

Technology Enabled Learning Excellence

ESSENTIALS » 11.2014
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Effective Learning
Solutions
*The three visual
building blocks*

E-Learning
Pros and cons

Go Beyond the Screen
*Five ways to make
learning go beyond the
screen*

Gamification
*An overused buzzword;
are we using it correctly?*

VALUE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Learning Outcomes ≠ Learning Value

Tammy Sanders

Technology Enabled Learning Excellence

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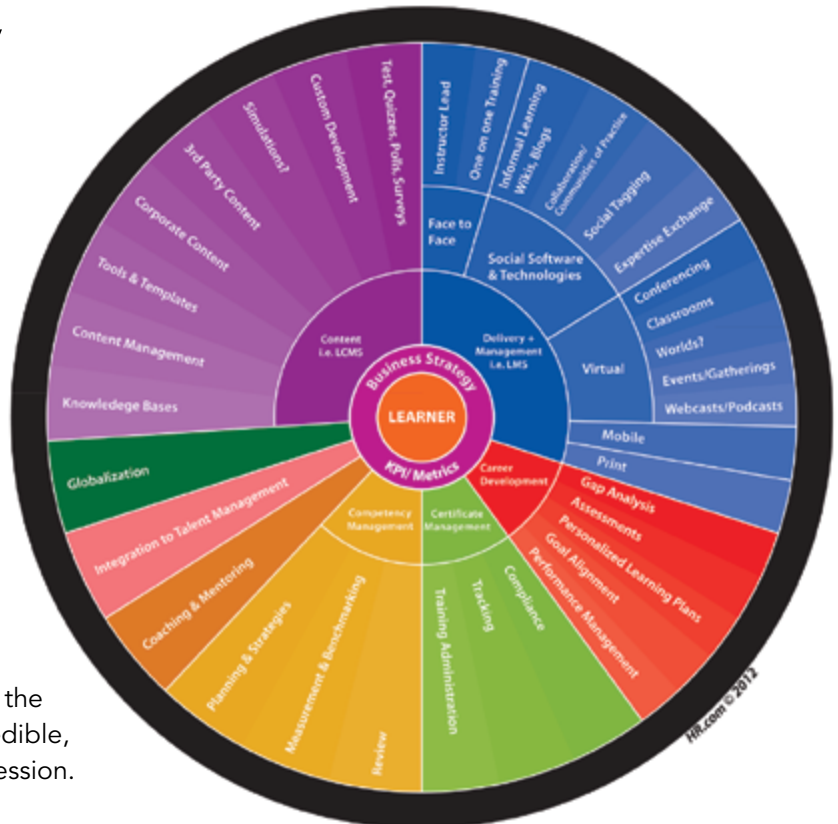
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I've been thinking a lot lately about the roles that informal learning and social learning play in supporting effective learning. As HR professionals, we need to support participants in e-learning programs which focus on the mastery of content and, yet at the same time we need to provide an engaging learning experience which enables the content to 'stick', through mastery of new skills and behaviors in the workplace.

We are increasingly understanding that it is the value of learning on the job (informal learning) and learning from others in our organizations (social learning) that can really 'implant' those concepts and enable the kinds of learning that are going to make a difference in the increasing the effectiveness of learning. While e-learning technology has been primarily used to present content and develop skills, the increasing use of mobile technologies, social media and other supportive tools can now facilitate the contextualized learning that is so important for creating those moments of high-impact learning that are crucial for employee development.

How fortunate, then, that this month's issue of Technology Enabled Learning Excellence focuses on a number of ways in which we can support that deeper workplace learning that is important for employee and organizational effectiveness. Michelle Albert discusses ways in which social communities can benefit organizations, and ways to identify needs for social learning. Jean Martin's article on millennial learning trends also indicates that this generation values on-the-job and networked learning, as well as formal learning. Tammy Sanders' research addresses the preference of different generations in the workplace for different learning technologies. Interestingly, most of the participants in her research showed a preference for some in-person interaction in learning. The interactive nature of social learning is also part of what Trey Tramonte calls "Tribal Learning"—how we do things here, in this organization.

This issue also addresses the multiple ways of creating and supporting effective and meaningful e-learning. Eric Friedman presents the pros and cons of e-learning, and discusses the ways in which e-learning can facilitate both skill training and professional effectiveness. Dhaval Trivedi discusses the importance of using blended learning, or b-learning strategies. Tim Eisenhauer shares ways in which social intranet software can enhance the value of training for new employees. Daniel Russell's article on the use of coaching to support learning is yet another way in which we can contextualize learning to support more effective workplace learning.

We have two articles in this issue on the use of

mobile learning as a key strategy for workplace learning effectiveness. Aneta Sokolowska directly addresses the benefits of mobile learning for increasing social learning and collaboration, as well as the ability of mobile learning to contextualize corporate data with local issues and needs. Heera Edwin discusses the benefits of mobile learning as a solution to provide consistency and flexibility to learning for our increasingly mobile and mobile-savvy workforce.

The design and delivery of effective learning solutions can also contribute to effective informal and social learning. John-Carlos Lozano talks about the visual foundation of a successful learning solution, and Gauri Reyes discusses Gamification design and use as a learning strategy. Loy Oppus talks about the use of the ADIE process for developing effective training, and Judy Philbin shares ways in which training should be an ongoing and strategic process for organizations.

Finally, Sabrina Leis presents ways in which organizations can ensure that learning goes "beyond the screen" through the internal marketing and more effective delivery of e-learning that meets employee needs.

After you read the articles in this issue, continue to improve your learning program effectiveness, by asking some important questions about the programs in your organization:

- * How can we provide support for our formal learning programs through using a variety of technologies to contextualize learning?

- * How can we effectively deploy learning solutions to our mobile and local workforce, which meets their need for local learning?

- * How can we ensure and support continual and strategic learning in the workplace?

- * Then, consider ways in which the solutions presented in this issue, such as mobile learning, blended learning, coaching, and other ways to support informal and social learning can support a deeper, tribal, and lasting learning.



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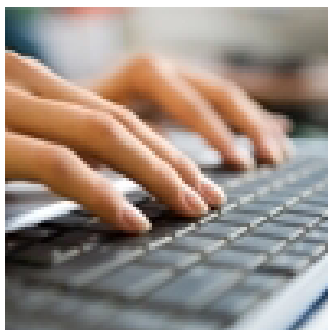
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Value of Online Learning

Learning Outcomes ≠ Learning Value

By Tammy Sanders



By most accounts, just about everyone teaching anything needs to learn how to ‘leverage’ online learning. Indeed, teachers come across this leveraging phrase in anecdotal urgings [time](#) and [time](#) and [time](#) again.

