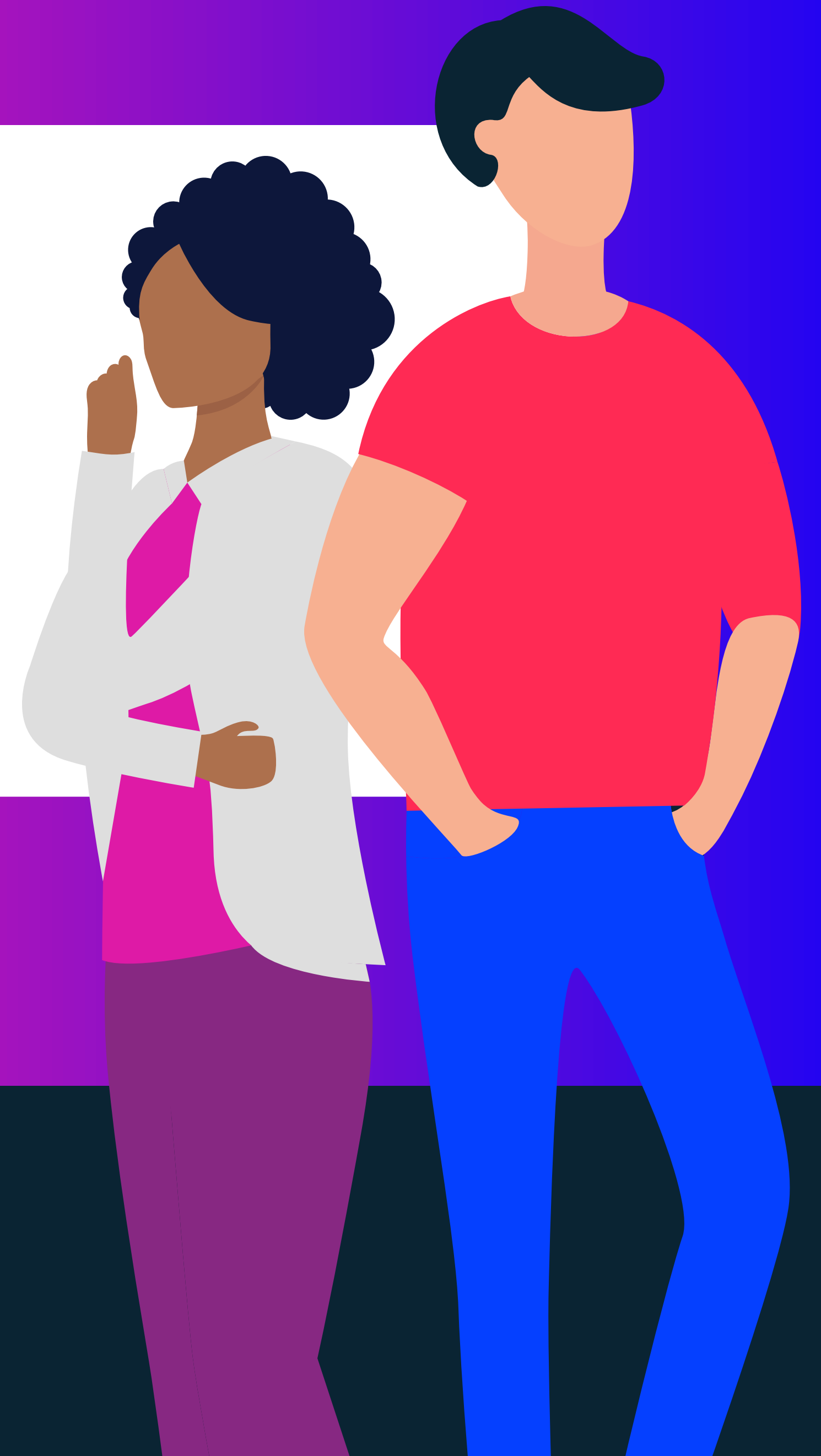
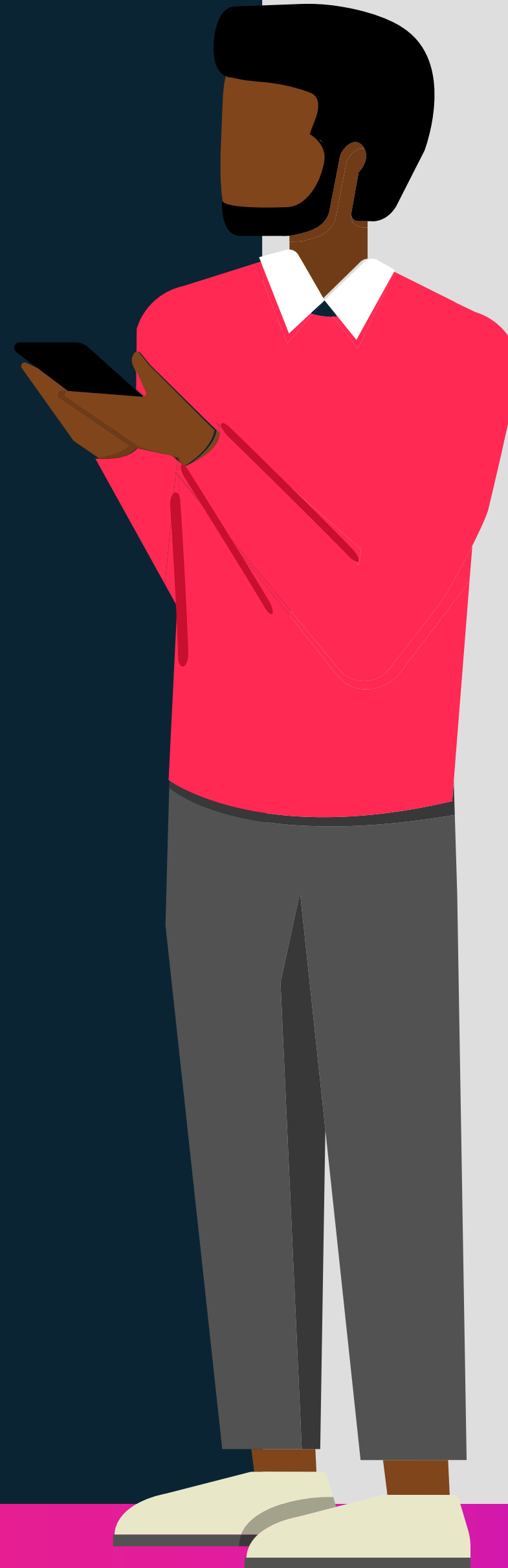


