

**5 ways** a digital library supports employees and boosts retention with a flexible, easy-to-use learning opportunity







**Recent years** have illuminated the monumental shift in workers' changing priorities around workplace benefits. Employees prioritize benefits that support their well-being, mental health and flexibility more than ever before. A [Harvard Business Review](#) article says companies must use wellness metrics to understand, motivate and satisfy employees.

In addition to an increased focus on health and well-being, workers expect benefit packages to include opportunities

to advance in their career, bringing them closer to their professional aspirations. Learning and development rank among top employee motivations for staying with an organization, according to [Lever's 2022 Great Resignation: The State of Internal Mobility and Employee Retention Report](#).

This, coupled with the rise of remote and hybrid work environments, is forcing companies to look beyond traditional benefits to find options matched to today's lifestyle. These trends point to an untapped

benefit an organization can provide employees to support retention amid the "Great Resignation" or "Great Reshuffle": a digital library.

In this report, we'll look at how access to comprehensive, on-demand digital resources enables companies to offer their employees greater flexibility, a connection to the broader company culture, upskilling opportunities, and resources to support mental health and meet diversity, equity and inclusion expectations.





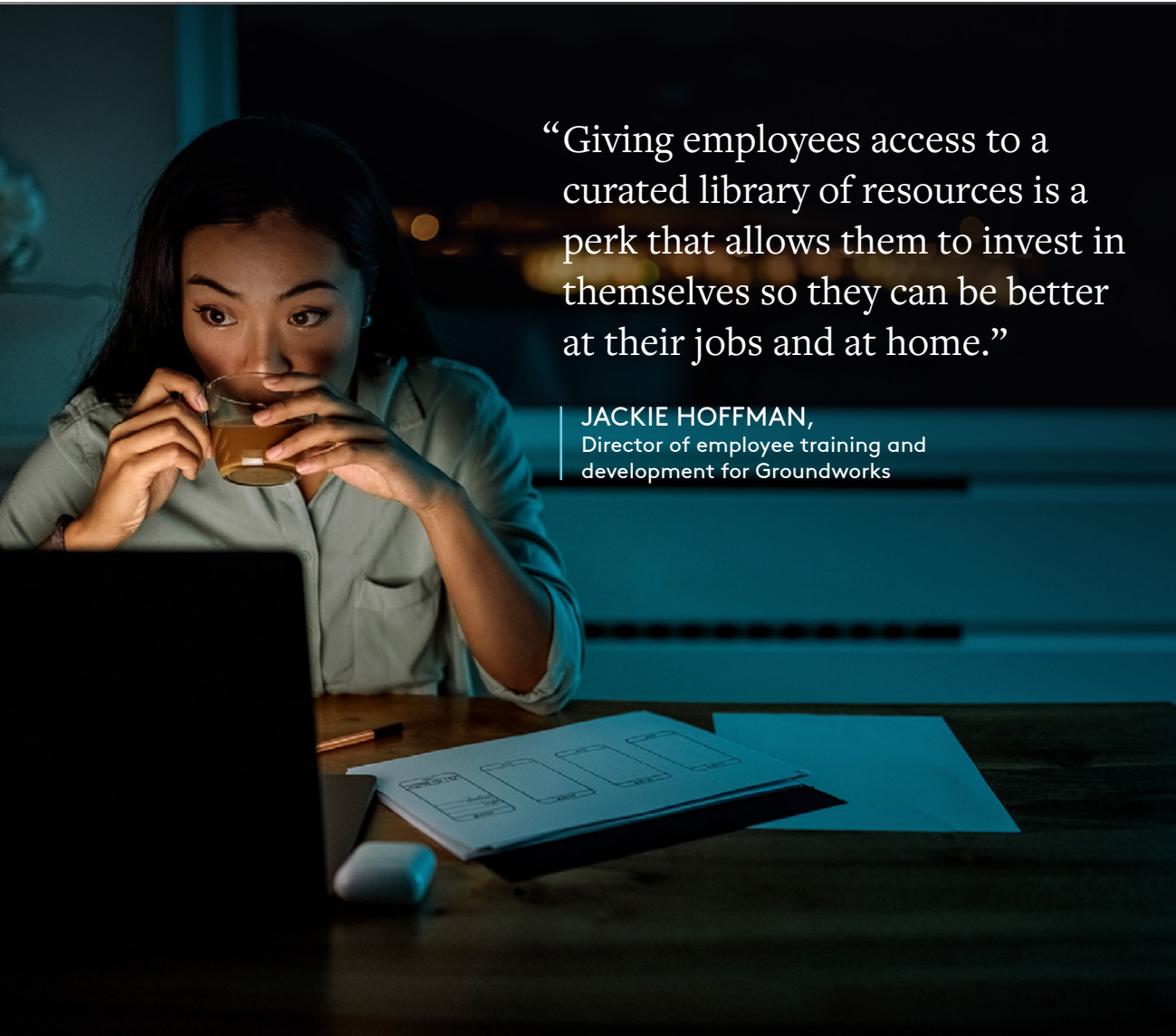
# 1 Employees prioritize flexibility

Most companies recognize that workers expect flexibility, but too often they associate that with only remote or hybrid work environments. All staff, whether fully remote, hybrid or in-person, want support for their professional and personal pursuits and relationships with colleagues, but they want them in the way that works best for their life, career and situation.

One way to help ensure organizations are meeting (and exceeding) the needs of all their staff is with a digital library.

An OverDrive Professional digital library is a comprehensive collection of ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and other resources that users can access from any device. A digital library enables companies to build a culture of learning with access to compelling content from a variety of sources. It's the ultimate solution for providing flexibility and support to remote workers. Accessing materials is convenient, allowing users to read an ebook on their mobile device or play an audiobook while walking, working out or traveling.

For Jackie Hoffman, director of employee training and development for Groundworks, a foundation and water management solutions company, providing a resource for her remote and traveling team members to access personal and professional development was important. The company's sales and service team drives two to three hours each way to reach customers. Access to a digital library turns "windshield time" into time for personal and professional development.



“Giving employees access to a curated library of resources is a perk that allows them to invest in themselves so they can be better at their jobs and at home.”

JACKIE HOFFMAN,  
Director of employee training and  
development for Groundworks

A digital library offers companies flexibility in the resources they make available to employees. Digital resources also allow staff to read as few or as many titles in a month as they would like. Frederic St-Louis, learning and development manager for Intact, the largest property and casualty insurance provider in Canada, says this enables Intact to achieve its goal of expanding the company’s elearning system available to employees.