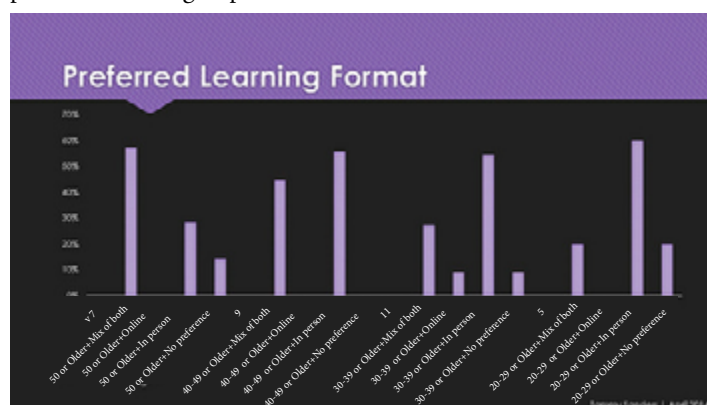
So what happens when adult learners are asked about their preferences in learning format? Despite [continued growth](#) in online courses and programs, learners don’t seem as partial to learning online as stats and experts insist they are ([or should be](#)) in our Digital Age.

How do Adult Learners Prefer to Learn?

In a pre-dissertation research project for my PhD in technology and learning for professionals, I spent the dark, cold months at the beginning of this year surveying and interviewing adult professionals to explore what they think about learning and how they prefer to go about it.

My initial respondents were an eclectic tech-savvy collection of 32 people: 45 percent men and 65 percent women, sitting across four continents. They ranged in professional development from newly graduated to near retirement. They represented a wide array of pursuits in health care, gaming, finance, real estate, retail, management, entrepreneurship, education, social justice, social media and marketing.

Contrary to my expectations, all but one age group (the oldest) preferred learning in person above all other formats:

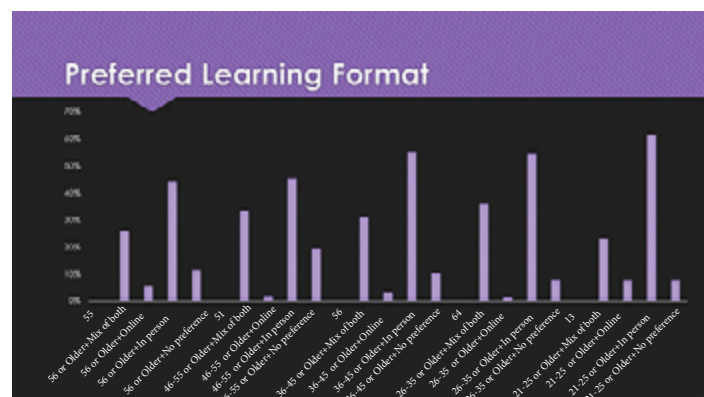


As fortune would have it, my survey gained traction with an art and design college looking to establish a non-degree learning program, so I conducted a second survey to understand alumni’s opinions of their learning opportunities as professionals and practitioners.

This survey included 274 respondents, the majority of whom were leading professional lives primarily related to their studies in fine arts,

architecture or design. Some of them worked in unrelated fields to pay the bills, but considered themselves artists first and foremost.

All age groups of alumni from the art and design college preferred learning in person the most:



It’s worth noting that nearly half of all respondents and at least 40 percent of people in every age group reported having experienced an online course of some sort. Just six percent of those who’d experienced online learning preferred the format over other options. They did, however, lean a tad more favorably toward a mix of online and in-person learning (43 percent) compared to in-person only (40 percent).

Had I not started out researching the smaller mixed group of professionals, I might have chalked up the A&D alumni results to prejudice learners from a hands-on education environment.

True to form, several survey responses from these two groups reflected their distinctly different demographics. However, questions about preferred learning format yielded strikingly similar percentages with a remarkably similar message: Being online is not the same as learning online.

For all the commentary and critique of Millennials’ attachment to technology, these surveys show a fairly consistent preference for in-person learning across all age groups. Older folks proved more open to learning online, while the younger age groups had a higher proportional preference for learning in person. Online learning on its own was the least-preferred option for everyone, less so than having no preference at all.

I’d seen similar results from [Eduventures’ research in adult learning](#). I’d also read [reports like Pew’s](#) on the digital revolution in higher education that outlined differences in the public’s perception of online learning’s value (low) and college executives’ perception of online learning’s value (high).

Still, my tech-slanted bias wouldn’t let me believe it. Industry growth and enrollments numbers show demand for online learning. How would that be possible if people don’t prefer to learn online? Research made it sound as if we might be living the 21st century version of [Ford’s faster horse quip](#).

These reports cited above were typically quantitative with no why behind the what, since most surveys don’t ask respondents to explain



their answers. However, ask for such detail, and you hear that while it may be logistically easier or necessary to take a course or program online, given a choice: Nothing compares with face-to-face interaction.

In follow-up interviews with survey respondents, I heard those who favored in-person learning fervently advocating for the value of people in their learning process.

Committing time in the presence of others is an investment that's harder to avoid, even for in-class learners prone to multitasking on Instagram.

For these learners who prefer the in-person format, the best run Adobe Connect session or the most sophisticated virtual world can't replicate personal engagement's immediacy, depth and nuance with comparable satisfaction. Interactive elements such as body language, nonverbal cues, energy exchange and spontaneity are as integral and valuable to the learning experience as the content of the course or program.

In fact, these interactive elements become part of the content. Being with peers affects both what is learned and how it's learned.

Sometimes, it's just about the work.

A few who spoke in favor of online learning focused more on tasks than people. They talked of getting work done when they wanted, managing their learning process, becoming more accountable for the act of learning etc.

What these respondents didn't mention as often, in contrast to those who favor in-person learning, was how being online affected what gets learned.

The more I listened to learners talk about learning online, the more I realized how little I'd seen in other research about the inherent learning value of the format. We know online learning is flexible and convenient, but we don't seem to know how the format functions as a cognitive endeavor.

This got me wondering to what degree learner presence in online formats is incentivized by indirect non-learning benefits like scheduling flexibility, meeting degree requirements, money saved or access gained to education brands that are otherwise out of reach. I wonder whether learners even consider the learning value of an online course and how they'd define that value.

Learning Outcomes ≠ Learning Value

The education industry lives and dies by scores, and I understand why. How learners fare on quizzes, tests, exams and grades provides tangible measures of learning performance, and this performance is the handiest way to assess and represent outcomes in a learning context. It's how we educators can (hopefully) show that the work we do amounted to something for the people we (supposedly) educated.

A learner's perspective isn't relevant in such assessment. Only the learner's productivity matters, confined as it is to the original learning context.