Building the business case for connected workforce development



Workforce development can **support** employee growth, **strengthen** workforce readiness and **help** organizations manage important compliance requirements.

But securing investment often requires HR leaders to connect those benefits to broader business priorities.



Executives need to understand more than what learning opportunities will be offered. They need to know:

- What business problem the investment will address
- Why the organization should act now
- What outcomes the organization should expect
- Who will benefit
- How progress will be measured
- How the investment will support future workforce needs



Shift the conversation from:
“What training do we need?”
to:
“What business outcome are we trying to achieve?”

The elements of a **strong** business case

A business case for workforce development should connect the proposed investment to a defined organizational need. It should also explain how the investment will improve the experience for employees, managers, HR teams and business leaders.



These elements give HR leaders a practical structure for evaluating workforce development needs and presenting a clear recommendation to decision-makers.

1 What business priority are you trying to address?

Workforce development investments should support more than learning goals. They should contribute to the priorities that matter most to the organization.

Those priorities will vary. One organization may need to prepare employees for new responsibilities as the business grows. Another may want to strengthen its internal leadership pipeline, improve retention or address emerging skills gaps. Others may need a more consistent way to manage mandatory training across roles, departments or locations.

Starting with a defined business priority helps leadership teams evaluate the investment in terms they already understand.



