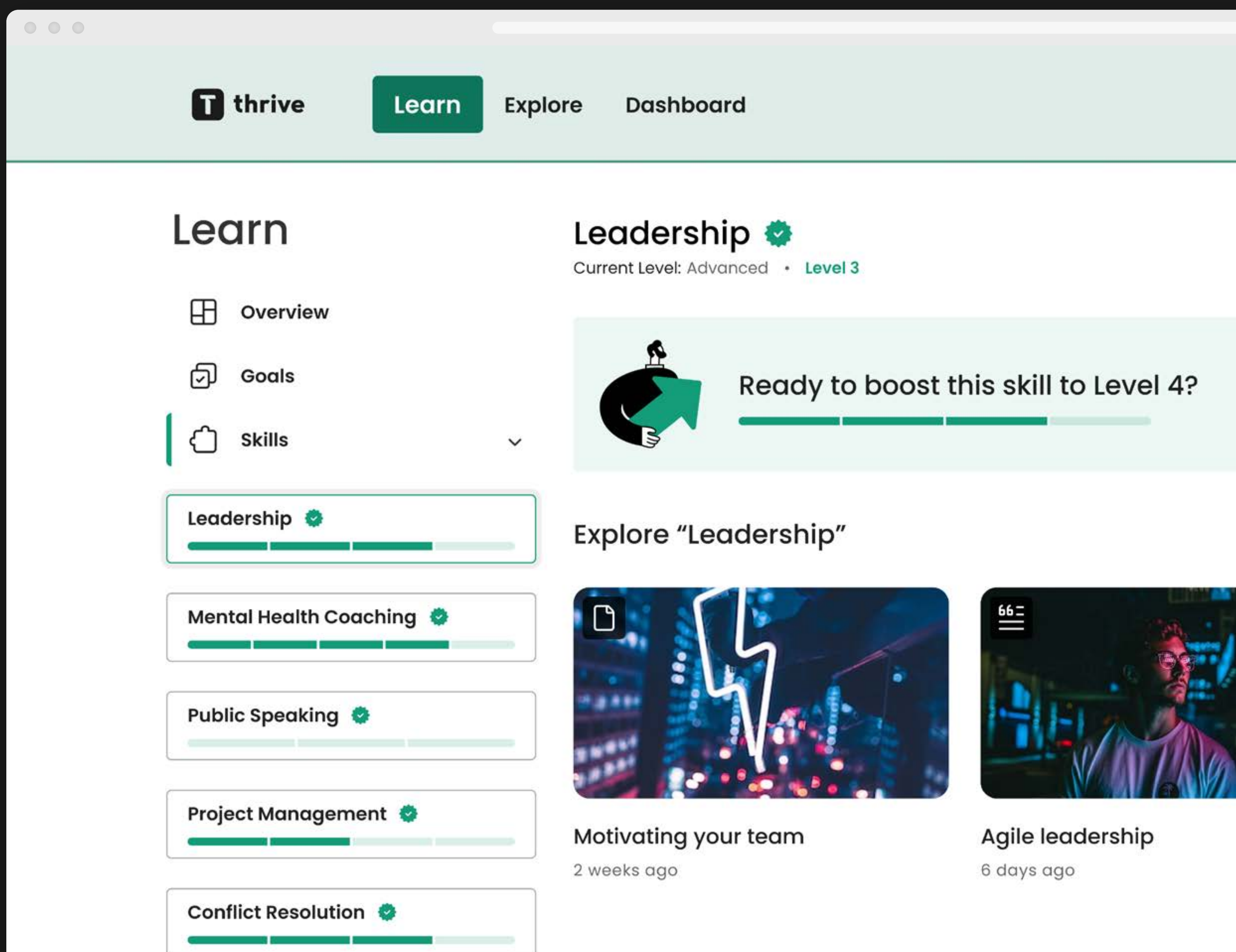


The future of skills

How to adopt an agile skills strategy from the ground up

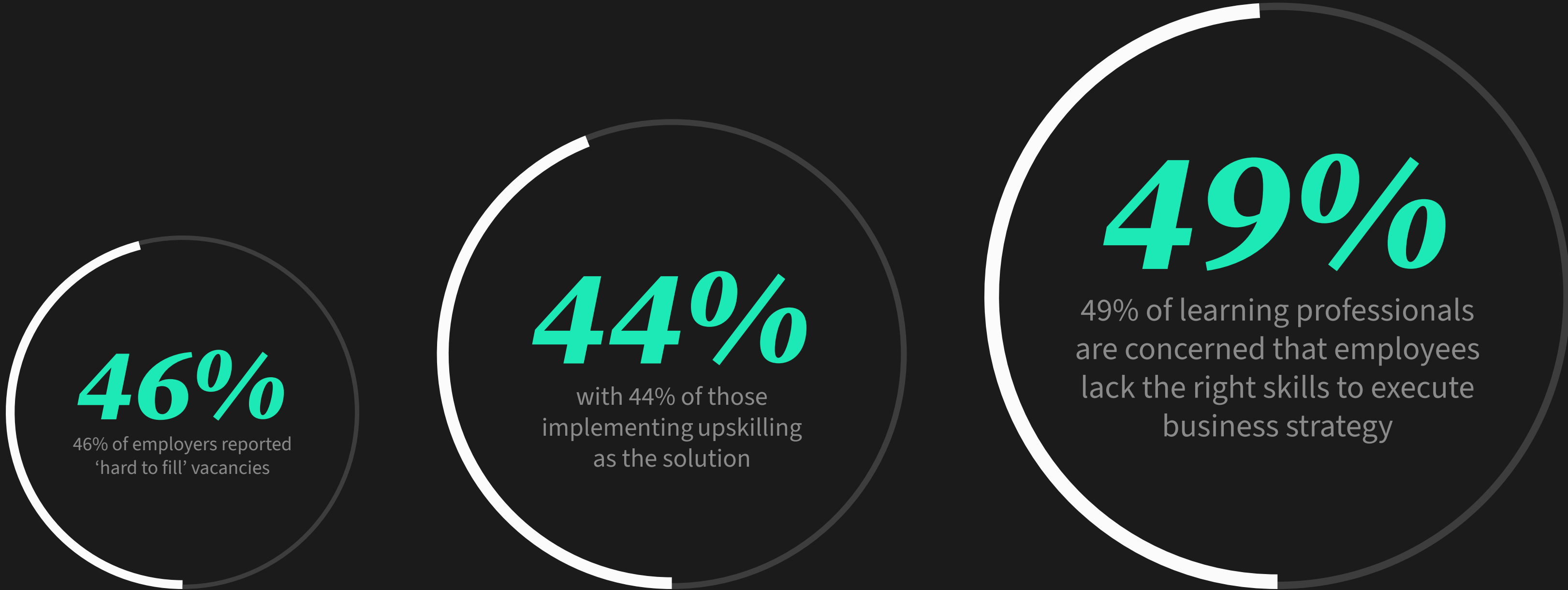


Why should you care about the skills conversation?

Let's set the scene.

CIPD's Winter 2021 Labour Market Outlook research found 46% of employers reported 'hard to fill' vacancies, with 44% of those implementing upskilling as the solution. However, according to LinkedIn's latest Workplace Learning Report 49% of learning professionals say executives are concerned that employees don't have the right skills to execute business strategy.

The war for talent and the need for rapid upskilling combined with rising concern from business leaders has highlighted the immediate **need** for more skills transparency, and a clear way to link the skills strategy to business outcomes - which employers are still looking for.



“The confusion and lack of transparency in our industry are growing; with never-ending acronyms, hidden & additional costs, and ongoing debates between analysts trying to bucket different vendors’ empty promises.

It’s time to cut through the noise and simplify the conversation to focus on more transparency and solving the problem in hand.

With the global learning lens focused on closing the ever-widening skills gap, we’re turning traditional ways of thinking on its head- and adding more technology to your ecosystem isn’t the answer.

Our vision is one of an organic, agile skills strategy that is ever-living and breathing, allowing you to identify who the experts are within your business and understand the new and emerging skills that inform future L&D decisions.”

Sean Reddington
CEO & Co-Founder of Thrive



Skills are ever-changing

The world we live in is constantly moving.

Skills are changing at an accelerating rate and businesses are in a race to keep up. But the gap keeps widening. [Gartner HR Research](#) found 58% of today’s workforce will need new skills to do their jobs successfully by 2030.

It’s true. The way we do things is constantly improving, and as that happens new tools and ways of working are introduced. How aware are businesses of the areas where skills are changing most rapidly, and how able are they to support their teams in that growth?

Right now, we’re seeing a significant shift in the relationship between employers and employees, with the pandemic inspiring a revolution in working patterns, and a skills shortage encouraging employers