I have my doubts about whether learning outcomes have much relation to learning value, defined here as utility, effectiveness, consequence for and contribution to professional and/or personal development.

This distinction matters to discussion of online learning, where much of the research involving adults is about whether college students' exam scores and grades are comparable in online and in-person courses. The supposition is, if learners pass their tests, they've learned something of use. In non-degree (& non-certification) learning, such measures have no meaning, since there are no exams or grades. The only substantive measure that matters is whether learning changes the learner.

Recently, I had the COO of a learning client company ask me

how we'd know whether the learning program we were designing for the company's directors made a difference in the mindset of the intended participants. How, essentially, would we know the learning had any value?

In my education work, learning has value when thinking has changed enough for people to do things differently than they thought to do them beforehand. When I think in terms of learning value, I think of the learner taking what they've gleaned in the learning context and putting it to work in their professional or personal context. No test score captures this value.

Learning earns its value when it can help solve real-world problems, when it has effect outside the learning context, when it transfers to and is put to work in real-life situations. Is this a viable expectation of value for online learning? This is the question I'm now looking to explore.

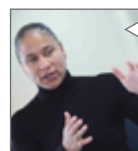
Online Learning is not the Future of Education.

It is, rather, the normalized now of education. Slow-to-change traditional public universities are now offering fully online degrees. Harvard is priming undergrad business minds via its online [Credentialed of Readiness](#) certificate. High-end [executive education](#) is steadily finding its way online.

A [handful of states](#) and several districts now require students take a class online before high school graduation, and K-12 teachers are adding 'LMS' and 'Apps' to their Education Acronyms & Abbreviations guidebooks.

Growth in online learning as an industry [is slowing](#). Yet, with millions of learners of all ages experiencing courses or programs online, there is no going back to a time when we did not learn in front of a screen.

If we can all expect more learning to happen online, but most people still don't prefer to learn primarily online, those of us on EdTech's cheer team should delve further into this disconnect and find reasons for learning online that are not just about time, money or requirements but are actually about the value of the learning itself. **TEL**



Tammy Sanders is a McKnight Doctoral Fellow who designs learning programs for professionals in the U.S and abroad and researches technology and learning for executive, managerial and Digital Age professionals at Florida International University in Miami. Connect [Tammy Sanders](#)

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doesn't work



Accelerating Organizational Performance

The case for executive coaching

By Daniel Russell



The top reason organizations partner with coaches is to optimize individual or team performance (International Coaching Federation 2013 Annual Report). Today, most organizations which are serious about people development employ executive coaching. We frequently see coaching implemented as part of high-potential, succession planning, or other leadership development programs. Sometimes, organizations will engage coaches to help coach leaders during a particularly tough transformation, or other significant change effort.

Convincing your leaders to participate in executive coaching may be a practical challenge as you look to implement the programme. In the past, executive coaching was focused on ‘fixing’ poor performers, but today companies are focusing on coaching high potential leaders and future CEOs. Even the CEO of Google Eric Schmidt stated

that hiring an executive coach was the best advice he has ever taken. A Google board member suggested coaching to Schmidt – who was initially resistant. In an interview with Fortune magazine, he stated, “everyone needs a coach”.

A recent PWC and Association Resource study on executive coaching showed coaching produced an average return of seven times of what the coaching cost the sponsoring organization. A quarter of respondents realized returns of 10 to 49 times the cost. Surveys also reveal that 97% of organizations believe that coaching has a positive impact on business results.

Coaching clients are overwhelmingly satisfied with their experiences. They often engage coaches to help them expand career opportunities, increase self-confidence, or improve work/life balance. Over 85% of

these coachees are satisfied or very satisfied.

Choosing the right coach based on the need and expected outcomes is the first important decision. However, there are a few general guidelines which are applicable across various circumstances:

* **Look for a coach with experience working through similar challenges:** Although some coaches focus on particular industries, past work experience, in general, and coaching experience, in particular, these are more important factors to consider. Often, coaches who work across industries are able to see commonalities across industries and inject new ideas into the conversation based on a broader set of experiences.

* **Establish trust between coach and client:** You may often hear coaches talk about the need for ‘chemistry’ between the coach and client. This chemistry is hard to define, but both will know it when they first meet. That’s why it’s important to plan for a short meet and greet session before finalizing your choice of a coach. Ensuring trust and confidentiality should be foundational to any coaching relationship, and it will be important to clarify with the coach exactly what information will be shared back to the sponsor company.

* **Look for a coach with globally standardized coaching credentials:** The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the world’s largest coaching organization with over 22,000 members, and provides specific training and certification guidelines for its members. The International Association of Coaching (IAC) is the second largest coaching organization with over 13,000 members. Both of these two global organizations have national chapters. In addition to these credentialing and membership organizations, a number of academic and private certification programs have entered the market. Be aware that these programs are quite varied in the quality of their content and graduates.

Determining how you will structure the coaching engagement is the second major decision. In many ways, the executive coaching engagement is like other leadership development programs. Having clear learning goals and objectives in mind at the outset is vital. Goals should be defined at both the enterprise level (such as “improving our leadership pipeline”) and for the individual (such as “move into critical business leader role within 3 years”). Learning objectives may also be defined at the organizational-level (such as improving innovation capability) and individual (such as applying innovative thinking to current business challenges). Beyond these learning goals, a framework for learning should be established.

For example, you should consider the following questions: How frequently should the coaching pairs meet? What other developmental tools should be available to participants? What information is owned by the sponsoring company versus what should remain confidential?

Finally, evaluating the effectiveness of the executive coaching programme must be considered at the outset. There are multiple ways to evaluate the program including:

* Behavioural change measures (such as pre- and post- 360 degree survey feedback, or other assessment data) are the most sensitive and targeted to detect improvements in day-to-day activities and performance on the job.

* Outcome measures (such as sales, promotions, productivity, and turnover) are less focused on detecting specific behavioral change, and are more focused on understanding the business impact or return on investment in coaching. Many, if not all, of these measures can be translated into a financial benefit for the company.

* Organizational health measures (such as employee engagement)

“

In the past, executive coaching was focused on ‘fixing’ poor performers, but today companies are focusing on coaching high potential leaders and future CEOs. Even the CEO of Google Eric Schmidt stated that hiring an executive coach was the best advice he has ever taken.

are also indirect measures of coaching effectiveness, but important to the overall success of the business. Often, these measures have already been tied to financial outcomes and their impact on business performance is implicitly understood.