Improve employee retention



Prepare future leaders



Address skills gaps



Support organizational growth

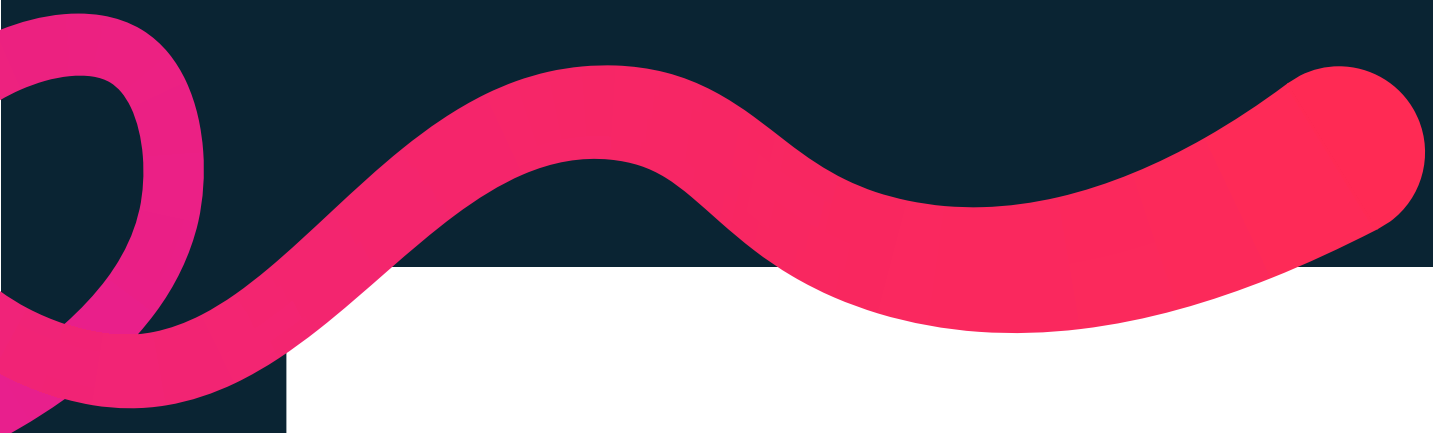


Strengthen compliance



Improve workforce visibility

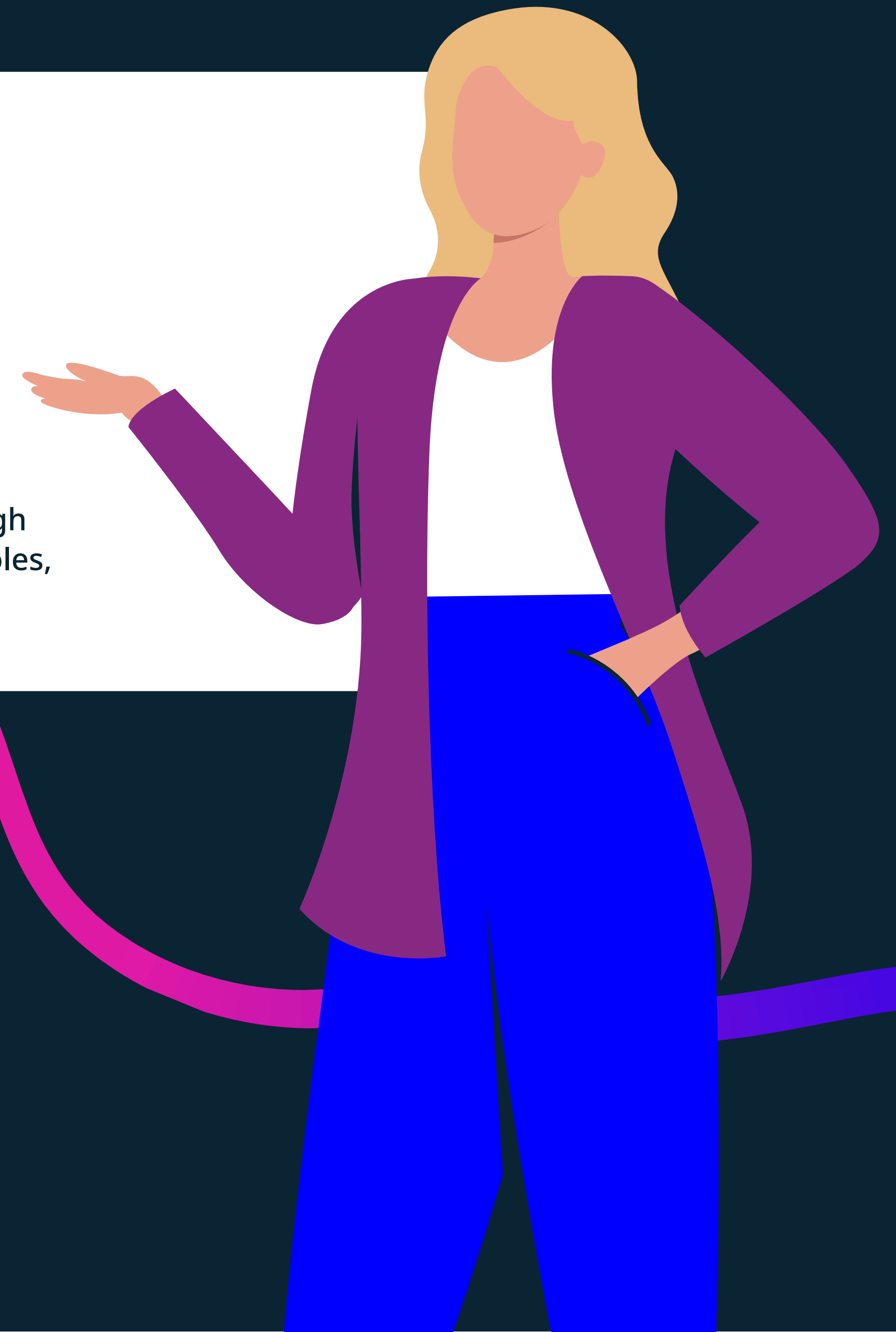




For example, an organization preparing for rapid growth may need greater confidence that employees can take on expanded responsibilities. Another may want to develop future managers internally rather than rely primarily on external hiring.

In both cases, learning is not the final objective. It is one part of a broader workforce strategy.

The business case should also consider how the investment will support changing workforce needs. The goal is not to predict every future requirement, but to give leaders enough visibility and flexibility to respond as roles, skills and priorities evolve.



What organizational priority will this investment help advance?

Avoid beginning with a platform, course catalogue or list of features. Begin with the business need.

2 What is happening today—and what is the cost of doing nothing?

Once the business priority is clear, HR leaders should document the current situation. Learning activity, compliance information and workforce data may be spread across separate systems or manual processes, creating additional work for HR and limiting visibility for employees, managers and leaders.

