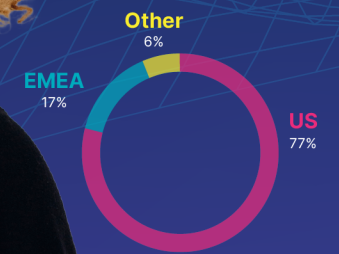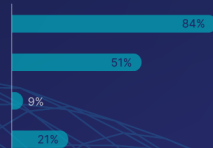**RESEARCH REPORT**

State of Customer Education 2024

Executive Summary

Customer education is proving to be a major driver of business success, delivering benefits from revenue to customer lifetime value. This year, more businesses are seeing the value in monetizing their education efforts and using AI to improve learning experiences. Our data reveals key trends and strategies that are driving the best returns on investment.

The Business Impact of Customer Education is Higher than Ever

The impact of investing in education has grown significantly. Due to training alone, organizations have seen a 56% improvement in impact on customer onboarding in the last 2 years, as well as 21% more influence on customer lifetime value.

AI Automation is Trending

AI automation is now being used to enhance learning experiences, streamline administrative tasks, and deliver personalized content more than ever before—underscoring education teams' need for an excellent learner experience (plus efficiency gains).

Monetizing Customer Learning is Growing in Popularity

Putting a price tag on customer learning is up more than 20% in the last 4 years as more businesses recognize its revenue potential. Respondents reported using strategies like subscription models and premium content offerings, among others.

Investments in Scale, Customization, and Reporting Give a Big Payoff

Companies that reported the most revenue gains from education highlighted two factors: customization of the learning experience (67%) and the ability to centrally manage all aspects of training (57%).

"The impact when it comes to investing in external training shows outstanding results across the board. This is a testament to the function of customer training, and as we move forward, it's inevitable that innovative learning strategies will continue to play a crucial role in driving business success."

- Robin Wadsworth, CEO, Thought Industries

The Undeniable Benefits of Customer Education

Education plays a crucial role in boosting business performance—not just in one area but throughout the customer lifecycle. Our data shows that businesses are leveraging customer training to achieve big gains in areas like retention, revenue, and cost efficiency.

What percent change in performance gains did you see across the following benefits in the last year?