Coaching is a fairly mature profession in North America and Europe as most large companies incorporate coaching regularly into their leadership development program. We are also seeing coaching grow rapidly across Southeast Asia. Many of the largest and most successful organizations here are employing coaches to help accelerate their leaders’ development, and grow their leadership bench strength as they continue to grow. Although Western companies typically take a ‘top heavy’ approach to coaching programs, Asian companies are focusing much more on building a culture of coaching among leaders at all levels of the organization.

This trend is to combat the typical hierarchical power structure in Asian companies and attempt to engage and retain younger workers (who have a more global mindset). The challenge for those companies is to truly transform and sustain a coaching culture that may not be modelled by more traditional senior leaders.

Unlike many large, complex talent management programmes, executive coaching is an intervention that can be adopted by organizations of all sizes. Coaching can be especially useful in family owned companies to help work through succession issues. For example, coaching can help individuals manage critical leader transitions as they take on increasingly more important roles.

Is your organization ready to implement executive coaching? Explore the benefits of coaching. Coaching is something that can start small. Once you begin, gauge the impact of the program and you’ll quickly realize the benefits for yourself. Our leaders are vital to the success of our companies and the country’s future. Coaching is a proven approach to accelerate their performance and increase our success. **TEL**



Daniel Russell is Managing Principal at Link Consulting based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Russell has 20 years’ experience assisting clients to design and implement high impact HR programs. He has worked with dozens of Fortune 500 clients over his career. His most recent assignments include Talent Management Strategy, Leadership Assessment and Development, Talent Acquisition Process Design & Implementation, Change Management, and Performance Management.

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The Secrets to Training Success

Follow the 'ADIE' route

 By Loy Oppus

 Training is an important HR responsibility. Recently, I attended an excellent 'train the trainer' session conducted by Carolyn Sorensen Balling on behalf of [NCHRA](#), the Northern California HR Association. The HR professionals, who attended, gained not just from what she said, but how she said it.

Carolyn 'walked the talk'. Not only did she cover the 'how to' for a successful training program, she demonstrated what effective training looks like. Carolyn shared a mnemonic to use when developing a training program: A-D-I-E.

A – Analyze – What's the problem? Managers often tell HR what training class they think is needed to solve a problem. Carolyn strongly suggested an exploratory conversation that starts with "What's the problem?" A clear definition of the problem is the starting point of any effective solution, including exploring questions like, "Is Training really the solution?" and, "What type of Training makes Sense?"



D – Design and develop – Who is the training for? What do they already know? As adults, employees come to training classes with varying degrees of experience in the subject matter. This means that training should not be 'canned'. Determine the gaps in knowledge, then fill the gap with the right stuff. Nothing more, nothing less. Make the presentation interesting!

I – Implement – By focusing on the learner and taking the time to plan, you have a better chance of capturing the trainees' interest and getting them involved. (Yeah, even though the training is required, it doesn't have to be boring)

E – Evaluate – Establish a baseline and gather information that can tell you if you have met the goal or not. Focus on behavioral change. Pay attention to what really counts, not just to what can be measured. As Einstein said, "Not everything that can be counted matters, and not everything that matters can be counted."

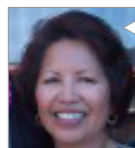
Here are the two things that Carolyn did to make her presentation interesting and effective:

1. She used **thought-provoking visuals**. A bucket. Eyeballs. She did not use PowerPoint slides with words and bullets. Instead she hand-drew some images on standard-size paper and taped them in rows on the front wall. At the end of the session, I realized that each drawing was a PowerPoint slide equivalent!

2. She told **memorable short stories**. Instead of lecturing on the pitfalls of dumping too much information into one training session, she told a short story, and then asked one of the attendees to hold up his coffee mug as she threatened to pour a whole carafe of coffee into the mug. Point taken. Don't spill, don't overflow. Don't make a mess. Don't overdo training.

So there you have it! The next time you are asked to 'do some training' — follow the ADIE route: make sure the solution (training?) is the right answer to the problem. Take the time to research the audience, and plan the most effective way to make the messages 'stick' (memorable stories? interesting visuals?) Finally, measure the effectiveness of the training based on actual behavioral changes shown by the participants. **TEL**

This article first appeared [here](#).



Loy Oppus is co-founder of Auxillium HRnetSource, a boutique HR software firm that helps small and mid-size organizations streamline HR administration and communications. Loy helps companies define product strategy, clarify positioning and deliver clear messages. She has specific experience in B2B software for small and mid-size organizations (SMBs).

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Effective Learning Solutions

The three visual building blocks

By John-Carlos Lozano

A few years ago, I bought my first house, and as everyone will tell you when you are buying a house, you have to look at the foundation.

Is it solid? Cracking? Leaning one way or another?

A solid foundation provides stability. It is the starting point upon which everything else can be built. Nice details and pretty colors may be attractive, but without a strong and stable foundation, you are bound to face costly problems that undermine your investment.

A learning solution's success also relies on a solid foundation. When we speak of that foundation, we tend to think of instructional design (business objectives, analysis, and audience) and project management (budget, risk management, and timeline) — all critically important factors. So when I recently was asked about the visual foundation of a successful learning solution, I had the opportunity to think back on the many solutions my team at SweetRush have designed, and pinpoint what I believe are three building blocks. These hold true whether the solution includes gamification, mobile, e-learning, or performance support.

“

A learning solution's success relies on a solid foundation. When we speak of that foundation, we tend to think of instructional design (business objectives, analysis, and audience) and project management (budget, risk management, and timeline) — all critically important factors.

Branding: Branding has always been a significant part of the visual foundation of learning solutions. Branding serves so many purposes -- it's the first impression, it helps draw the learner in, it helps tell the story, and it brings cohesiveness to the entire solution. I think we will see more and more emphasis on branding in the learning community.

Interactivity: A colleague, who happens to be a baby boomer, was recently reminiscing about his school days when he would get shuffled into the auditorium to watch a movie about math. Back then, seeing anything on a screen was innovative. Now we can click, drag, point and swipe, and those actions help hold our attention and are a more effective way to teach us new skills.

User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX): In his book, “Gamify,” Brian Burke discusses how we should think of the user's (in our case, learner's) needs, desires, and preferences first. If we are successful at doing that, the downstream effect is that the course will achieve the objectives. This is how we should think about UI/UX: it's the critical, learner-centric part of visual design. How does the learner move through the learning experience? With ease, where each step is clear and logically leads to the next? Does it begin with the excited anticipation of learning something valuable? Do learners walk away with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction (and clear direction about what to do next)? All of these factors are measures of success upon which the UI/UX has a significant effect.

Are there other building blocks to consider in visual design of learning solutions? Yes, of course.