Current State

Learning and workforce information are held in separate places

HR relies on spreadsheets or manual follow-up

Employees have limited visibility into development options

Managers receive information after problems emerge

Leaders lack a consistent view of workforce readiness

Desired State

✓ Learning and workforce information are connected

✓ Progress and requirements are easier to monitor

✓ Employees can see relevant learning and development paths

✓ Managers can identify progress and support needs earlier

✓ Leaders have clearer information for workforce planning

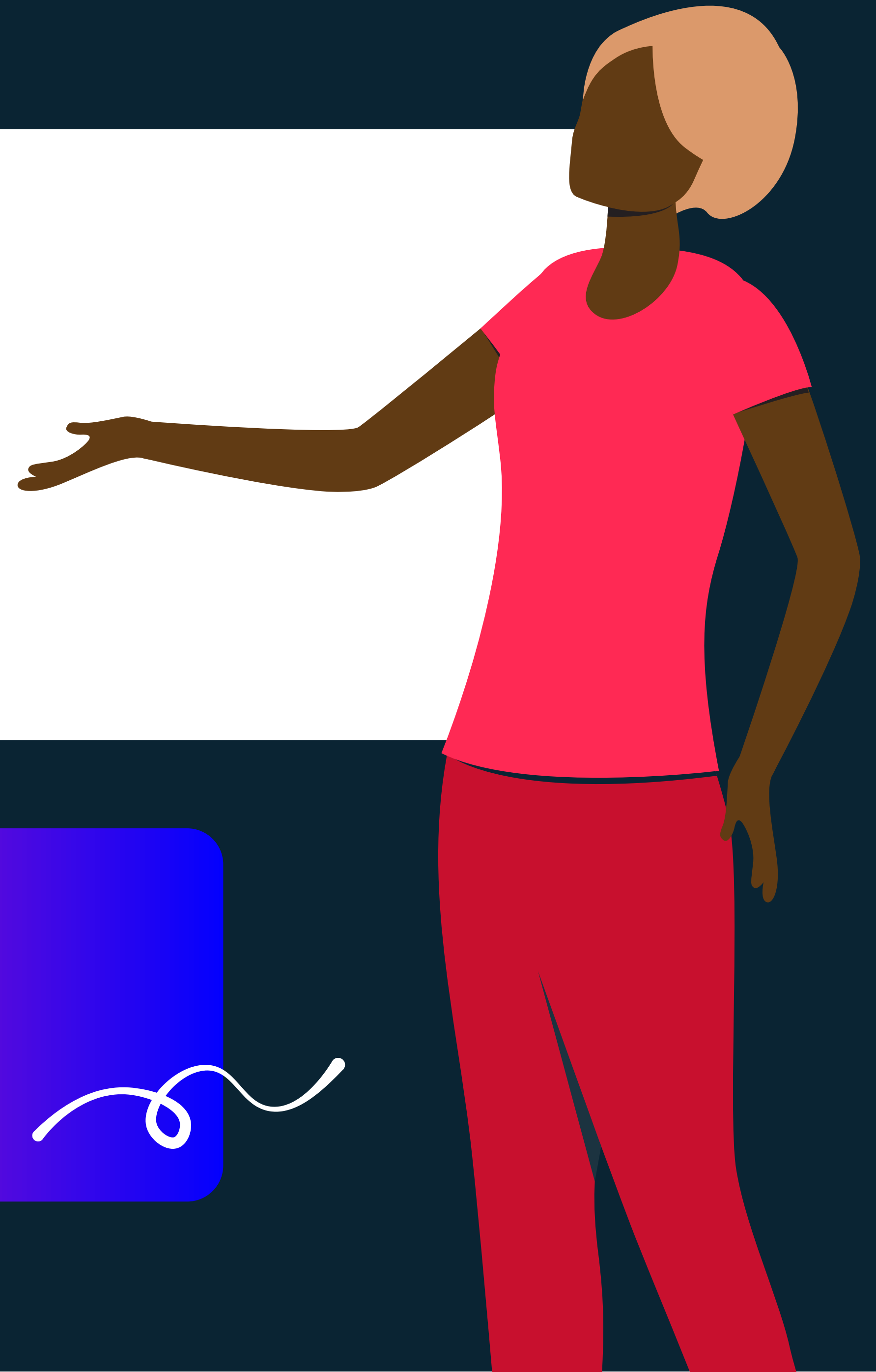
Potential consequences of maintaining the current approach may include:

- Limited visibility into skills and workforce readiness
- Missed or overdue compliance requirements
- Difficulty preparing employees for future roles
- Continued reliance on external hiring where internal development may be possible
- Greater administrative demands on HR and managers
- Inconsistent learning experiences across teams



THE COST OF INACTION

A business case does not need to predict every future consequence. It should explain where the current approach creates inefficiency, limits visibility or increases organizational risk.



3

Who will benefit from the investment?

Workforce development affects more than the employees completing courses. A strong business case should show how the investment will improve the experience for each group involved.

Audience

Common challenge

What a better approach can provide

Employees

Learning feels disconnected from their role or future goals

- ✓ Clearer learning paths, relevant recommendations and better visibility into progress

Managers

Limited information about employee participation and development

- ✓ More timely insight to recognize progress, provide support and prepare employees for new responsibilities

HR teams

Manual administration, reporting and follow-up

- ✓ Connected information, centralized oversight and more time for higher-value work