Digital libraries also help companies make their resources more inclusive based on different reading needs. For example, nearly 20% of Groundworks’ staff is bilingual. Access to titles translated into Spanish allows the company to accommodate and assist all its employees with a digital library.

“Not only does accessibility include giving people the option of ebooks or audio 24/7, but it also includes features such as a dyslexic font for screen readers, adjustable font sizes and zoom features for pictures and charts,” said Steven Rosato, general manager of OverDrive Professional.





## 2 Company culture isn't a thing of the past

People want flexibility, but they also crave a community aspect while working remotely. In a [Generation Lab poll](#), 74% of 500 respondents reported missing an office community. In-person work organically allows for interactions, which create a connection to the company culture. A digital library bridges the gap between in-person and remote staff.

“We have a couple of titles embedded into our culture that all new employees are required to read,” Groundworks’ Hoffman said. “When new hires start, their onboarding includes the direct link to these titles. We also recommend specific titles that match our culture, our mindset and what we want them to do.”

That shared experience — and shared reading — can help ensure employees feel more connected to the company community, culture and mission. Team or organization-wide book clubs can help accomplish the same goal.



### 3 Employees are focused on well-being

A 2021 JobSage study reported that one in four adults quit a job to prioritize their mental health. Companies large and small have been placing more priority on wellness programs and ways to help support the mental health and well-being of their employees. A Gartner study of 52 executives found that 94% reported increasing well-being programs. But a separate

Gartner study that included 5,000 employees found that less than half (46%) of workers felt their employer's well-being programs were personalized. With an OverDrive digital library, organizations can custom-build collections around topics that employees care about, including mental health.

"We have more ability to have hands-on customization and control the offerings a bit more with OverDrive than with any other service," Hoffman said. "We also want to ensure we allow employees the opportunity to grow outside of business. So, we offer collections on mindset; financial, physical and mental wellness; and how to be a better parent, and they can pick and choose what they want."



Employee well-being goes beyond health and wellness. It encompasses various topics related to current events, diversity and inclusion. Corporate diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives are increasingly important, with 66% of employees saying that their employer's DE&I strategy affects how long they will stay in a position.

There is no single solution, but a custom-curated library of digital resources in one place eliminates the time and stress of an individual having to search for respected resources.

Intact has dedicated a reading category with titles focused on diversity. In addition, available titles align with trending societal topics, such as climate change and equality.

"In October, we have a week where our leadership team curates and promotes many resources about diversity. We'll be using that to drive a collection in our library that will be available to

employees," St-Louis said. "When Black History Month and Women's History Month come around, we make a selection of books that are well recognized in the market and make those available."