Increased Customer Lifetime Value
35% ▲

Increased Revenue from Education
24% ▲

Increased Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
25% ▲

Increased Brand Awareness
17% ▲

Improved Customer Onboarding
25% ▲

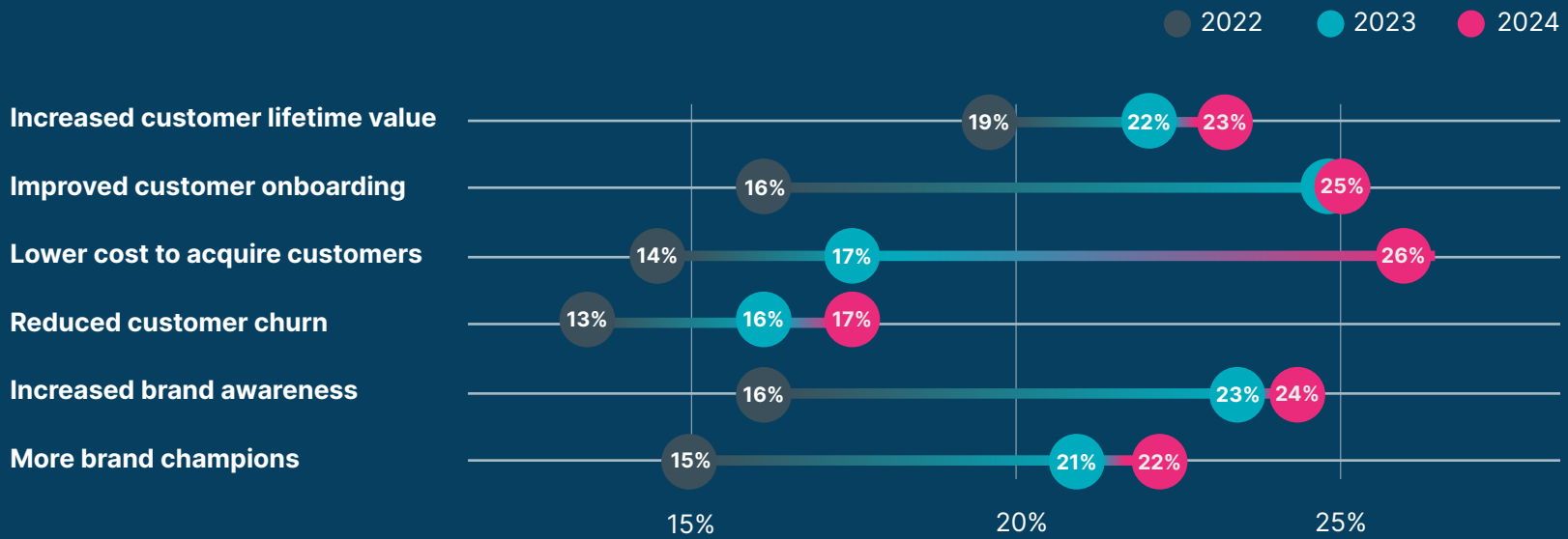Lower Cost to Acquire Customers
26% ▼

More Brand Champions
22% ▲

Customer Education Pays Higher and Higher Dividends

Across our State of Customer Education data over the last 3 years, 2024 marks the highest business impact from training that we've seen yet. As training strategies evolve, learning technology adapts, and organizations invest more in educating their customers, we expect this trend to continue.

In the last two years, the impact of training on
customer lifetime value has increased 21%.

Since 2022, the impact of training on the
number of brand champions has increased by 47%.

Legend: ● 2022 ● 2023 ● 2024

	2022	2023	2024
Increased customer lifetime value	19%	22%	23%
Improved customer onboarding	16%		25%
Lower cost to acquire customers	14%	17%	26%
Reduced customer churn	13%	16%	17%
Increased brand awareness	16%	23%	24%
More brand champions	15%	21%	22%

Axis: 15%   20%   25%

What Are The Most Successful Education Teams Doing Differently?

For those seeing the biggest performance gains, success is attributed to key details in their learning strategy, as well as the functionality of the learning platform they're using. The ability to customize and deliver an exceptional UX is especially key, as is comprehensive reporting and data analysis.

Organizations citing the **most revenue from education** also show the following trends:

67% customize the learning experience for large groups

57% centrally manage everything from events to on-demand training

48% use comprehensive reporting to pinpoint what's working and where to improve

Organizations citing the **most product adoption** as a result of training have the following on their priority list this year:

71% want to upgrade the user experience

55% aim to tailor learning to each user persona or audience

50% are ready to experiment with in-app or in-product learning

Organizations with the **biggest reduction in customer churn** cite the following as contributing factors:

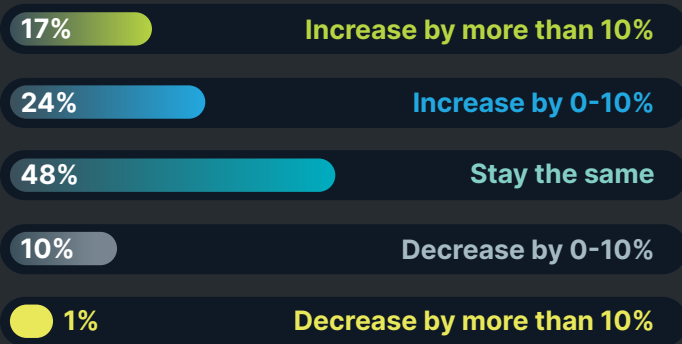**49%** integrated with key parts of their tech stack

67% customized the learning experience for large groups

52% use comprehensive reporting to pinpoint what's working and where to improve

Customer Education Wallets are Growing... But Not Without Challenges

Customer education budgets are on the rise, reflecting their increasing importance in business success. This year, many respondents plan to increase headcount or purchase new learning technology. On top of that, 41% of respondents expect a budget increase. Overcoming barriers like being able to prove ROI of training will be key to maximizing the impact and driving further business growth.

How do you expect your learning program budget to change in the coming year?