Leadership teams

Limited visibility into skills, readiness and organizational progress

- ✓ Better information to support workforce planning and investment decisions

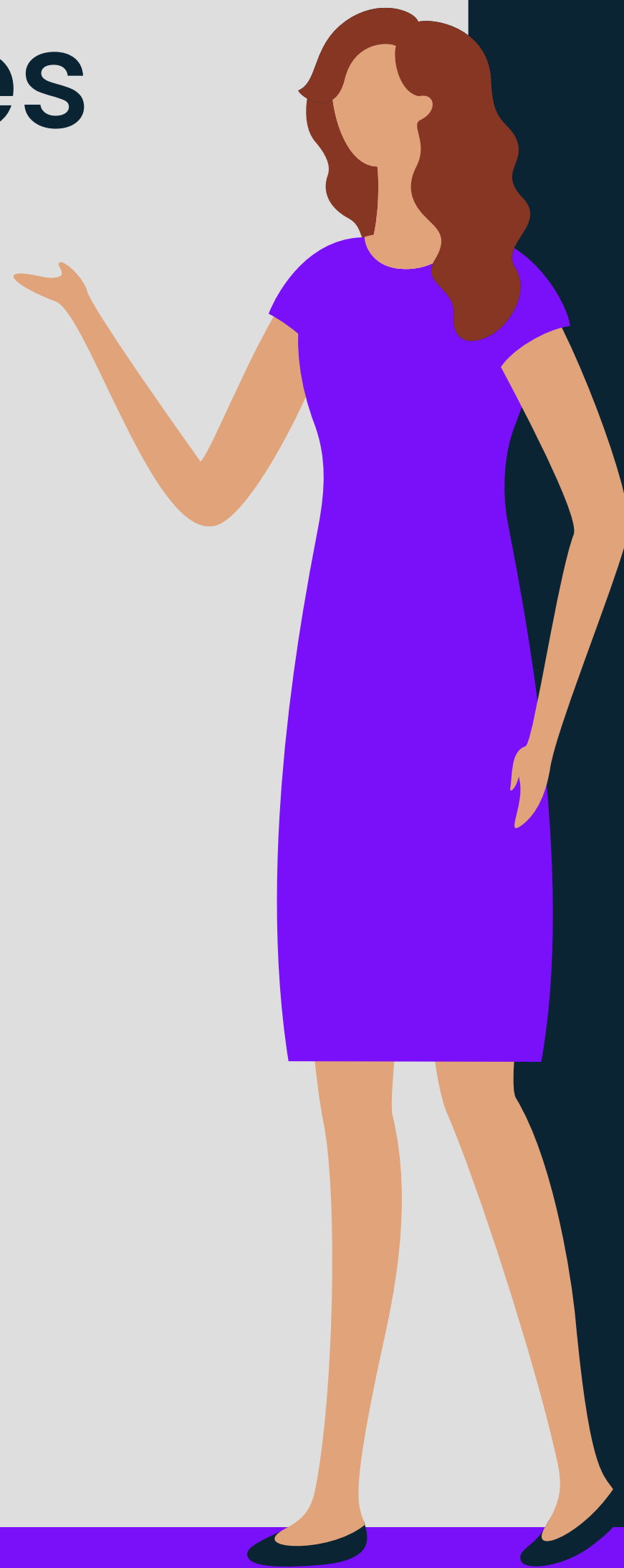


Together, these improvements can make workforce development easier to navigate, support, administer and evaluate across the organization.

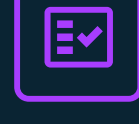
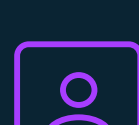
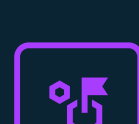
4 What outcomes should the investment produce?

Course completions and participation rates can show whether learning activity is taking place. They do not always show whether the investment is helping the organization achieve its broader goals.

The business case should define the changes the organization expects to see.



Those outcomes may include:

-  Greater readiness for future roles
-  Stronger internal leadership pipelines
-  Better visibility into workforce capabilities
-  More consistent compliance management
-  Improved employee engagement with development opportunities
-  Less administrative work for HR and managers
-  Greater confidence in workforce planning



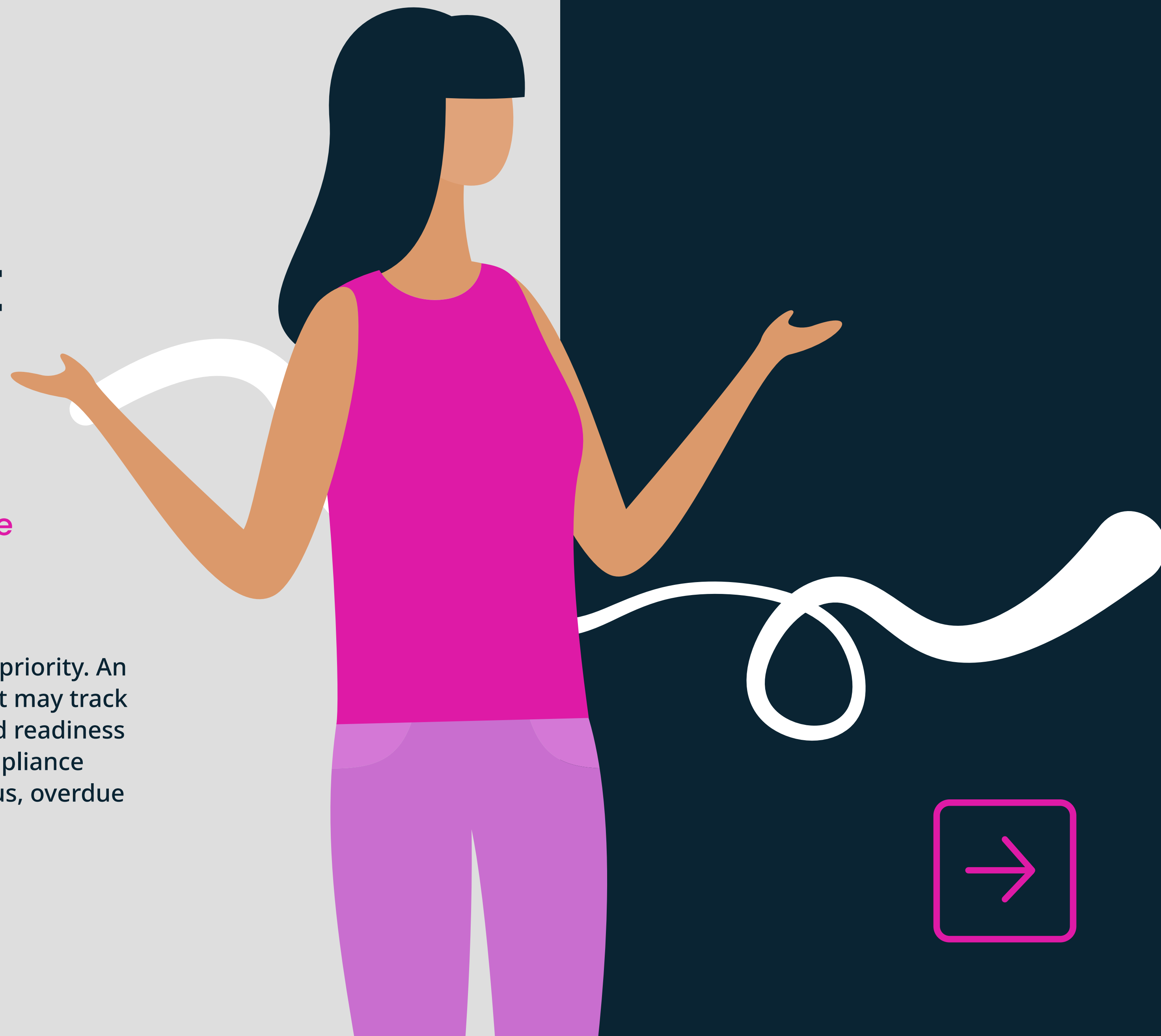
The business case should focus on these broader changes rather than learning activity alone.