to pay more attention to the wellbeing of their teams. There’s an increasing awareness that caring for team members’ individual needs engages great talent, contributes to more diverse cultures, accelerates innovation and equips teams with the ability to react to new opportunities.

With growing pressure organisations are beginning to move their focus away from role-based, generalised competencies and towards human, power skills. That’s whatever it is you need to learn that supports your life, both inside and outside of work - from mindfulness and wellbeing to becoming a parent and postnatal depression.



thrive

Learn

Explore

Dashboard

Learn

Overview

Goals

Skills

Communication

Mental Health Coaching

Public Speaking

Project Management

Conflict Resolution

Coding

Social Media

Fire Safety

Adobe Photoshop

Communication

Current Level: Advanced • Level 3

Ready to boost this skill to Level 4?

Explore “Communication”

Listening with empathy

2 weeks ago

Communication styles

1 month ago

How do you keep track of the evolving skills within your business?

In the [2022 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report](#), it was found that [LinkedIn members' skills for the same role changed](#) by 25% from 2015 to 2021. And it's expected that people's skills will change by about 40% by 2025. Skill sets are no longer role-based pigeonholes, and businesses are having to adapt.

Hands up if your strategy involves listing out the skills your business or leadership team think they need, and using that to assess and define opportunities for growth?

My next question is: how quickly did it go out of date? We speak to a lot of businesses that spend hours of time and resources on developing a formal skills framework, but it goes to waste because they have an expiration date.

And that's because managing skills centrally is nigh on impossible.

Every business needs transparency and agility to quickly build skills that react to evolving priorities, marketplace dynamics and ever-changing external factors.

That's what this ebook is all about: how to stay ahead of the skills game.

“We’ve seen many of our customers working to gain a broader understanding of the skills their teams need to work effectively.

Organisations are increasingly looking beyond the formal skillsets we see listed on job descriptions.

As an organisation focused on supporting knowledge sharing and skill building within teams, we’ve seen great examples of front line teams being supported to meet the challenge of change.