Book clubs can also generate conversations among workers on these and other topics. Whether a book club is a cross-company initiative or for a department team, it can spur interactions among employees.

"Every year the National Institutes of Health (NIH) does an organization-wide read that gets staff involved with discussions around a title with an important and timely theme," Rosato said. "This year, their selection was *How to Be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi."

The NIH program lasts three months, and often the author speaks on campus. Having a marketing plan in place to promote the title, including in the digital collection, is critical to engaging staff in the initiative.

"We've created a group page on social media where we put in top picks from our CEO. We also include top rankings of most-read titles or staff who use the library the most to generate interest," Hoffman said. "Of course, we push it out as part of our onboarding, but continue to highlight it in our quarterly newsletters."

Another well-being benefit of making a digital library available to employees? Reading has consistently been linked with health benefits, both physical and mental. For example, a study from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom correlated reading with reducing stress levels by 68%. Another study from the Centre for Research Into Reading, Literature and Society at the University of Liverpool found that readers were likely to feel 20% happier with as little as 30 minutes of reading a week. The study also found readers had stronger abilities to cope with difficult situations and increased decision-making skills.



## 4 Employees are looking for internal mobility opportunities

Companies that make it easy for employees to transfer to new roles or departments within an organization can increase retention rates, and ready access to professional development materials can give people a reason to stay with their current employer rather than look for a new job externally.

LinkedIn Learning's 2021 Workplace Learning Report indicates that 64% of learning and development (L&D) professionals said that L&D shifted from a "nice to have" to a "need to have" in 2021. This is in large part due to the "Great Resignation" and organizations putting a focus on finding opportunities to retain talent. With today's hiring challenges, supporting existing teams is paramount

to increasing retention rates and reducing turnover. One way to accomplish this is to equip all employees with essential communication skills to prepare them for conversations about development and changing roles or departments.

Providing access to a wide range of digital books and resources can help initiate these types of conversations.



Popular titles for building these skills include:


- ▶ ***How to Listen and How to Be Heard***, Alissa Carpenter
- ▶ ***Atlas of the Heart***, Brené Brown
- ▶ ***How to Win Friends and Influence People***, Dale Carnegie
- ▶ ***Nudge: The Final Edition***, Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein

Managers, too, need support and guidance in leading career-aspiration conversations with employees.

A custom-curated catalog of digital books and resources can help leaders facilitate such discussions:

- ▶ ***Employees First!***, Donna Cutting
- ▶ ***Trust & Inspire***, Stephen M. R. Covey
- ▶ ***The Insider's Guide to Culture Change***, Siobhan McHale
- ▶ ***Inclusive Conversations***, Mary-Frances Winters





## 5 Employees increasingly prioritize skill development

For Gen Z workers, advancing or developing skills tied for the second-most significant motivator in their current job behind pay (38%), landing at 17%, along with generous PTO and flexible work options.

With OverDrive Professional, companies can give employees access to a customized, curated digital collection. Titles in the collection can account for every role in an organization. Organizations can include technical, skills-based materials — such as coding, engineering, marketing, etc. — or broader, softer skills, such as communication and leadership development.

“OverDrive has more than 30,000 suppliers and 3.5 million ebooks and audiobooks. On average, we’re adding 50,000 titles a month. Plus, there are more than 4,000 magazines and a variety of streaming services like Learn It Live (wellness) and UniversalClass (continuing education),” Rosato said. “There is no other provider that has that kind of collection of titles available for institutional use.”

While it’s hard to correlate a job promotion to a reading list, company leaders can use dashboard data to identify learning areas of high importance to digital library users.

With these insights, company leaders can add titles or plan larger training opportunities aligned with employee needs and preferences.

“We’re seeing interesting data in terms of the impact of the curated libraries and the impact it will eventually have on the business in terms of what our managers are striving to learn more about,” Intact’s St-Louis said. “We can see if a book was accessed 40 times in the past six months and consider that as a topic that could be a national training.”



## Digital collections create a 24/7 resource for employees

Remote and hybrid working arrangements are here to stay. A robust digital resources collection not only supports and enhances employee retention but also comes with several additional benefits.

“We see it as an opportunity to add something very different in our learning ecosystem to make the learning experience even more personal for all employees,” St-Louis said. “This allows them to take full ownership of their personal development and career growth.”

A digital library is simple to implement, cost-effective and scalable, where costs decrease as the number of users increases. Even smaller companies with a staff of 50-100 can offer the benefit for much less than other digital resources.