If you become skilled at these three, however, your learning solutions will be just like that house on the corner that everyone admires: a masterpiece, from top to bottom. **TEL**



John-Carlos Lozano is Creative Director at SweetRush. He is the driving force in exploring and developing higher levels of custom interactivity, simulation, and gamification in learning for a long list of clients including Bridgestone, Petco, and Bank of America. With a dual degree in graphic design and illustration/animation, he is an extraordinary artist, and a passionate learner, leader, and teacher.

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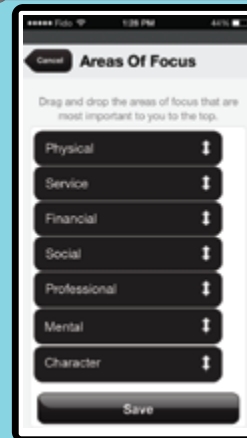


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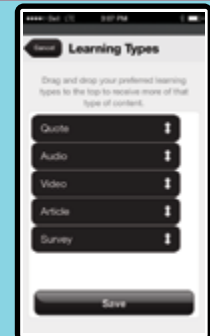
Employees choose the areas of focus they want to work on.

1 Choose area of focus



Employees choose how they learn.

2 How employees learn



As an employer, are you committed to helping your employees become engaged, better performers and motivated each and every day?

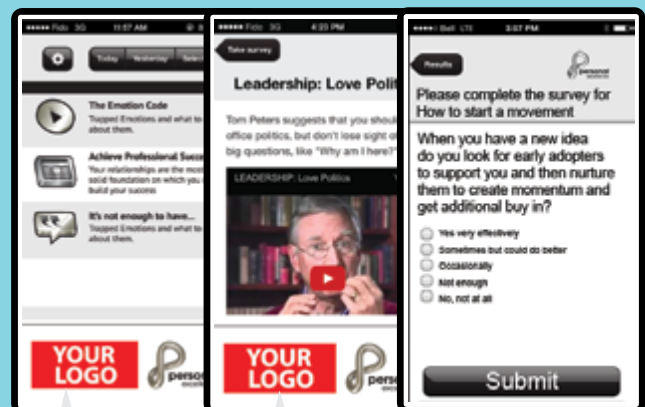
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- ✓ Key Performance Indicators for employees
- ✓ Align content with Corporate Values and Mission
- ✓ Gamification, Rewards and Points allocation based on usage *
- ✓ Quick Employee Survey and polling
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*Available Q2.

3 Spend 3-5 minutes of the day



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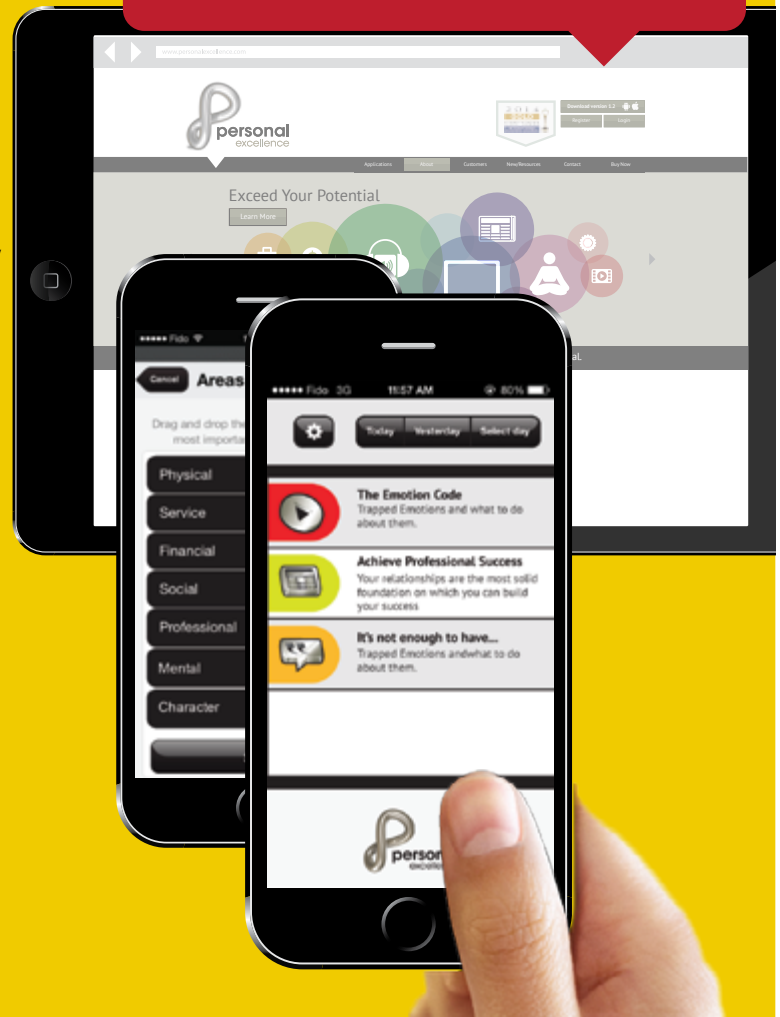
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..a better role model for my friends and family,
..a better coworker!"?

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Social Intranet Software

How to train your employees

 By Tim Eisenhauer

As a tool for facilitating a better environment for employee training, social intranet software simply cannot be beat. This being said, there are a number of things that can be done to ensure you're getting the most out of your social intranet when attempting to use it as a platform for onboarding or training new employees. It can be immensely powerful, but it requires you and your staff to utilize it to the fullest extent in order to achieve the best results.



When using social intranet software as a tool for training new employees, keep the following tips in mind:

1. Start by Teaching Everyone the Intranet Basics

One of the most important things you can do when training new employees via social intranet software is to teach them how to get the most out of using the Intranet itself. Getting the most out of a company's social intranet is easy once people get the hang of things, but that's not to say a bit of initial training isn't in order.

Try to isolate the aspects of your social intranet that are the most useful for your business, and do whatever you can to provide adequate training at the very beginning of an employee's hiring process.

2. Fill your Knowledge Base with essential Documentation

As a company's intranet can also serve as its knowledge base, outfitting it with essential documentation is the first step you can take towards ensuring that your employees can easily access the assets they need at any given moment.

Whatever paper documentation you may have in hand that describes your business' guidelines and philosophies should be scanned and uploaded (or otherwise reattributed) to your social intranet as soon as you get it off the ground, as this will give every one of your employees the opportunity to access it even when they aren't in the

office. For companies that hire remote employees, the importance of not skipping over this step cannot be overemphasized.

3. Assign a Leader or Mentor to each new Hire

Joining a team of individuals that is already cohesive in the first place can be a difficult experience, especially for those who tend towards being shy. In this regard, it's always helpful to assign someone in a leadership role as a direct contact with each new employee. This way there's never a question as to who to ask when an employee needs a little extra help.