5

How will you know whether the investment is working?

Leadership teams should agree on the intended outcomes and measures of success before implementation.

The right measures will depend on the business priority. An organization focused on leadership development may track progress through defined learning pathways and readiness for future roles. An organization focused on compliance may place greater emphasis on completion status, overdue requirements and visibility across locations.



Desired Outcome

Questions to consider

Potential indicators

Greater employee engagement

Are employees using relevant learning opportunities?

Participation, repeat engagement and pathway progress

Better manager support

Can managers understand employee progress and identify support needs?

Manager access, development activity and follow-up

Improved workforce readiness

Are employees developing the capabilities needed for future roles?

Skills progress, readiness indicators and internal development activity

Stronger compliance oversight

Can HR identify missed or upcoming requirements quickly?

Completion status, overdue training and certification visibility

Reduced administration

Has the organization reduced manual tracking and reporting?

Time spent on follow-up, reporting and data reconciliation

Better leadership visibility

Can leaders understand progress across teams or locations?

Consolidated reporting and access to workforce insights



Not every benefit will be captured through a single number. Some improvements may be reflected in greater confidence, faster access to information or more consistent decision-making.

The goal is to choose measures that are useful, repeatable and clearly connected to the reason for the investment.



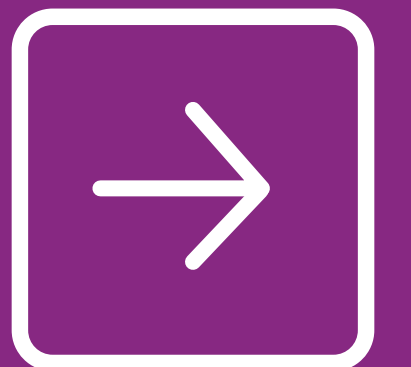
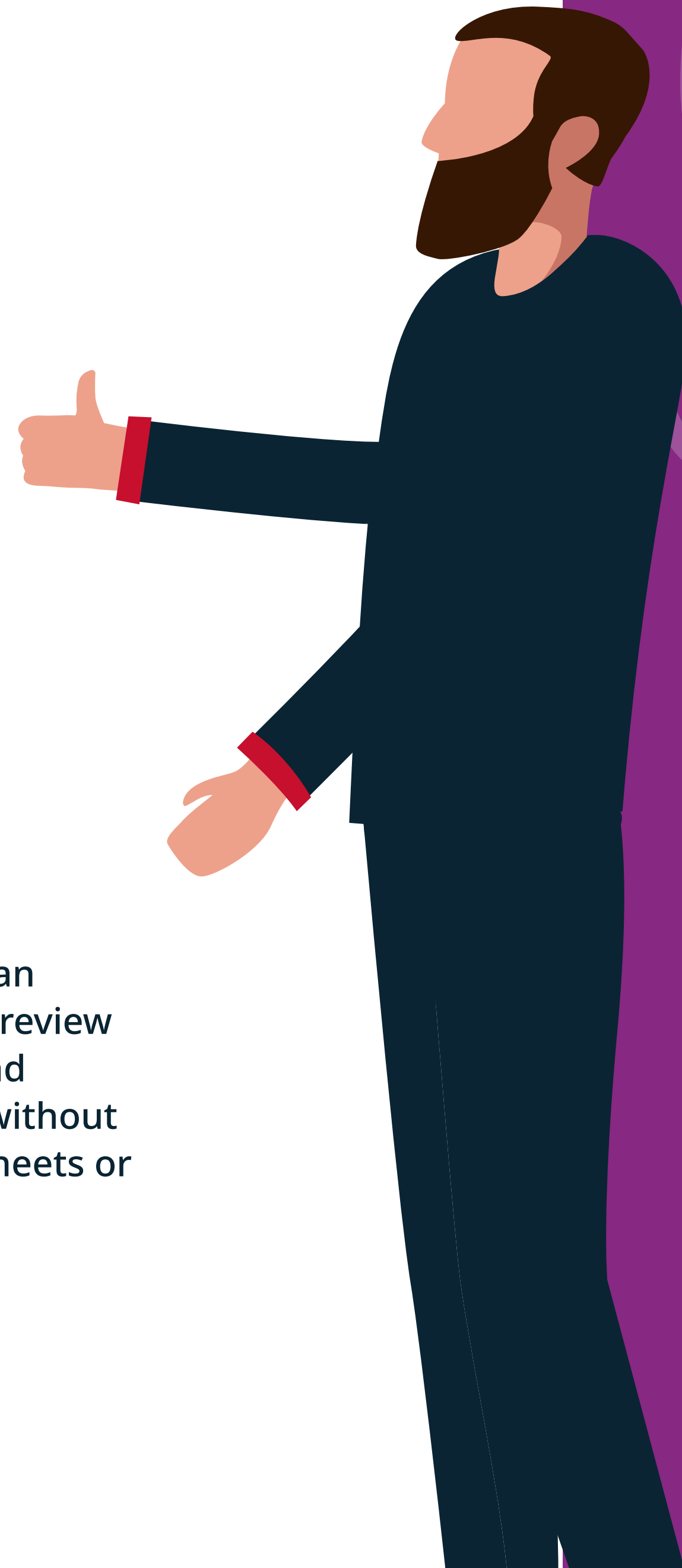
What information would leadership need six or twelve months after implementation to determine whether the investment is delivering value?