“For less than the cost of a catered lunch, you have a year-round resource that can be used anywhere in the world by your entire staff every day,” Rosato said.



“Books have the power to transform. You curate and create a collection of books based on what your organization values, exposing your team to thought leaders so you can harness their best work, advice and experience for your staff to learn from, empowering them to propel your company forward.”

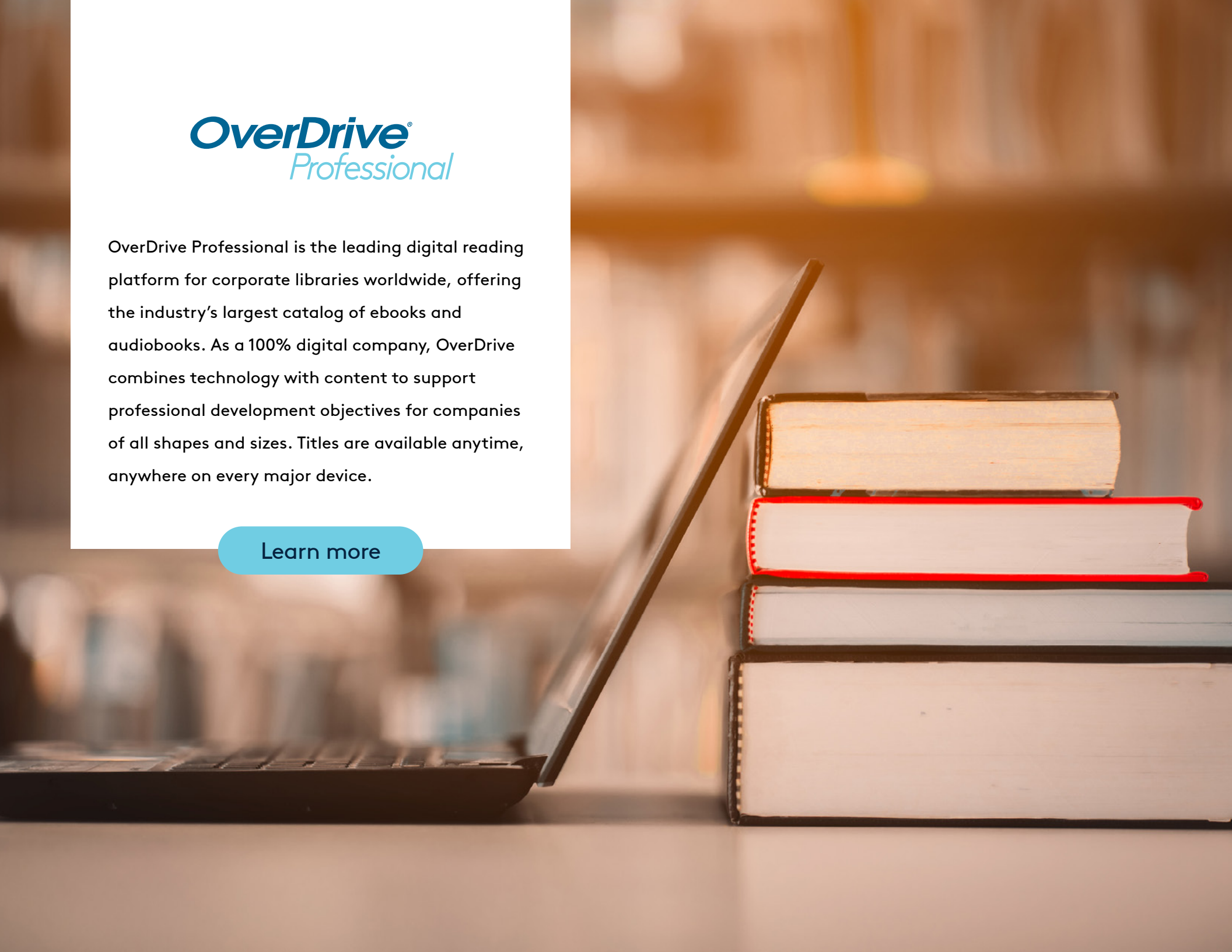
STEVEN ROSATO  
General manager of OverDrive Professional

The logo for OverDrive Professional, with 'OverDrive' in a bold blue font and 'Professional' in a lighter blue, italicized font below it.

## OverDrive<sup>®</sup> Professional

OverDrive Professional is the leading digital reading platform for corporate libraries worldwide, offering the industry's largest catalog of ebooks and audiobooks. As a 100% digital company, OverDrive combines technology with content to support professional development objectives for companies of all shapes and sizes. Titles are available anytime, anywhere on every major device.

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