Those who take on the 'big buddy' role don't necessarily need to be managers, but they should have the experience and knowledge to lead new recruits forward.

4. Set Clear, Realistic, and Reachable Goals

One of the best ways to ensure that you're actually making measurable progress when attempting to train new employees via social intranet software is to set clear goals. Defining what your employees should learn over the course of a period of time by perusing your company's intranet, and working in collaboration with colleagues will help to ensure that everyone is on the same page, thus cutting down on the chances that an employee might suffer from a lack of initial training. Always remember that goals such as these need to be articulated early on in order to achieve the best results.

5. Hold Individual Review Sessions

After a new employee has had sufficient amount of time to learn the ropes of their position and get to know your company's intranet, it's essential that you check in with them to see monitor their progress. Holding individual review sessions is the best way to go about this, as it will allow the employee an opportunity to ask whatever questions may be on his or her mind. Some managers find that regular review sessions can be beneficial, but at the very least, you should hold one after an employee has been a part of your staff for a month's time.

Other Tricks?

When utilized effectively, a social intranet can have a dramatically beneficial impact on an organization's ability to properly train new employees. Work towards streamlining the process, and you'll find that a great deal of the headaches associated with onboarding new staff members disappear completely. **TEL**

The article first appeared [here](#).



Tim Eisenhauer is a co-founder and president of [Axero](#) maker of Communifire, a widely popular social business platform used for implementing social intranets, collaboration spaces, and social knowledge management. He is also the author of the popular eBook, [22 Surefire Ways to Boost Employee Engagement](#), a research-backed and data-driven look at 22 practices that will help you better engage your workforces, boost company productivity, and increase employee engagement.

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From eLearning to bLearning

The future of blended learning

By Dhaval Trivedi



Consider this scenario: a sales manager is returning from a client meeting. She checks her mail while waiting to board her flight at the airport, and comes across an introductory video link to a training session that is going to be conducted later in the day.

She has nothing else to do, so she takes a look at the half an hour video on 'Time and Productivity Management'. On arriving back at office, the training session begins, and unlike in previous discussions, she gets actively involved in the exercises. After the discussion, she goes back to her team and shares what she has learnt, and they seem to be interested in the exercises as well.

Training programs have traditionally been only face-to-face. 'Corporate training programs' were regarded as a break from daily work routines for a majority of professionals, rather than a knowledge transfer exercise. However with new digital media, training has become more interactive and professionals are becoming more responsive.

What is Blended Learning?

As a next step from eLearning, there's an increasingly louder buzz around 'Blended Learning' today.

Blended learning quite literally means a blend of online training and face-to-face, instruction-led session. In this method, various platforms and modes of delivery are used. Introductory material such as videos, case studies or articles is sent out to participants in order to pique their interest.

These are often followed by a face-to-face session including interactive techniques such as role-playing, scenario based learning, simulations, gaming, and problem-based learning and collaboration of virtual teams.

How can Blended Learning programs be implemented successfully? *With new devices being introduced on a daily basis, Blended Learning is definitely not about using technology just because it is there; it's about using technology because it makes sense.*

Multi-device usage is the new normal today. Professionals expect to find information from different sources through various devices, whether it is an article to read, or a video to watch on an iPad, a podcast to download for later listening, or an interactive scenario-based training exercise to do on a mobile phone. Blended Learning could be a successful method if technology is strategically used. Device agnostic programs need to be developed, especially those that work

across various platforms, screen sizes, browsers, resolutions and operating systems.

Blending Learning programs should also be created keeping in mind the group of people that are going to be trained. Which mode of delivery will captivate them the most? What is their technology literacy? Would they prefer traditional face-to-face training methods?

The Future of Blended Learning

The big question on your mind might be, "Is Blended Learning here to stay, or is it going to fade out like another buzzword?"

Blended Learning in a corporate setting is definitely advantageous for the modern, 'connected' professionals as they can learn on the go. While instruction-led training will definitely not be replaced entirely by virtual methods, a combination of both seems to get the best results. Many organizations are widely adopting Blended Learning in the workplace. However, its success and future depends on the capability of organizations to:

- * Adapt to new and emerging technology
- * Understand and implement blended programs strategically
- * Inculcate self-learning skills of participants
- * Obtain management support
- * Facilitate bandwidth
- * Provide engaging content

The future of Blended Learning depends on how technology is used to compliment face-to-face, instruction-led training. Success also depends on how an interactive and responsive learning environment can be provided to change the perception that knowledge transfer in a workplace is just a 'break from work'. **TEL**

The article first appeared [here](#).



Dhaval Trivedi is Senior Business Response Manager at Upside Learning. With over 7+ years of experience in Pre-sales (RFI, RFP/RFQ & Bid management), IT - Sales & Marketing and Business Development, Dhaval is well versed with the learning domain, Offshore Product Development (OPD) and Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) services in Manufacturing and Engineering Domain.
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E-Learning

Pros and cons

 By Eric Friedman

Our lives are dominated by technology — we depend on cloud computing to sync information among all of our electronic devices; we can text, e-mail, and tweet almost simultaneously from our smart phones, and have access to information 24/7 through the Internet. It's no wonder then that the technology that allows us to do all these things is also increasingly being applied to learning. More and more companies are turning to e-learning to provide training and professional development opportunities to their employees, thanks to its accessibility and adaptability.

As companies begin to grasp the importance of adopting professional [development strategies](#) for their employees, they begin to look for suitable solutions and best practices. E-learning is quickly coming to the forefront of those solutions. Technology has proven to be a great enabler for learning by granting wider access and facilitating continuing education throughout an organization. It provides an infrastructure through which companies can develop interactive and engaging platforms to deliver skill-building, and training information.

However, like most new technology, e-learning still has its drawbacks. Wider access can also mean less control and potential technology issues. Here are some of the pros and cons of adopting e-learning for your company's training and development needs.

Pros

* **Access.** Perhaps the most valuable benefit of e-learning is that it provides access to a wider audience. Through cloud computing and the Internet, companies can offer training tools to employees anytime, anywhere. This benefits large, multinational corporations with employees in every continent because now there's a way to offer them all the same training, translated if necessary, and in their own time zones. Even if the company is in only one time zone, the benefit of access through e-learning can change [the way employees are trained](#) and the way employers manage their progress.

* **Low cost.** Another key advantage to e-learning — and one that finance departments everywhere can rejoice over — is its relative low cost. E-learning doesn't require paying an instructor, companies don't have to find and pay for a space to hold the training, and they don't have to buy any new equipment or books. Any company can find the right e-learning solution to fit its budget, depending on its strategic goals and its employees' needs. This is especially true for companies with hundreds or thousands of employees that need to learn the same skills or policies, as scalability greatly reduces the cost per person.

