

TL;DR

Framing L&D as a Business Enabler – What Resonates with Executives and Finance Leaders

The Challenge:

L&D is often viewed as a “nice-to-have” or a cost center. To secure buy-in, leaders need to shift that perception—showing how L&D drives core business outcomes.

Key Takeaways from the Panel

Position L&D as a Business Enabler

- ✓ Don't frame L&D as an expense—frame it as a lever for achieving specific business goals.
- ✓ Tie every investment request to clear business priorities (quarterly/fiscal goals, strategic initiatives).

Establish ROI—Even Without Upfront Data

- ✓ If you don't have historical ROI data, propose a **pilot** to test the hypothesis.
- ✓ Define how success will be measured (e.g., behavior change, productivity, retention, revenue impact).
- ✓ Set expectations upfront: “If this pilot proves X, we can justify broader investment.”

Use Pilots to De-Risk the Ask

- ✓ Start small, keep it measurable and time-bound.
- ✓ Prove outcomes through data and storytelling, then scale.
- ✓ This approach builds trust and reduces perceived risk for execs.

Finance-Friendly Framing

- ✓ Executive leaders respond best to structured, ROI-driven proposals.
- ✓ Clear problem > Hypothesis > Small request > Defined metrics.
- ✓ Avoid vague pitches—be disciplined and precise.

Real-World Example (Sarika's Story)

- ✓ Identified a business gap during a rapid growth/acquisition phase.
- ✓ Proposed a one-year plan using cross-functional resources to prove value.
- ✓ Delivered measurable outcomes and used success to earn headcount and build a team.

BOTTOM LINE

To get executive buy-in, connect L&D to what matters most—business outcomes, not just employee experience. Prove value in small, measurable ways, and build credibility from there.