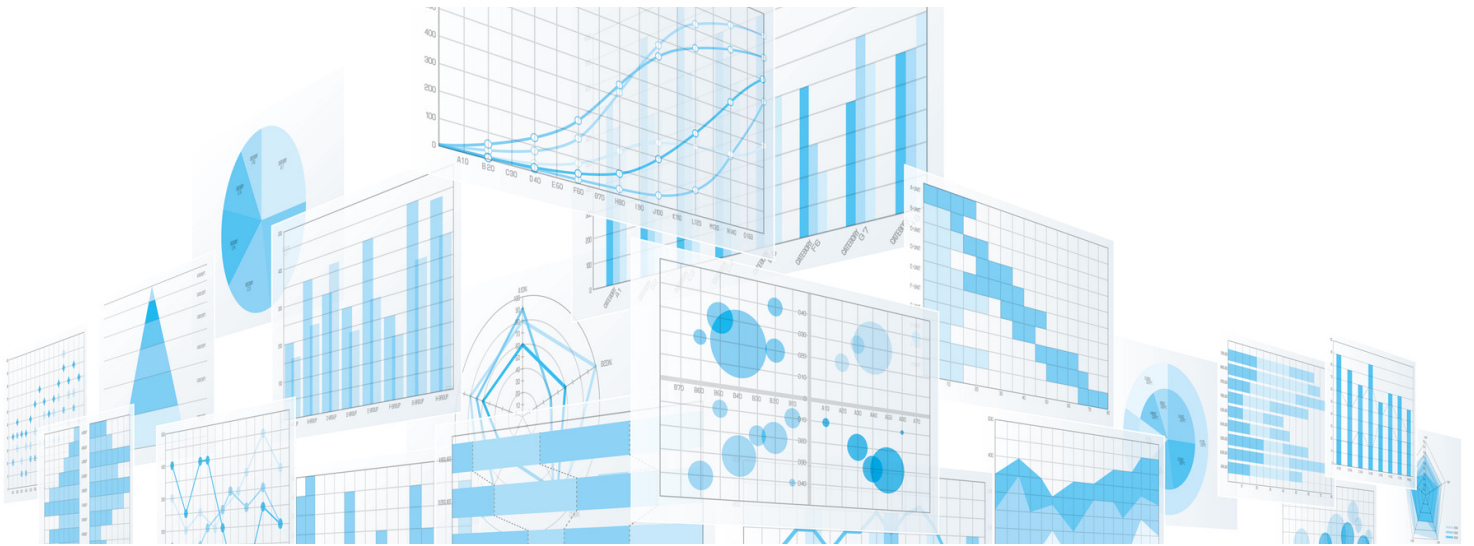
I have been leading with a data-centric approach in which you collect data consistently from start to finish. You think about the metrics before you even get started. And you intentionally take time to understand the impact on the business metrics for anything that you initiate or any change that you're trying to drive. That means getting on the same page with the business on the scorecard. That's important. That's why I'm excited about this topic – this is a weak spot in many organizations' L&D teams.

Q: WHICH METHODS DO YOU USE TO COLLECT DATA?

There are multiple sources of data. It's not just surveys – it's your tech platforms, like your HRIS (Human Resources Information System) and the data it reveals around hiring and turnover. You also have your engagement platforms that you use to measure your employee journeys, from onboarding surveys to engagement surveys to exit surveys. You've got your performance management platforms, which provide leaders with dashboards to track goals management, and quarterly check-ins and ratings, if you use performance ratings. This is what I've been doing in every transformation role – bringing in robust tools for all of these components and taking a data-based approach. I believe very strongly in putting data and dashboards in the hands of the people managers, so when they lead people and teams, they are empowered with tools, not begging HR for data. Dashboards are key to scaling analytics. And good platforms focus on this differentiating strength. I look for this when making platform decisions.

Q: WHEN YOU WANT TO SHOW HOW L&D IS MEETING ITS GOALS, HOW DO YOU DECIDE HOW TO AGGREGATE THE DATA AND WHICH DATA TO PRESENT?

It starts with looking at each department and what's of value, looking at their engagement/productivity, listening to their leadership teams, looking at feedback from employees and pulling it all together. Last year, when I started this role, I asked the L&D team to pull a report on program utilization. Based on that, we decided to discontinue some programs that were not being utilized, and to keep the one that were, and make the case that it needed to be funded.