17%	Increase by more than 10%
24%	Increase by 0-10%
48%	Stay the same
10%	Decrease by 0-10%
1%	Decrease by more than 10%

Has your organization been able to successfully demonstrate the benefits and impact of its customer education capabilities to senior leadership?
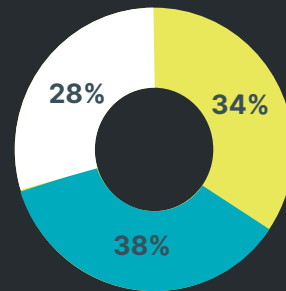
- 34% — Yes, we can demonstrate clear business impact of training
- 38% — We can demonstrate learner engagement or experience metrics only
- 28% — No, we struggle to quantify the impact of training on our business

32% of respondents who can demonstrate the impact of customer education reported a budget increase for 2024, compared to **23% of those who cannot**—highlighting the importance of robust analytics and reporting features as part of an organization's tech stack.

Barriers to Maximum Impact for Customer Education

Even with proven business value, customer education teams face organizational hurdles. Many are dealing with insufficient staff and overloaded teams. Budget limitations and the lack of analytics also pose significant challenges. The road ahead for education leaders will necessitate a higher level of investment from key revenue owners in the business to reach the next level of success and value.

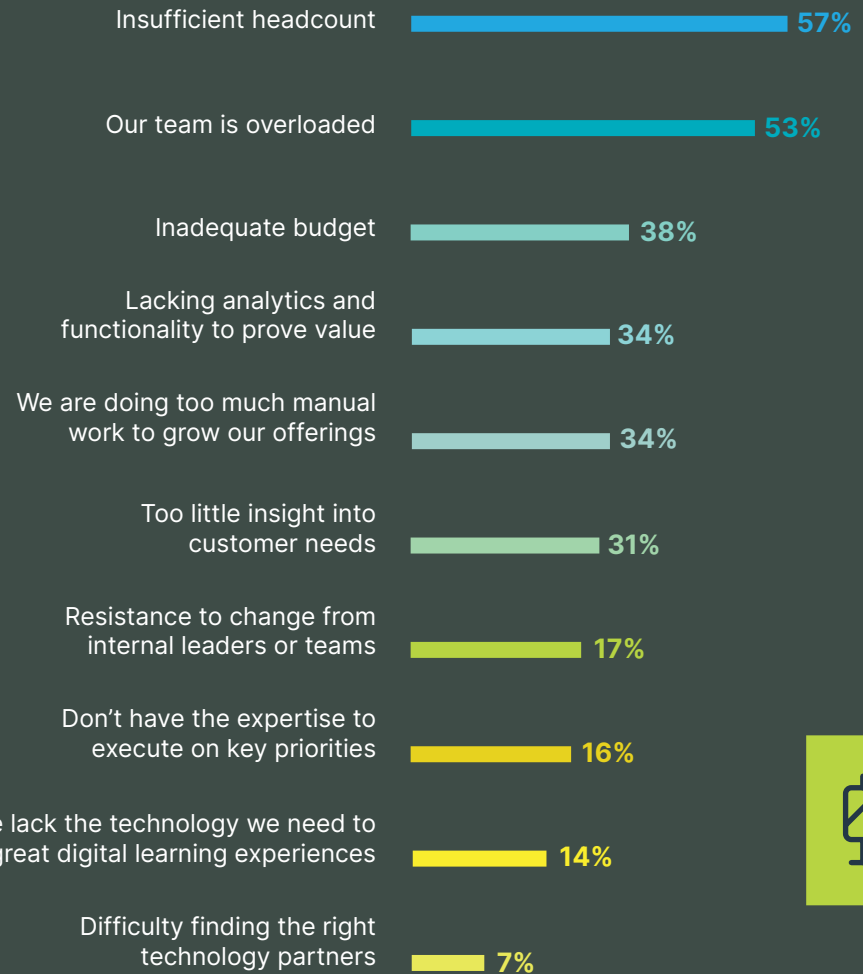**Our respondents indicated the following to be most likely in the coming year:**

25% Increase learning program headcount

20% Purchase new learning technology or increase budget

18% Increase overall business headcount

13% Increase learning program costs/expenses

What are your most significant barriers to increasing the impact of customer education?

