



# Brandon Hall Group™

## Building Capability in the Age of AI

What L&D Leaders Need to Know



2026

## Executive Interview



NovoEd

## About NovoEd



**NovoEd's** collaborative learning platform empowers organizations to design and deliver experiential learning that accelerates business performance on a global scale. Since the company's founding at Stanford's social algorithm laboratory in 2012, global corporations, executive education providers and training firms have relied on NovoEd to develop high-value capabilities through purposeful practice and application, coaching and mentorship and group collaboration. NovoEd's proven approach to learning connects diverse groups of learners, mentors and leaders in a high-impact online environment, unlocking your organization's collective knowledge and driving measurable outcomes.

## About Scott Kinney

**Scott Kinney** is the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board at NovoEd. He also leads the education technology team for Devonshire Investors, the private investment arm of Fidelity, which acquired NovoEd in 2018. Before joining Devonshire in 2017, Scott served as president of Capella University and has led three other technology services businesses since the late 1990s. Earlier in his career, he worked as a software developer in Boston and as a manager at the Boston Consulting Group. He is a Strategic Advisor to GSV Ventures and a frequent speaker at industry events including ATD and the ASU GSV Summit. Scott holds a B.A. in geology from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Stanford University.



## About Rachel Cooke

Today's conversation is moderated by **Rachel Cooke**, she is the Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group™. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research and Performance Improvement industries.



**Q Rachel**

Our research shows most organizations are still at levels one or two in AI adoption and that progression is going to be slower and more deliberate than many expected, partly because of the ethical decisions involved. How do you think about the responsible adoption of AI in enterprise learning?

**A Scott**

I think it is genuinely a chaotic environment right now and I mean that in a neutral sense. That is how a lot of real change happens. There will be winners and losers based on how smart they are about what they adopt and when. The key hypothesis I keep coming back to is that AI is not a typical hype cycle. Venture capital and private equity thrive on hype and they produce a major one every three to five years. Only one in three or four of those proves truly transformational.

But AI, I believe, belongs in that small category, comparable to what the internet was in the mid-to-late 1990s.

At the time, dot-com valuations soared, most of the hype collapsed and yet the underlying transformation was permanent. Everything we do now runs on internet-based technology. AI is in that same early period. Right now there are companies worth billions with barely any revenue and there is real anxiety in our market, particularly at large organizations in regulated industries like healthcare and financial services. They cannot afford to have employees using inaccurate information with customers or straying into compliance risk.

At the same time, the potential benefits of AI in those sectors are enormous. The answer isn't to move fast or to stand still. It's to build programs that use AI where it genuinely helps, protect data and manage risk and never lose sight of the fact that learning outcomes, for the individual and for the business, are still what matter.

**Q Rachel**

AI gives us a lot of ingredients to work with, but simply throwing them all together doesn't produce something useful. How do learning leaders think about selecting and combining the right tools to build effective experiences?

**A Scott**

The analogy holds up well. Large organizations today are dealing with a complex, interconnected world: AI disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, tariffs, energy costs. All of that pressure forces them to ask what capabilities they actually need over the next few years and that question has to come before any technology decision.

For enterprise organizations, generic AI tools and generic content may be sufficient for smaller companies, but they won't work at scale for a company that needs learning tied to its own content, its own value proposition and its own differentiation in the market. L&D leaders need tools that can deploy experiences for 10,000 or

100,000 learners and that move the organization in a unified direction, not just serve individual employees going to ChatGPT or Perplexity on their own.

Compared to L&D leaders of ten or fifteen years ago, they need to be more tech savvy, understand how systems integrate and still hold tightly to the fundamentals of how adults learn. AI can assist that process and generate valuable data. It will not replace it. The future is genuinely bright, but managing the risk side, finding partners who can contain and mitigate that risk, is how organizations avoid the kind of mistakes that are more than recoverable.

**Q Rachel**

Where does coaching and mentoring fit in a world where AI is increasingly capable of providing on-demand guidance?

**A Scott**

I think about coaching and mentoring somewhat differently from each other. Coaching, particularly the network-based, technology-enabled coaching that emerged over the last decade, will see significant AI disruption. For in-the-moment guidance, the kind of thing where someone might say “I’m about to have a difficult conversation with an employee for the first time, help me prepare,” AI can actually be quite useful.

The high-end executive coaching market, the kind where an engagement runs \$25,000 over six months, will continue. But the broader coaching marketplace that platforms built will be substantially affected. Mentoring is different because it is typically internal to an organization, tied to career navigation, institutional knowledge and the specific culture and goals of that company. Technology can enable that and we have a mentoring product at NovoEd, but it is fundamentally human-centric.

People operate within networks of other people and the capabilities that matter most, how to influence

effectively, how to build a case for an investment, how to lead through change, are not things a chat interface is going to develop in someone. AI can assist personalized learning at scale. What it cannot do is replace the outcome: measurable impact on the business and on the individual’s career.

**Q Rachel**

What should people be watching for from NovoEd this year?

**A Scott**

The area we are most excited about and the one we’ll be talking about at ATD and ASU GSV and other conferences, is practice. Adult learning has always depended on having a safe space to practice and finding that space has never been straightforward. Practicing with colleagues carries performance pressure. Finding low-stakes, realistic practice environments is hard in an analog world.

Practice has always been part of the NovoEd experience, but what AI now makes possible is immediate, specific feedback on performance, whether that's a sales pitch, a presentation, a difficult conversation, or any number of soft skill areas. The difference between a generic AI chat tool and what we're building is that our practice experiences are tied to a company's own content, not external generic material and the data captured flows back to the individual, to their manager and to L&D leaders.

That feedback loop, connected to a structured learning program rather than a standalone tool, is where real performance improvement happens. We'll be making significant product announcements in this space throughout the year.



Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:





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