6 What operational and compliance needs must the approach support?

Workforce development should be practical to manage as well as valuable to employees.

As organizations grow, learning and compliance requirements often become more complex across roles, departments and locations. Missed training, overdue certifications and inconsistent processes can create unnecessary risk.

An HR leader preparing for an audit or annual compliance review should be able to understand where potential gaps exist without relying on multiple spreadsheets or extended manual follow-up.



Can HR see compliance status in one place?

Can managers identify where follow-up is needed?

Can requirements be assigned consistently?

Can the organization produce reliable information when requested?

Can the process adapt as the workforce grows or changes?



Compliance may not be the primary reason for every workforce development investment. It should still be considered as part of the operational case.



Business-case checklist

Before presenting a workforce development recommendation, confirm that the business case answers the following questions.

☐ **Business need**

Have we identified the priority and explained why action is needed now?

☐ **Current state**

Have we documented the limitations and consequences of the current approach?

☐ **Stakeholder impact**

Have we shown how employees, managers, HR teams and leaders will benefit?

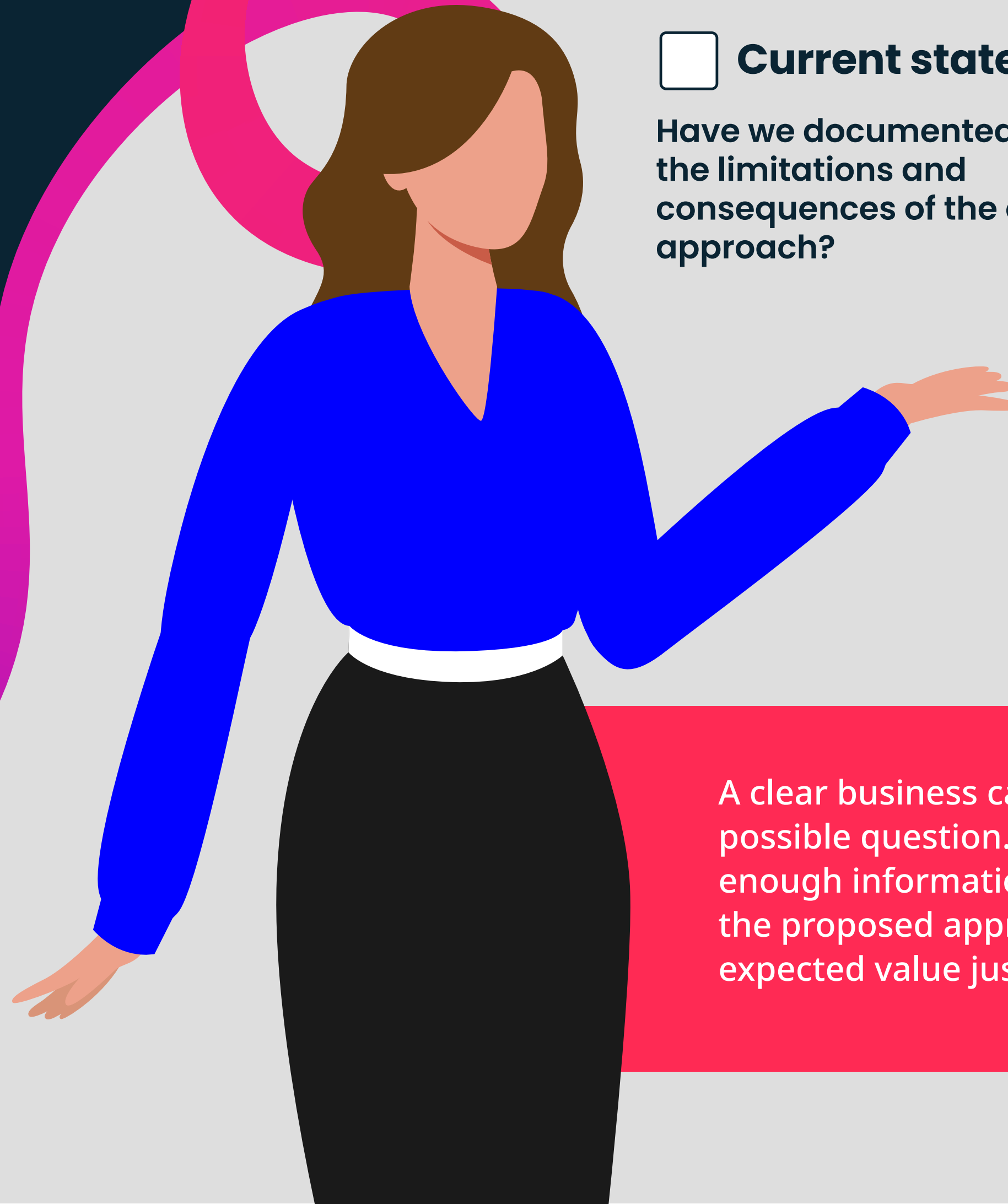
☐ **Outcomes and measurement**

Have we defined what should improve and how progress will be evaluated?