Barrier	Percentage
Insufficient headcount	57%
Our team is overloaded	53%
Inadequate budget	38%
Lacking analytics and functionality to prove value	34%
We are doing too much manual work to grow our offerings	34%
Too little insight into customer needs	31%
Resistance to change from internal leaders or teams	17%
Don't have the expertise to execute on key priorities	16%
We lack the technology we need to build great digital learning experiences	14%
Difficulty finding the right technology partners	7%

AI and the Future of the Learning Industry

This year, customer education teams are all about innovation. Top priorities include **upgrading user experience** (64%), **tailoring learning to specific audiences** (52%), and **embedding learning directly in apps** (44%).

AI is a big focus too, with many organizations a**utomating communications** (45%) and **system integrations** (33%). Looking ahead with exciting tools becoming more and more commonplace, teams expect AI to **make content creation faster** (58%) and **deliver more responsive learning experiences** (49%), **driving greater value and efficiency.**

Which of the following are your innovation priorities in the coming year?

64% Upgraded user experience

44% Learning in-app or in-product

52% Learning tailored to user persona or audience

30% Learning data strategy

"AI is transforming training by automating content creation and delivery. By analyzing learner behavior, AI tailors programs to individual needs, boosting retention and practical application. Human oversight ensures AI-generated content remains accurate and relevant. As AI evolves, it will reshape the industry, making learning more intuitive and accessible while maintaining ethical standards."

- Chris McClelland, Co-founder and CTO, Thought Industries

New Applications of AI

" "We're hoping AI will help us make sense of the data we have to give us better insights into how our customers behave and what the impacts of this behavior are on our key metrics."

- Team Lead, Software Company

" "We want to deploy AI everywhere possible to scale and provide value."

- Education Program Head, Technology Organization

What aspects of your external learning processes have been automated (with AI or machine learning) in the last year to increase efficiency?

25%
Communication with learners (e.g. reminders, notifications)

18%
Content creation or generation

33%
Integration with other systems (e.g. CRM, LMS)

16%
Learner assessments and coaching

18%
Data analysis for personalized learning recommendations

What applications of AI in learning do you expect to have the biggest positive impact on your business in the year ahead?

58% Building learner content and assessments easier and faster

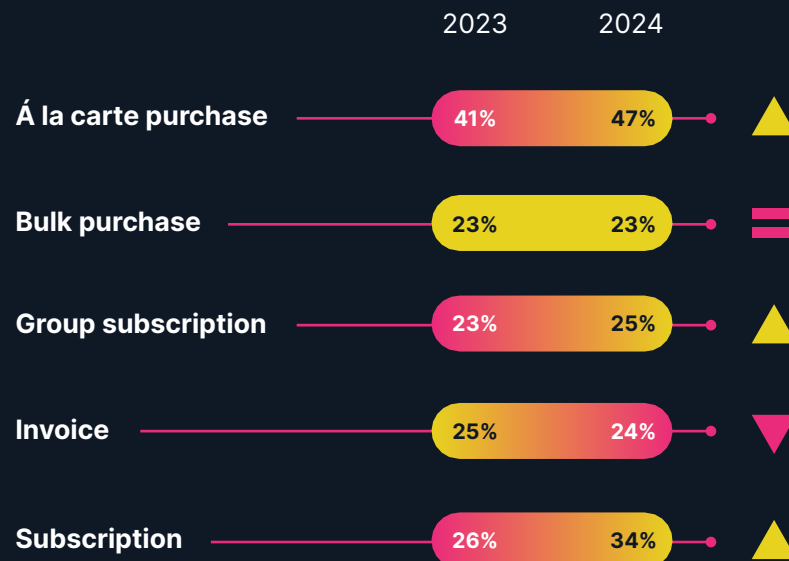**49%** Delivering a better, more responsive learning experience for our customers

49% Automating manual work for our internal teams

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More Training Programs are Generating Revenue

In the past 4 years, we've seen an increase of over 20% in organizations putting a price tag on their learning content. Now, over half of the teams are breaking even or turning a profit from their training programs. This trend not only reflects a shift in the broader learning industry but also indicates that higher-revenue businesses are more likely to capitalize on education.

What is your organization's approach to monetization of your customer education?

	2023	2024	
Á la carte purchase	41%	47%	▲
Bulk purchase	23%	23%	=
Group subscription	23%	25%	▲
Invoice	25%	24%	▼
Subscription	26%	34%	▲

Which of the following best reflects the structure of your customer education?

