Infopro Learning

Hire vs. Augment

The 2026 Decision Framework

The Problem

Full-time hiring is slow and expensive when L&D demand spikes.

Headcount is fixed even when project scope isn't.

Skill gaps in AI-enabled instructional design are hard to fill permanently.

The Numbers

	Hire	Augment
Cost	$5,475 avg. cost per non-executive hire. *(SHRM 2025 Benchmarking Report)*	Up to 60% cheaper via ofshore/hybrid hubs. *(Verified Market Research, 2026)*
Speed	42–45 days average time to fill. *(SHRM 2025 Benchmarking Report)*	Shortlist in 48 hours, onboarded in a week. *(Infopro Learning benchmark Report)*
Flexibility	Fixed headcount, hard to unwind.	Scales up or down with project need.

The Hidden Costs

Hiring

Recruiter time, tool-stack spend and lost productivity while the seat sits open.

Augmenting

Vendor management overhead and ramp-up if the staff augmentation partner doesn't specialize in L&D.

Either way, a bad match costs more than the search itself.

The Framework: Ask 3 Questions

01 Is this requirement permanent or project-based?

02 Do you need the skill for 3 months or 3 years?

03 Can you absorb 42+ days of vacancy cost, or does the launch window close sooner?

The Business Case

- Hiring builds long-term capability but ties capital to headcount for the life of the role.
- Augmentation converts a fixed cost into a variable one, freeing budget to match actual demand.
- The decision isn't hire vs. augment. It's how much flexibility your L&D strategy can afford to give up.

> Top L&D functions don't pick one model; they run hire and augment side by side.
>
> Talent availability is now a top barrier to execution: 73% of leaders rank it #1. The real question isn't hire or augment. It's how fast you can shift between them.

Are you building your next L&D team, or scaling one?
Let's find the right fit.

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