☐ **Risk and readiness**

Can the proposed approach support compliance and changing workforce needs?

A clear business case does not need to answer every possible question. It should give decision-makers enough information to understand the need, evaluate the proposed approach and determine whether the expected value justifies the investment.



How People First Learning supports connected workforce development

Connected workforce development is not simply about delivering more training. It is about creating an approach that is easier for employees to navigate, managers to support, HR teams to administer and leadership teams to understand.

Business-case requirement

Align learning with workforce priorities

Support employees and managers

Improve workforce visibility

Simplify compliance management

Reduce administration and support future needs

How People First Learning can help

Create learning pathways, playlists and personalized recommendations that support defined workforce needs

Give employees clearer access to relevant learning and provide managers with greater insight into participation and progress

Use reporting tools to understand learning activity, progress and emerging needs

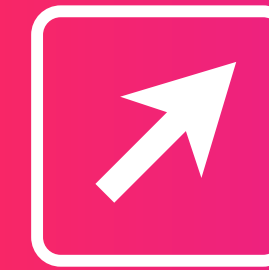
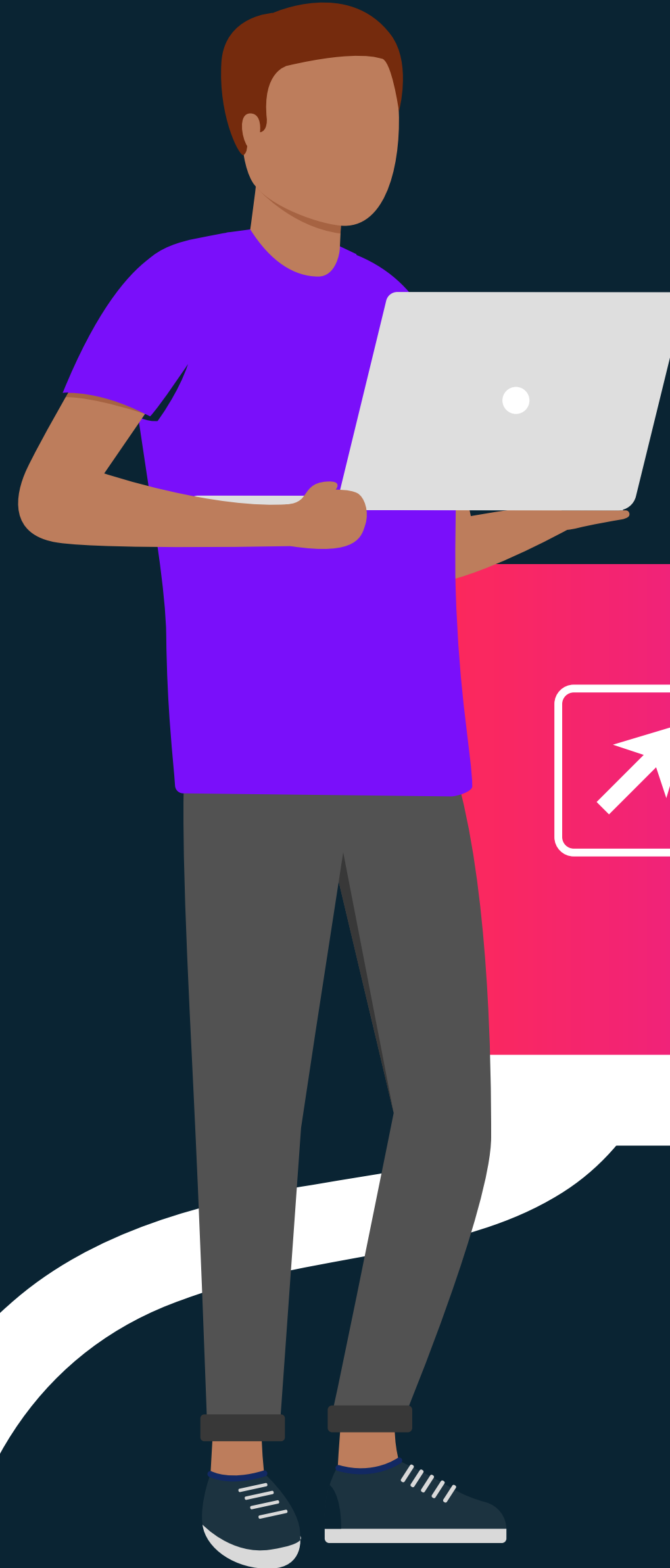
Centralize required learning, tracking and reminders

Bring workforce development information together to help HR teams manage activity and respond as priorities change

Turn **workforce** development into a business conversation

Building the case for workforce development starts with a defined business need. HR leaders should document the current challenge, identify who will benefit, define the expected outcomes and agree on how success will be measured.

Clear answers to these questions can help leadership teams evaluate the investment and understand how it supports broader organizational goals.



Schedule a demo

Build a clearer case for connected workforce development

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About MHR

MHR has been driving innovation across the HR technology space for over 40 years. We don't just meet the industry standard; we exceed it. Engineered with the latest SaaS technology, our product, People First, enables increased employee productivity and organizational growth with a demonstratable return on investment.

People First is guided by what our customers and the market demand in a rapidly changing world.

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