48% Cost center	**28%** Profit center	**24%** Break-even center

Does your organization charge external audiences for training?

% respondents who monitize training

- 2021: 43%
- 2022: 58%
- 2023: 61%
- 2024: 65%
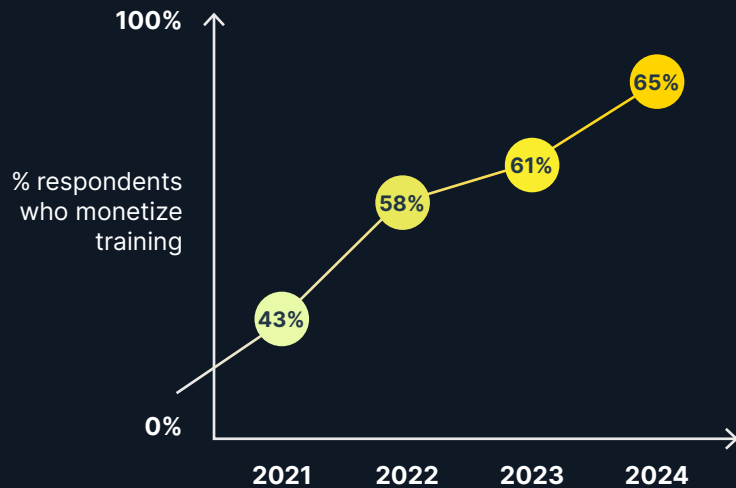
Subscription offerings are rising, demonstrating particular value in this "buy access to the library" style of packaging. It's beneficial to customers and organizations alike. Users can explore and consume content as they like, while the organization can safely rely on steady profit.

How important is your customer education program to your overall business revenue?

**30%** Extremely important

46% Moderately important
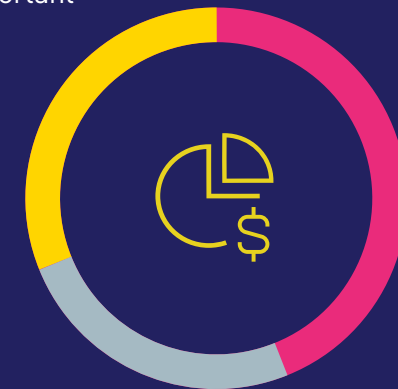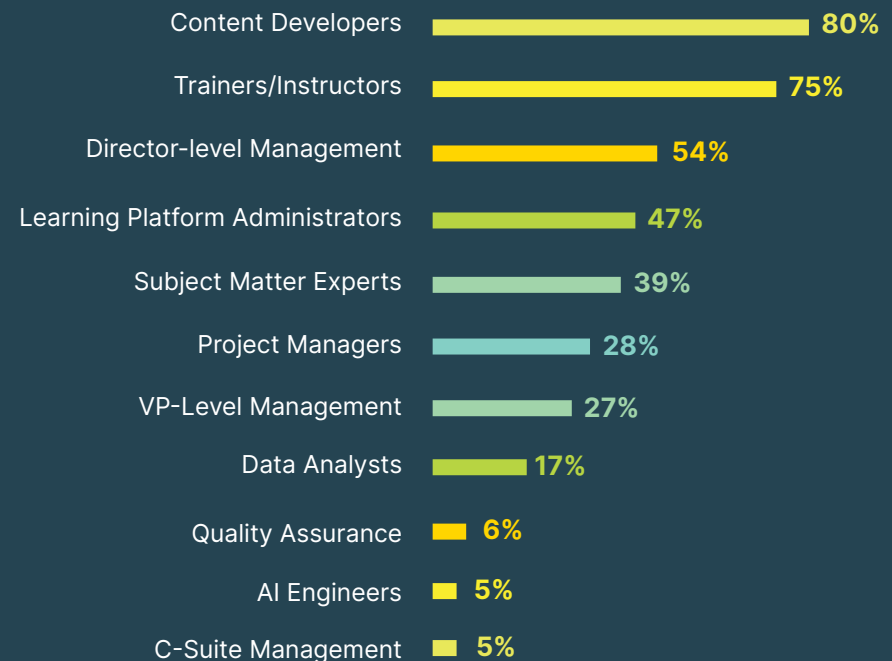
24% Not very important

Growing Teams and Innovative Technologies in Customer Education

Customer education teams are expanding, and contain a variety of roles, from content developers and trainers to AI engineers and C-suite management, highlighting the diverse expertise required to create and manage effective learning programs. Teams are predominantly reporting into Customer Experience (CX) departments, reflecting the close alignment between customer education and overall customer satisfaction. The technology stacks for education teams continue to grow as well—with more and more components and functionalities becoming available in the market.