We want to make it easier for learning teams to identify fast paced changes to the skill landscape and respond to support their team members effectively.”

Mark Ward
Co-Founder of Thrive



Competency Frameworks vs Skills Strategy

Competency Framework

[kom-pi-tuhn-see freym-wurk]

A competency framework is a structure that sets out to define key competencies and values within an organisation, organised into role-based levels.

Competency models and frameworks were born in the 1970s with one purpose: to prove skills supported an organisation's vision. Knowledge, skills and behaviours can all make up a competency model, and the pre-defined list of 10-20 generalised capability areas is usually based on what attributes an organisation wants to see across their workforce - then details different levels of capability for each role

But teams often don't connect with formal frameworks because they don't resonate with the terminology that they are familiar with - the same words may mean different things to different groups of people.

Furthermore, the frameworks don't relate to the essential day to day skills they know they need in their role, or that they look for from others in their team and as such do not see them as an obvious part of their development.

Skills Ontology

[skills on-tol-o-gy]

Skills ontology is a categorisation of skills that builds a common language, defining the aspects of a specific job rather than relying on blanket terms and vague descriptions.

Competency frameworks are not good at capturing the complexity of skills required at the team level, and a matrix of capabilities is simply mapped against role types instead of individuals.

So, the next obvious step was building a more relatable skills ontology framework: a structure where HR teams conduct a talent mapping exercise, and attempt to audit the skills associated with every role within the business.

Skills ontologies tend to resonate with individuals better, because the language used aligns with business as usual.

For example, instead of a blanket term like 'communication', you might see 'microsoft teams' or 'delivering a presentation' but in practice, they aren't agile or practical either.

Trying to maintain skills from a single learning team is a scaling nightmare, especially when it comes to understanding the individuals and their BAU. That's why they usually take a ton of time and effort to create.

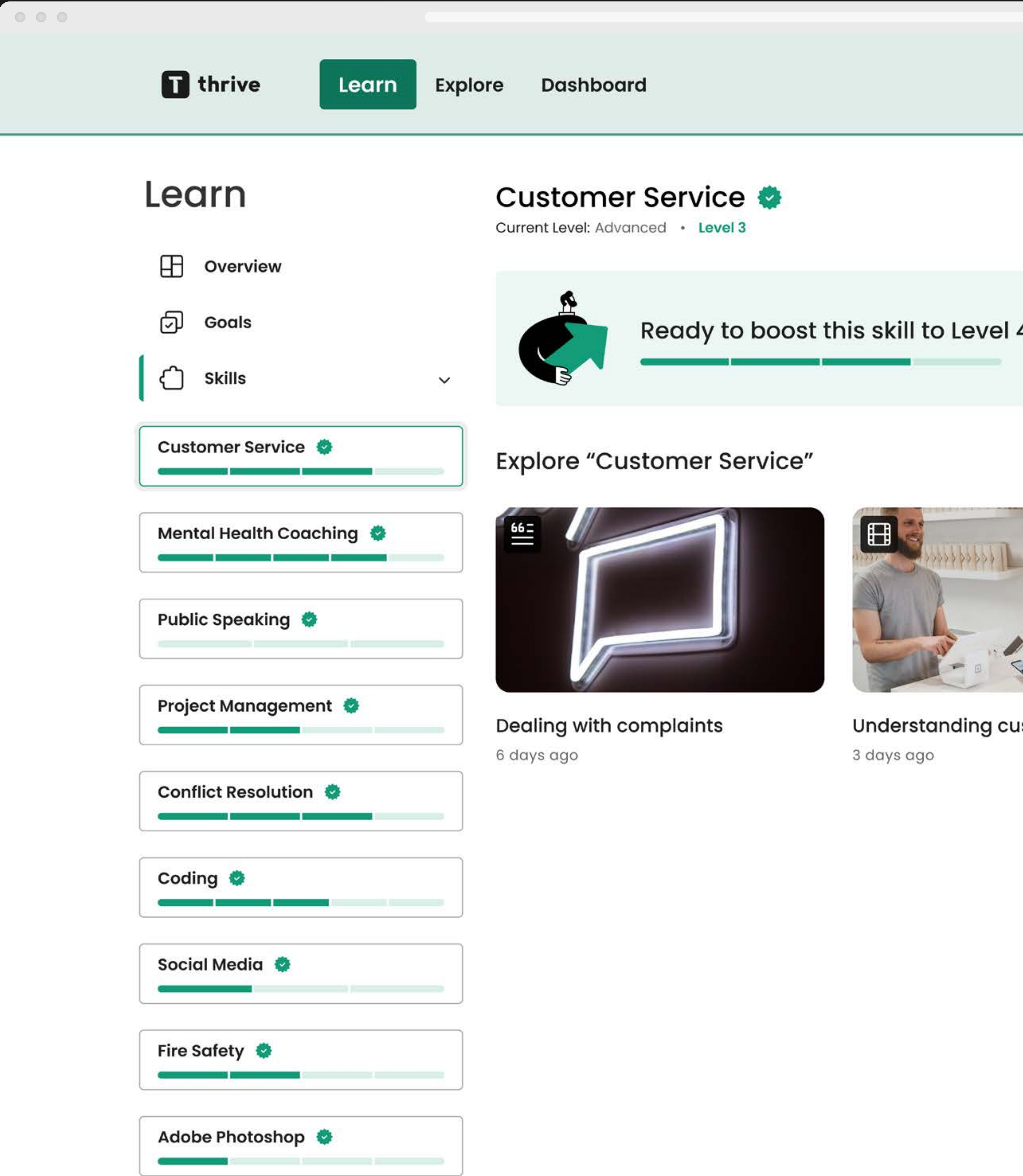
But for us, it comes down to: why are you guessing what existing and new skills your business has or needs? Surely there's a quicker, more accurate model to measure and assess skills?