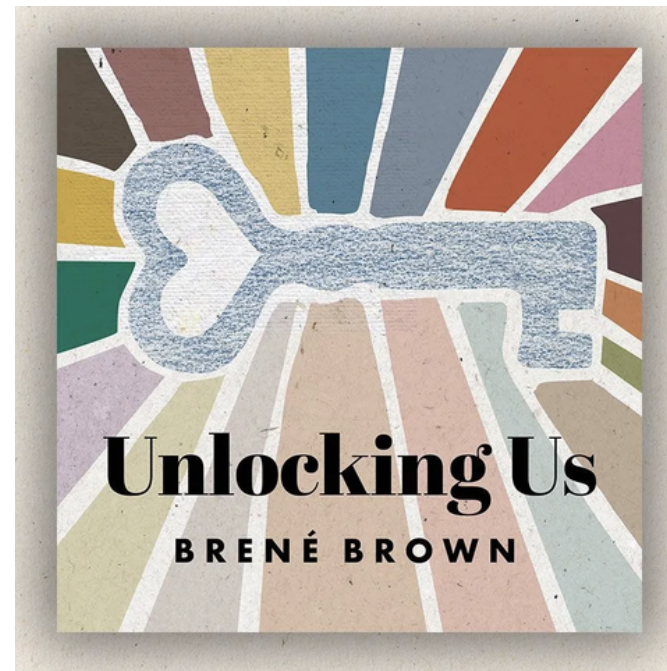
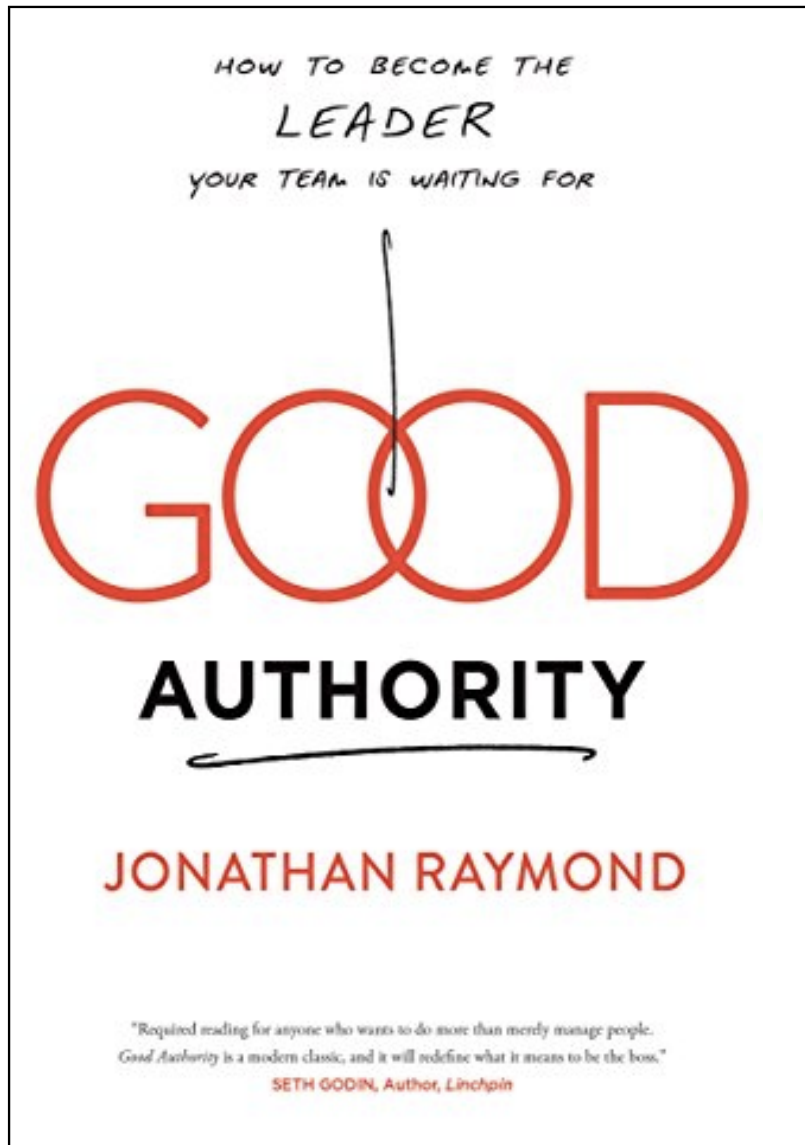


It was also important to understand from the leaders what they wanted. For example, their big ask was for us to fix performance management. Our year one budget is primarily based on streamlining performance management, and it's not just processes – it's also tools and behaviors, and behaviors require training. So, building out the case of what would streamline the process, but then also what would be required for change management was essential. I also use benchmarks to guide and influence decisions. These benchmarks, such as L&D investment per employee, are really important because leaders need context and awareness.

It's never enough to focus on just utilization. Data that shows impact is critical. I am a big fan of feedback on leader effectiveness data and collating it with those who are actively taking development programs, because it is the behavior change we are after.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE BOOKS, BOTH PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL?

I read a lot but don't have a single favorite. To name one here – *Good Authority* by my friend Jonathan Raymond – it's a book that has touched me the most professionally. I don't read much fiction, or for fun, but I do listen to podcasts a lot. Personally, I am hooked on *Unlocking Us* with Brene Brown.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Join Madhuri's upcoming talk at the
Global Chief Learning Officer
Exchange, November 09-11, in Miami,
FL.