What team do you report into?

40%
Customer Experience

13%
Product

11%
Professional Services

12%
Sales

4%
Marketing
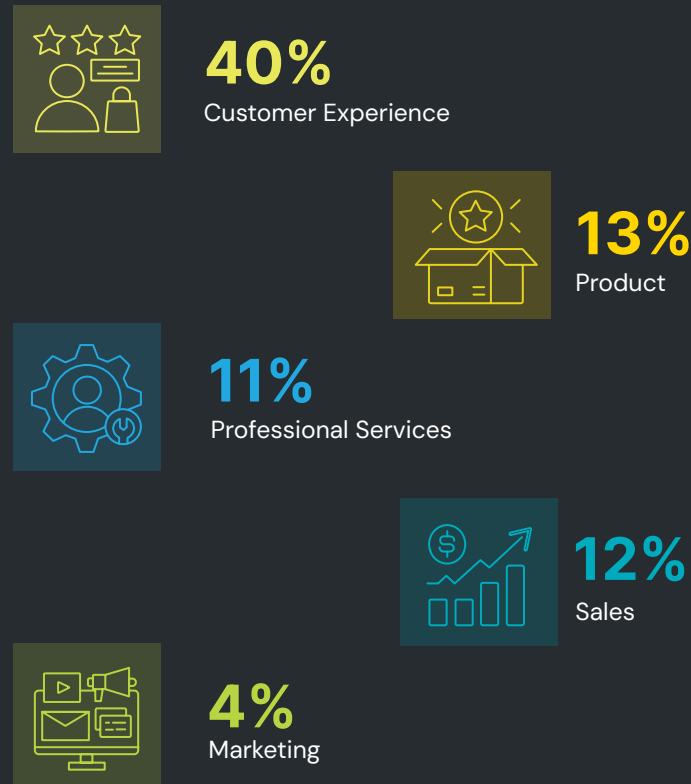
Which of the following roles are included in the external learning creation and management team at your organization?

Role	Percentage
Content Developers	80%
Trainers/Instructors	75%
Director-level Management	54%
Learning Platform Administrators	47%
Subject Matter Experts	39%
Project Managers	28%
VP-Level Management	27%
Data Analysts	17%
Quality Assurance	6%
AI Engineers	5%
C-Suite Management	5%

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Number of customer education team members:

- 1-5 members — 35%
- 6-25 members — 49%
- 26-75 members — 9%
- 76+ members — 7%

Elements of the training program:

Element	%
Videos	83%
Self-paced e-learning	82%
Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT)	77%
Training Aids & Manuals	65%
In-Person Instructor-Led Training (ILT)	55%
Support Articles	55%
Certifications	49%
Product Demonstrations	46%
Badges	36%
Product Simulations	30%
Powerpoint Tutorials	27%
Chatbots	18%
Cohort Learning	14%
AR or VR	4%
AI-powered feedback and coaching	4%

Components of the learning technology stack:

Component	%
Learning Management System (LMS)	81%
CRM	67%
Support Ticket System	51%
Single Sign-On Provider	34%
Content Management System	25%
Marketing Platform	24%
Data Analytics Platform	24%
Customer Success Platform	22%
Community Platform	20%
Adoption Platform	19%
Credentialing Platform	18%
Localization/Translation Platform	12%
eCommerce Platform	11%
Data Warehouse	10%
Business Intelligence Connector	8%

With the Right Technology, Innovation is Unlocked

Organizations with a more flexible learning technology framework, such as a Headless LMS, are also much more likely to incorporate innovative components in their program.