Enter an Agile Skills Strategy

An agile skills strategy is an ongoing, iterative plan that sets out to understand the skills a business has.

These include the current power skills that are present within the organisation’s culture, along with the future skills the organisation needs to fill the gap and adapt to changing requirements.

An agile skills strategy aims to break those skills into more achievable, adaptable and measurable goals.



What does that look like in reality?

It's a world in which people...

can identify current and future skills	can measure skills progression
are encouraged to recognise new and emerging skills	can set their upskilling goals
can develop new skills at the point of need	can share their knowledge on emerging skills
can recognise and endorse each other for skills	

An agile skills strategy is all about building and capturing an accurate picture of the people-powered skills within your organisation.

It also captures the emerging skills that haven't yet been endorsed by the organisation. That's why we call them "user-generated skills" - the second people start to discuss it, it becomes evident.

This gives you total transparency to identify gaps, see new emerging trends, and provide the right development opportunities through content.

For L&D teams this could mean: improved management training for the skills you know you need to grow; the opportunity to personalise goals to individuals instead of assuming a specific role or department will and should have the same skills; and

lastly, providing visible ownership and clear career progression for your people. Who doesn't want that?

Adopting an agile strategy is all about getting a picture of what's changing within your organisational skills landscape. As this picture develops over time, you'll gain a better appreciation of the skills that really matter within your organisation.

It's going to take time and work along the way - but that's the key difference. It's not about writing out a rigid plan that could take years to achieve. It's about always nurturing, adapting and growing the skills that already exist within your business.

How do you get going?

It starts with a challenge mindset. It's not about top down or one-size-fits-all; it's about understanding what you can get better at, putting your learners at the forefront, and encouraging the managers within your organisation to look at what they've got to achieve.

It becomes easier with visibility. Your L&D team, business leaders and managers need the right tools and processes in place to collect and mine the skills data that informs your decisions.

Getting this snapshot and keeping it up-to-date manually is almost impossible because it's a living, breathing strategy that's designed to change as your people do.

That's why choosing a technology which delivers a cohesive learning experience is essential to support your ongoing approach, and is key to bringing this to life. You'll then be able to use the data you collect to upskill your people, create and recommend the right learning opportunities, and ultimately fill the skills gap.

Using real data to support your skills strategy

Understanding the supply and demand for skills is critical to the continued growth of your organisation, and a key factor to positive workplace culture.

Over time many things change: the skills your business needs, the combination of skills required by individuals, and your team's aspirations and interests. This gives you a huge amount of data to make sense of, so where do you start?

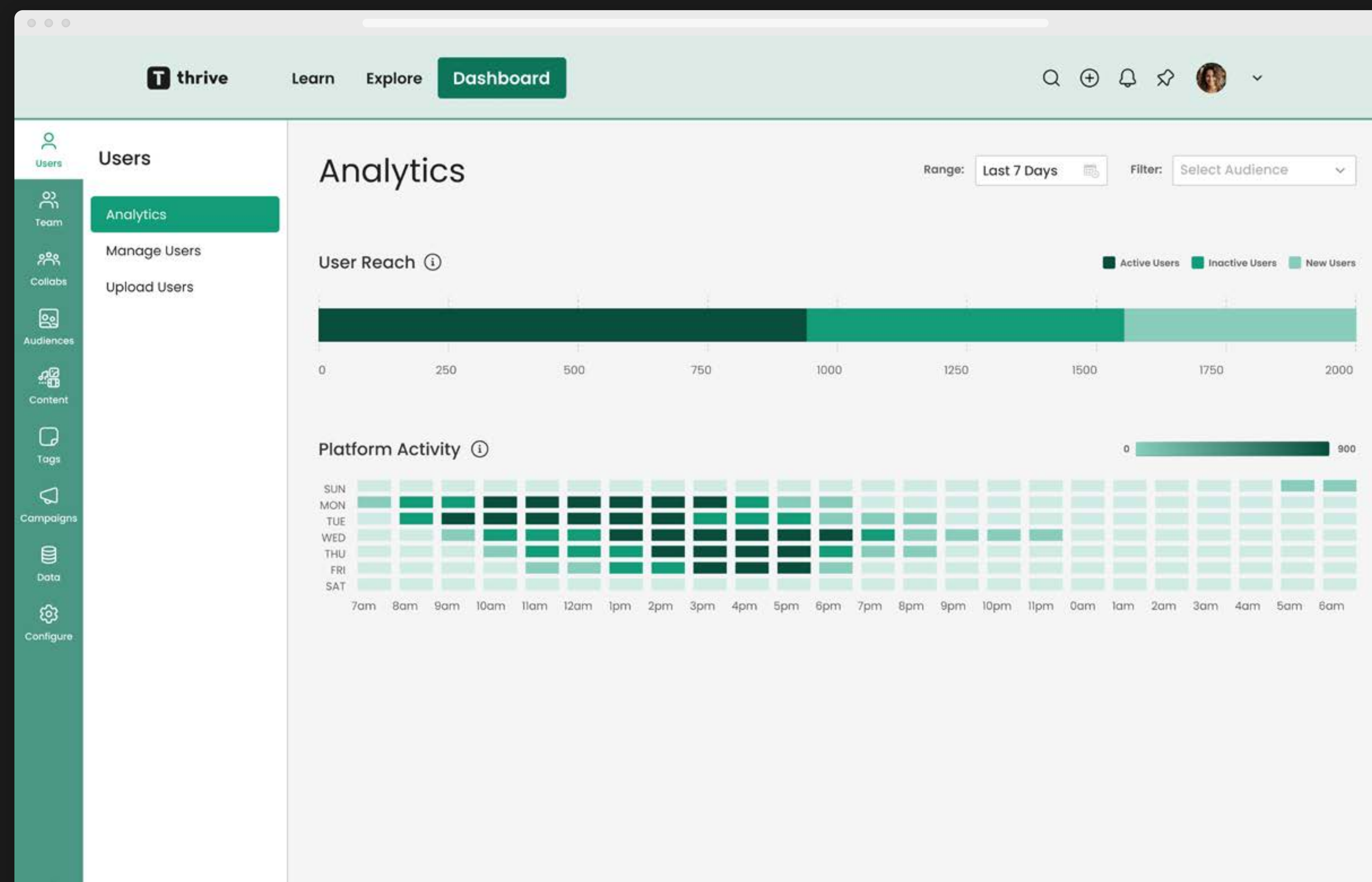
Think about your business or team's goals. What's most important? Once you identify these goals, think about how skills apply and how you might track success.