* **Ease of use.** Given how much an average person uses technology on a daily basis, and based on our familiarity with software applications, e-learning's ease of use can be a big benefit. By choosing a user-friendly platform, companies can count on their employees being able to navigate their way around, and learn how to use it quickly. Of course, not every e-learning platform is user-friendly and not every employee is tech-savvy, but generally organizations can reap the benefits of having a tech teaching tool that most employees will feel comfortable using.

* **Tailoring.** In terms of access, cost, function, and pretty much anything else you can think of, e-learning can be tailored to your business needs. Whether you need training for five employees or five

thousand, e-learning tools can be customized to what works best for your company. They can also be tailored to your employees' needs. If employees feel like they know certain topics very well, they can skim over them and waste less time. That way they can concentrate on the topics they need to really work on. Employees also get to learn at their own pace, which is advantageous, considering that most of them are balancing multiple tasks, workloads, and deadlines.

Cons

* **One size doesn't fit all.** One of the main disadvantages of e-learning is that it doesn't appeal to all learning styles. While most people appreciate the freedom and flexibility that e-learning provides, many prefer the traditional classroom method to learning on a computer. Some people might prefer to learn through a hands-on approach and may find e-learning a little too much like going through the motions, instead of applying the lessons to real-life scenarios.

* **Isolation.** Learning through the Internet on individual computers allows for wider access, but it can also easily lead to isolation. Learning face-to-face means employees can ask questions and have them answered right away, which is not the case with e-learning. Employees have the freedom to learn during their own time wherever they are, but this may leave them with a feeling of isolation and lack of support. The lack of a physical classroom and instructor can be frustrating and demotivating.

* **Tech issues.** Although most of us are comfortable navigating the Internet and the computer world, not everyone is as tech-savvy. These employees may find the concept and/or execution of e-learning difficult to grasp. Even if the e-learning software is user-friendly, the idea of using it may be daunting to some, especially for those employees who don't have to use computers regularly on their jobs. Other potential tech issues can include a slow Internet connection, specific browser requirements, and poor device compatibility.

* **Lack of control.** Through e-learning, employers are giving control to employees to learn in their own time and in their own way. Since employees can use e-learning tools at their own pace, there's a risk some may fall behind or just go through the material without really paying attention. This lack of control over the learning process can lead some to be weary of using e-learning for training purposes.

When strategically and properly implemented, e-learning has the potential to change the game for any company's employee training. Have you adopted any e-learning tools for skill training and professional development? What have been the benefits and disadvantages to your business? [TEL](#)



Eric Friedman is the founder and CEO of eSkill Corporation, a leading provider of online skills testing for pre-employment assessment and benchmarking. Eric has degrees in Psychology and Business, and a fascination with matching people with roles they're best at, and that they enjoy. Connect [Eric Friedman](#)



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m-Learning

Learning on the go

By Aneta Sokolowska



Recently we've been exploring different ways in which learning technologies can help you support your global workforce. So far we've covered [social learning](#), shared tips on [how to build global learning communities](#), discussed the importance of [supporting self-initiated learning](#), and touched upon rising fondness of mobile technology among learners.

Mobile Devices and their Big Implications for Learning at Work

With the modern world open for business and connected 24/7, the work environment brings with it increasing competitive pressure, information complexity and the required speed of response to product development. Sales and customer preferences require faster, better access to performance support and tools to collaborate among knowledge workers. This might seem like a challenge for learning and development managers, but is it really?

While it might be true that the fast evolving business environment brings with it new challenges to the workplace, it also opens doors to new opportunities. Modern work becomes ever more flexible and not dependent on location – and this is where mobile technology brings with it great opportunity, not only for the business but for learning and development within it. The trick is to realize the potential mobile technology has for learning, envision different learning applications that it can support, and expertly implement it into organizational learning and development (L&D) strategy. m-Learning can truly transform traditional training.

Now, let's look at some particular attributes that mobile technology has to offer for learning at work.

Extending and Amplifying the Course

Formal learning isn't dead! According to recent study conducted by Towards Maturity, three out of five learners still report that the traditional course is one of the most effective opportunities for learning what they need for the job. However 88% of learners want to be able to learn at their own pace. Here's where mobile learning nicely fits in.

It provides the opportunity to extend and expand the course through the re-application of learning and practice, vital for learning retention, reinforcing knowledge and skills. It might be a great idea to use m-learning as part of induction and foundational capabilities for new starters.

Post course, mobile devices make it possible to access and revisit training materials anytime and anywhere, this includes

post course quizzes and tests, summary screens, reference guides and expert tip videos. These can be made available through short mobile courses encouraging learners to apply what they have learnt through real actions after training courses. But that's not the end.

The Social side of m-Learning

Still, the potential of mobile technology to transform traditional training goes far further. Mobile devices allow social interaction, facilitate collaboration and link directly to the context of the workplace event and therefore the learning need.

These are the devices individuals have with them 24/7, devices able to capture information (voice, camera and video) and increasingly able to interact with new technologies of local contextualized data combined with filtered information from corporate knowledge-base.

What's more, mobile devices lend themselves to bite sized performance support. They are by definition [social and collaborative platforms](#).

Increasing Collaboration

With the social side to m-learning there comes collaboration. It's a no-brainer now that mobile devices add greatly to collaboration at work. They can be used for conferencing and webinars; thanks to them fellow learners can have an ongoing communication with each other, and trainers and experts can mentor and coach outside scheduled courses by posting regular, real-time updates with hints and tips on various topics.

Just-in-time Performance Support

According to Laura Overton (the MD of Towards Maturity) [what's important for learners](#) is instant access to relevant information – in short, just in time support. Mobile performance support effectively assists just in time learning, using such features as podcasts, field guides, manuals and references, audio and video content, on the job support, etc.

Searchable databases, short demonstration video clips, live and static information can all be accessed to aid tasks via mobile devices in the field, or when staff are away from their desks.

As an example, mobile learning technology can be a great support for sales people, i.e. when it comes to client meetings, product demonstrations, or selecting products for a customer based on their requirements, providing sales people with support and access to information on a product as and when they need it. And finally...

m-Learning has a great potential to create new level of engagement for online content. Fifty percent of learners report uninspiring content as the top barrier to their engagement (according to Towards Maturity benchmark 2013). But the scale, value and uptake of the emerging mobile platforms means huge investment will continue into enhancement of the experience, resources and services available for learners. The mobile revolution contributes opportunity for L&D community to increase learner engagement with mobile apps, games, digital content, interactivity, etc. And when you combine mobile learning with social learning the engagement is bound to happen! **TEL**

The article first appeared [here](#).