Headless LMS users are:

376%
more likely to offer chatbots

250%
more likely to offer cohort learning

599%
more likely to offer
AR or VR experiences

211%
more likely to offer AI-powered
feedback and coaching

What's Next?
Actionable Insights From Our 2024 Findings

Propel your success with these data-backed strategies:

1

Showcase Your Impact

- Organizations demonstrating impact are more likely to see budget increases.

- Focus on metrics like retention, CSAT, and customer LTV.

- Invest in reporting and analytics tools to show attribute results to education.

2

Scale & Personalize Learning with AI and Headless LMS

- High-revenue businesses are focused on more personalized learning experiences.

- Headless technology rips the ceiling off your potential to keep innovating.

- Invest in AI and tech that allows you to automate and optimize.

3

Let Training Pay for Itself (and More)

- Most organizations now charge for customer education.

- Monetize your most valuable education pieces to offset the cost of production.

- Make sure your learning technology can keep pace with your pricing strategy.

About Our Respondents

Our survey captured a diverse group of over 200 respondents representing various roles, industries, and company sizes, providing a comprehensive view of the current state of customer education.

Roles Represented

Percentage	Role
39%	Director or Program Head
25%	Manager
13%	Specialist or Individual Contributor
8%	VP
6%	C-suite or Senior Executive
6%	Team Leader

Industry

Most respondents came from the software or technology sector, with a notable percentage from manufacturing:
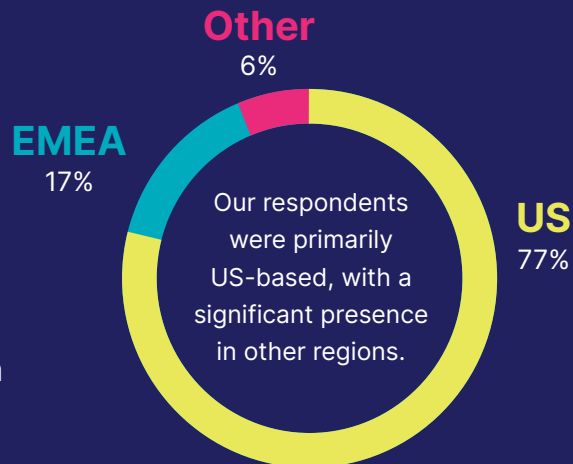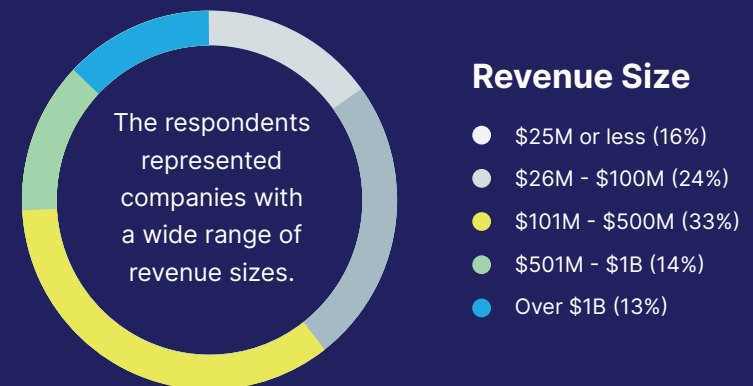
Software or Technology
88%

Manufacturing
12%

Types of Training Offered

Percentage	Type
88%	Customer Education
81%	Employee Training
60%	Channel Partner Training & Enablement
51%	Internal Enablement
30%	Professional Training
23%	Continuing Education

Geographic Distribution

Other 6%

EMEA 17%

US 77%

Our respondents were primarily US-based, with a significant presence in other regions.

The respondents represented companies with a wide range of revenue sizes.

Revenue Size
- $25M or less (16%)
- $26M - $100M (24%)
- $101M - $500M (33%)
- $501M - $1B (14%)
- Over $1B (13%)

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About the Author

Rachel Rheinhart

Director, Content Marketing, Thought Industries

Rachel is a strategist, editor, and content marketer with 10+ years of experience creating content that accelerates demand generation and sales at high-growth companies. She partners with internal and external experts to surface and answer the most burning questions for learning teams, aiming to find new, valuable insights for the industry and package them in a digestible format. She leads the creation of innovative content, including toolkits, webinars, consulting frameworks, and signature thought leadership assets. Rachel is based in Portland, Oregon.

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