Alongside metrics like skill progression and skill recognition, consider what's important to organisational success. Metrics around staff retention, the average length of service, and internal mobility are some examples of how the tracking of skill development can link directly to the wider business goals.

“Lack of career development continues to be one of the main reasons that employees leave a business. I've seen survey responses ranging from 45-70% of those surveyed stating this was a core reason for leaving a role.

Having a clear structure to develop skills and provide pathways for internal mobility will be integral for organisations to retain their top talent and ensure employees remain engaged with the business.”

Ian Blackburn
Head of Analytics
at Thrive



How can Thrive support you?

You didn't think you were going to have to go on this journey alone, did you? We're in it with you!

Evolving from our roots as a trailblazing LXP, we've developed a new Skills Platform, ready-built within Thrive that makes identifying skills from the ground up, understanding new skills as they organically emerge and managing supply and demand a seamless reality.

Let's take a look at the features that help you do just that...

User-generated skills from the ground up

Save time by organically building an agile skills strategy driven by real-time learner data and custom goals.

Set & manage goals

Connect people to meaningful learning opportunities through custom goals made up of truly blended learning journeys that demonstrate your learner's achievements.

Analytics to identify gaps, supply & demand

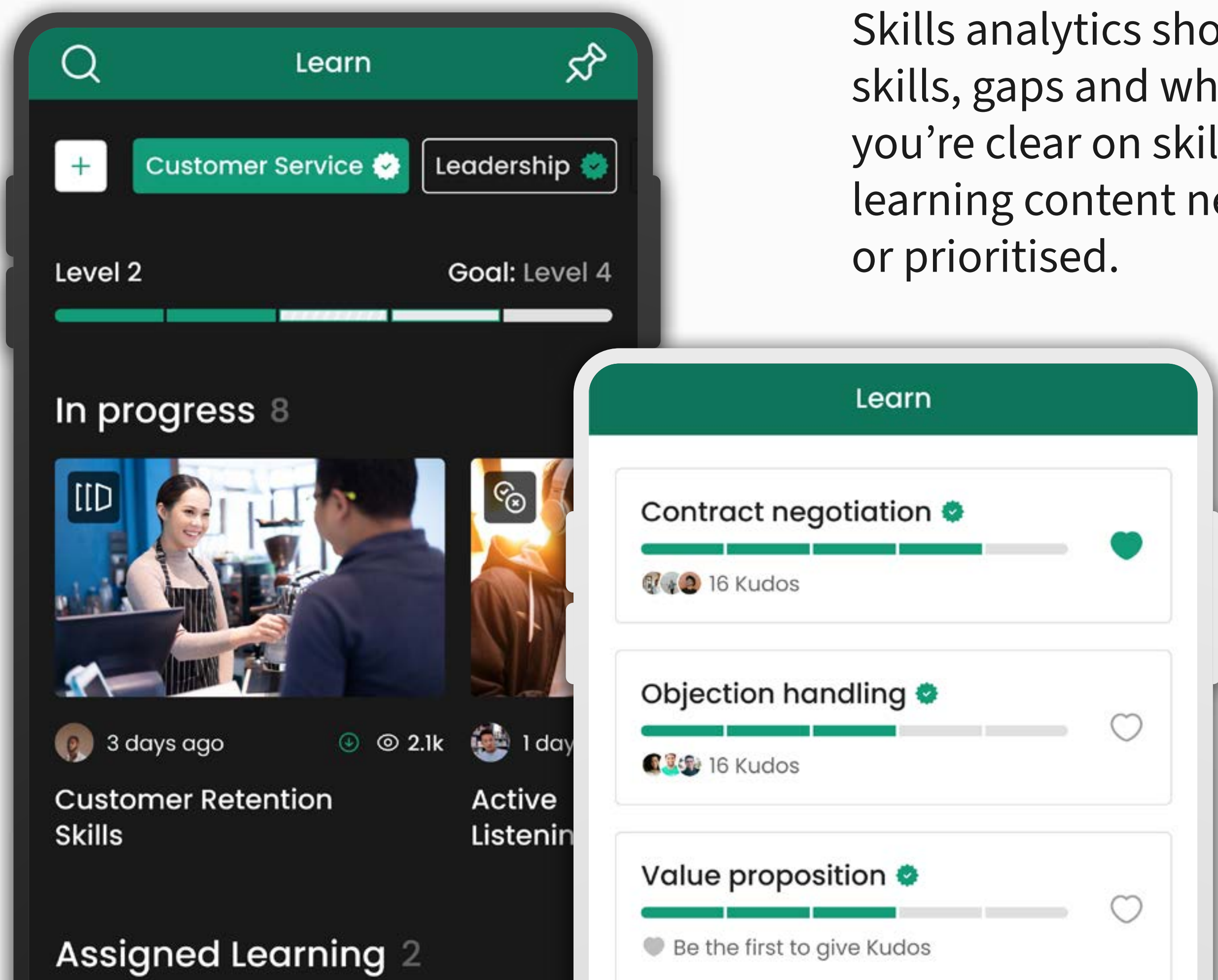
Skills analytics show you emerging skills, gaps and what's growing. So, you're clear on skill demand and what learning content needs to be created or prioritised.

Smart skills progression

Smart skills progression uses data to connect the right people to the right learning opportunities that progress their individual or team's goals

Identify experts & emulate experiences

Empower your learners to explore and connect with their network by identifying subject matter experts, understanding their experiences and giving recognition to colleagues.

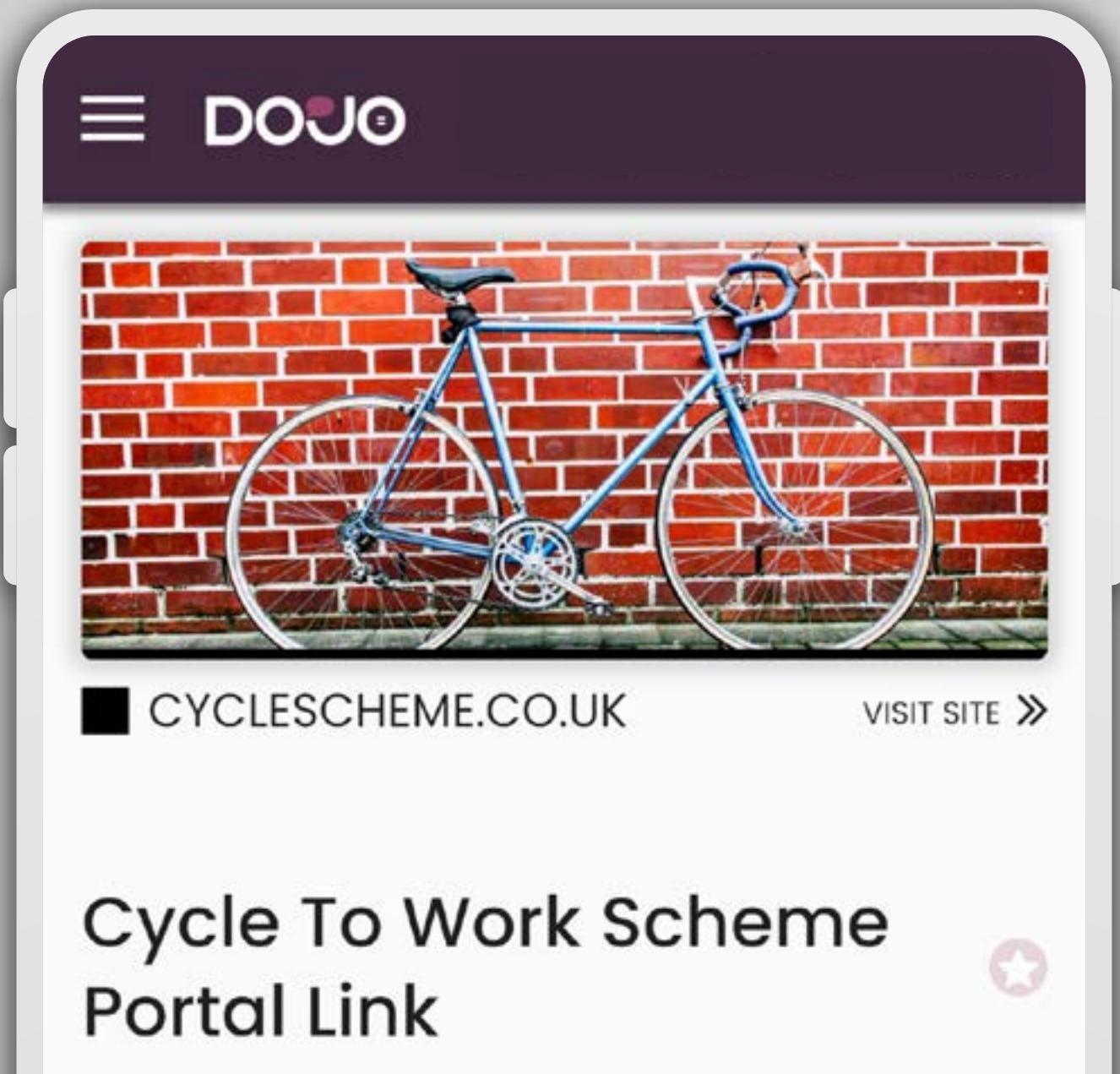


No one else is tackling skills like Thrive are.

We've spent a lot of time building compeatencies before today but an agile skills strategy has changed the game.

It adds so much value to what we've created by putting our learners front and centre of our strategy. We have total transparency to understand what's new and trending, which is a lot in the world of gaming, and how upskilling aligns with each individual's career goals at Sumo.

Jenny Muhlwa
Group Head of L&D



The skills glossary

Agile skills strategy

An agile skills strategy is an ongoing, iterative plan that focuses on the language people use for development.

It sets out to understand the skills a business has, the future skills it needs to fill gaps and adapt to changing requirements and breaks them down into more achievable, adaptable and measurable goals.

Skills supply & demand

The amount of activity against a new or existing skill and the demand for learning content.

Skills gap

The skills gap is when your current workforce's skill set doesn't align with the skills they need to do their jobs.

Skills progression

Skills progression is the level of expertise with a given skill area, each level represents your ongoing progression.

Trending skills

Trending skills are determined by your learners identifying what people are talking about and what's most important at any given time.

Endorsed skills

Skills that are already part of your skills ontology, recognised by the organisation.

User generated skills

The emerging skills that haven't yet been endorsed by the organisation. User generated skills use real-time learner data from your Learning & Skills Platform to build a snapshot of what your current skills landscape looks like.

It's flipping traditional competency frameworks on the head and building a strategy from the ground up based on what's actually happening within your organisation, (what skills your learners believe they have and want to progress) instead of the top-down where the business dictates it.

A bit about Thrive

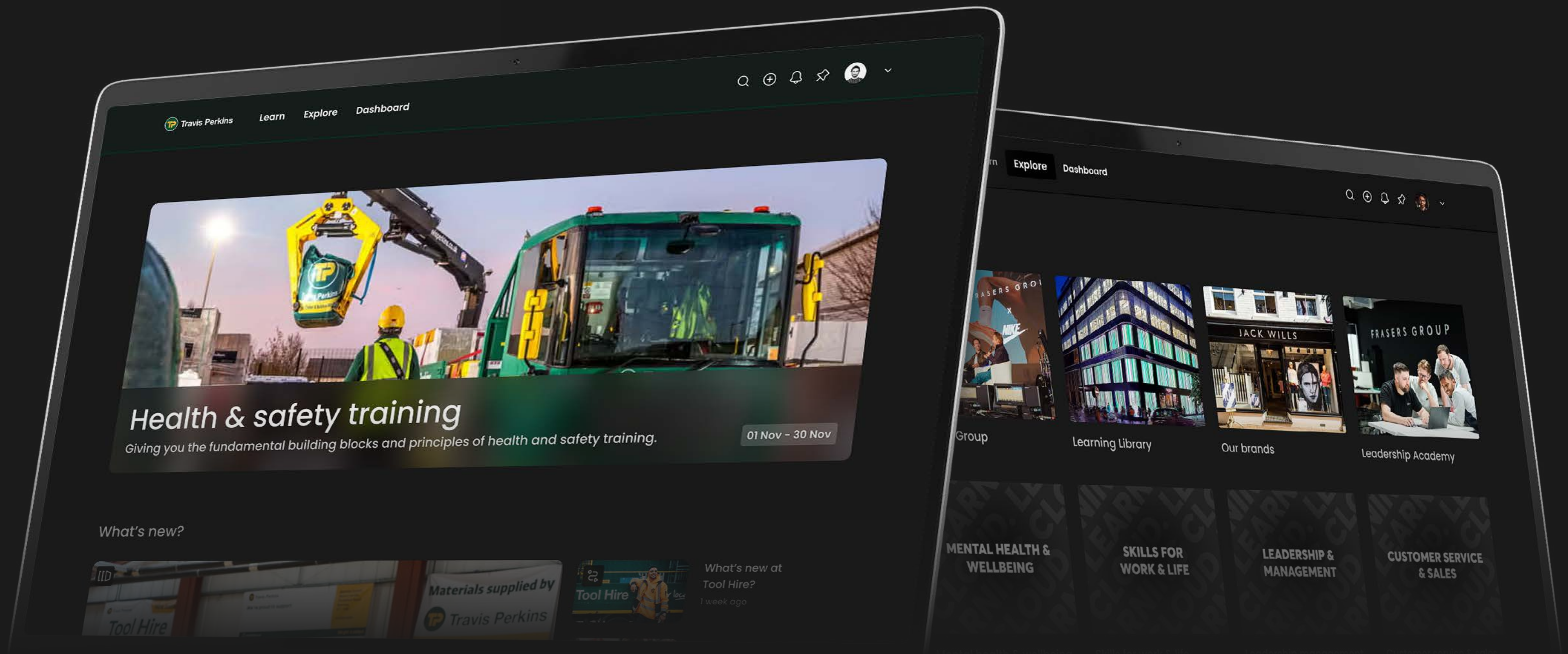
We deliver learning solutions that turbocharge modern businesses and the people powering them. Say goodbye to LMS vs. LXP head-scratching, and sayonara to the eye-watering cost of a skills solution.

That means all your learning is in one place, creating a slick, intuitive, addictive user experience that connects your people to each other and personalised learning opportunities so they can share knowledge and upskill collaboratively.

To make learning count, we equip you to set and manage custom goals for your learners. By plugging in data to connect the right people to the right learning needed to achieve them, and encouraging peer-to-peer collaboration by identifying subject matter experts, Thrive creates the perfect environment for them to grow.

With Thrive's all-in-one Learning & Skills Platform, you get:

- The compliance requirements of an LMS
- The hyper-personalised, learner-led, social experience of an LXP
- An organic, user-generated skills framework that lets you build, view and develop skills across your teams.



What else do we offer?

T content

Thrive Content works with you to create campaign-led content that changes behaviours and drives meaningful conversations.

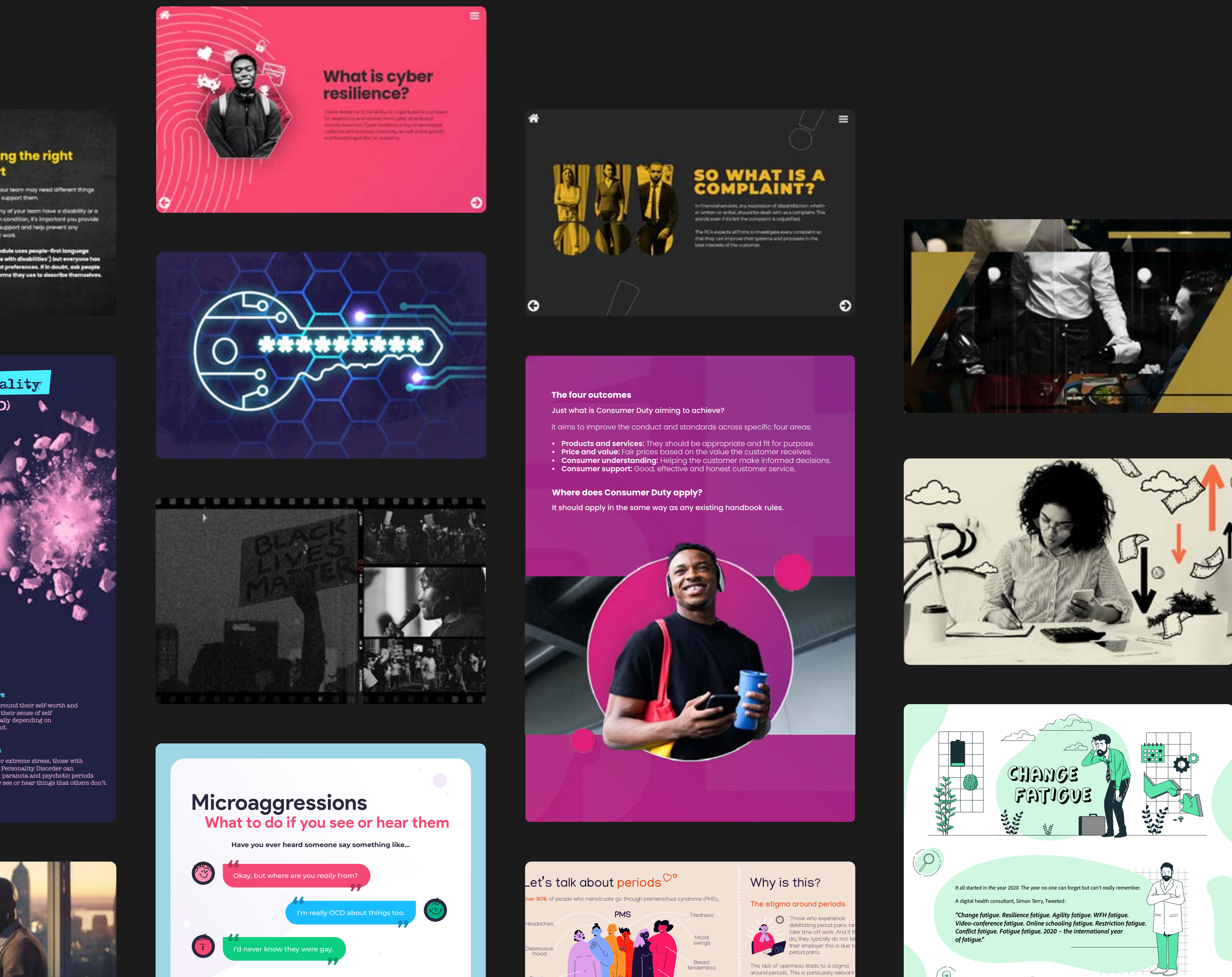
It's all mapped into engaging learning pathways, and if you've got any content gaps, we'll fill them for free.

T impact

Thrive Impact shows how L&D improves performance; pinpointing the specific challenges you're facing and giving you actionable insights to support your bottom-line objectives.

Through it all, you're backed by the Thrive Tribe - A team of engaged, electrifying dare-to-doers, pulling out all the stops to maximise your investment and support your team's development.

From straightforward and transparent pricing, all the way through to show-stopping customer-only events, we've created a team and an approach that's built to wow, and when you look at our industry-leading customer results, it shows.



Try it out yourself



The only all-in-one LMS that brings learning, skills and comms together.



All the learning content you need, with an extra pair of hands.



Travis Perkins



FINANCIAL
TIMES



Thrive empowers over 3 million learners to advance their people's development in over 350 world-class companies.



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