Aneta Sokolowska is Marketing and PR Executive at Commelius Solution. Aneta joined learning and development industry in 2011, and since then learning and learning technologies are half the time on her mind (the other half is occupied with other fascinations in my life, like good books, films, music and discovering how the mind works). Visit www.commelius.com Connect [Aneta Sokolowska](#) Call 44[203]6682245



Improving Millennial Employee Learning

Six quick wins

 By Jean Martin



CEB research shows that for more than six in ten learning and development (L&D) practitioners, tailoring L&D solutions for millennials is a critical priority, given the extent to which millennials value professional development opportunities.

Sixty-five percent of millennials stated that the opportunity for personal development was the most influential factor in choosing their current job.

Millennials are 34% more likely to rank development as one of the top five most important employment value proposition (EVP) attributes.

We identified six trends in millennial learning preferences and behaviors that differ from other employee segments:

Trend #1: Millennials lack Confidence in Identifying what to Learn

Millennials are 9% less likely than other employee segments to be confident that they can identify the skills and knowledge they need.

L&D Implication: Enable managers to help millennials identify and prioritize skills and knowledge most important for their current roles.

Trend #2: Millennials Value Network Learning, but do not always Seek Peer Feedback

Millennials are 18% more likely to find network learning (in which employees who work together learn together) effective in teaching them new skills and knowledge. However, millennials are 5% less likely to ask their peers for feedback on their work.

L&D Implication: Enable employees to have more effective network learning conversations.

“

For more than six in ten learning and development (L&D) practitioners, tailoring L&D solutions for millennials is a critical priority, given the extent to which millennials value professional development opportunities.

Trend #3: Millennials Value on-the-job Learning

Millennials are 14% more likely to find on-the-job learning effective in teaching them new skills and knowledge.

L&D Implication: Enable millennial employees to identify and take advantage of on-the-job learning opportunities.

Trend #4: Millennials are more likely to Value and Seek Manager Feedback

Millennials are 16% more likely to find constructive feedback from their managers effective at helping them learn. What's more, millennials are 17% more likely to emphasize asking managers for feedback on their work.

L&D Implication: Improve manager effectiveness at coaching millennials by ensuring managers are intentional and consistent in their coaching.

Trend #5: Formal Learning is equally Valued by Millennials and other Employees

Millennials are more likely than other employees to find formal and virtual learning effective in teaching them new skills and knowledge.

L&D Implication: Ensure that formal learning programs are relevant to millennial's learning needs.

Trend #6: Millennials lack Confidence in their ability to apply Skills

Millennials are 8% less confident in their ability to apply newly learned skills and knowledge back on the job.

L&D Implication: Enable millennials to plan for learning application at the end of formal programs. **TEL**

This article first appeared [here](#).



Jean Martin is CEB's Talent Solutions Architect. Jean directs the development of talent management products and insights across the company. Her areas of expertise include topics such as leadership, talent drivers of corporate performance, future of HR function and workforce trends. Connect [Jean Martin](#)
Visit www.executiveboard.com



Time for 'Back-to-School'

Ongoing, strategic training program is key

By Judy Philbin



“

Majority of customers say they judge a company based upon the interactions they have with its call center. That makes your customer service representatives an extremely valuable asset to the organization's bottom line.

Treat me like a person, not an issue. Listen carefully and take time to understand what I really need.

Work with me to solve MY problem. You may have a script, but [one size does not fit all!](#)

Give me someone who is well trained and knowledgeable. If YOU can't help me, quickly and graciously give me someone who can.

[Give me a real live person!](#) Computers aren't empathetic and they're not smart. For the most part, they're irritating.

Give me even more than I ask for. Surprise me with excellent service!

5. It starts at the Top. Good front-line supervision is critical to retain good employees. High employee turnover is costly and, as the economy improves, predictions are that turnover will increase. Managers can help stem the tide by attracting good people, and creating a [positive work environment](#) with supportive listening, sincere praise, and by empowering staff to make decisions that capture the company's customer service goals. While many of these suggestions sound simple and logical, they may not feel natural to supervisors who are used to more traditional ways of managing staff.

Test Time!

Consumers have almost unlimited choices. And while price/value will, in certain instances, determine their purchase, Harris Interactive, Customer Experience Impact Report finds that even in a negative economy, [60% of consumers](#) are often or always willing to pay more for excellent customer experience.

The lesson? An ongoing, strategic training program can help your call center team deliver the best possible service experience and develop a long-term, loyal customer base. Now, back to school! **TEL**

This article first appeared [here](#).



Judy Philbin, a long-time independent contractor, copywriter and editor, understands the importance of focused listening, quality delivery and customer service.
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ABCs for Building a Stellar Customer Experience
“Confidence comes from discipline and training.”

Robert Kiyosaki, American investor, self-help author and motivational speaker.

Your call center is probably the single most common touchpoint for customers, and up to [92% of consumers](#) say they judge a company based upon the interactions they have with its call center. That makes your customer service representatives an extremely valuable asset to the organization's bottom line. They are the face of the company, and a tremendous opportunity to deliver satisfaction and build loyalty.

Yet, according to the report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, [68% of customers](#) have gone to a competitor because they were unhappy with the treatment they received while speaking to a customer service center. The lesson here? As fall approaches, it's time to think 'back to school' by providing your call center staff the training it needs to deliver the best possible [customer experience](#).

There are a variety of good reasons to 'hit the books':

1. Introduction of new, [Multichannels of Communication](#). All the latest call center trends —email, SMS or web chatting — are great, but won't serve the customer or build loyalty if staff is clumsy in its delivery.

2. Updated Processes or Technology. How is customer information collected, shared and stored? Are follow-up emails expected? Are service representatives now expected to cross-sell and up-sell? How is a hand-off managed? Are updated metrics being applied? Customer satisfaction depends on a seamless experience at every level.

3. Current Trends in Technical Support. Quality technical support can be the hook that keeps customers loyal. However, it's not necessarily the technical know-how of a support team but how they *communicate what they know* that makes the difference.

4. Time to Brush-up on 'Soft Skills'. Best-in-class call centers are those where staff is well versed in the skills of listening, respect, positive attitude, communication, creativity, and the ability to ask the questions that get to the heart of the customer inquiry. In fact, if your service team goes 'back to school' for no other reason, it would be to remember the universal truths of what the customer really wants!



Go Beyond the Screen

Five ways to make learning go beyond the screen

 By Sabrina Leis

We've all been here. We take a course because we have to. We go through the motions, and that's it. Nothing transfers over into our day-to-day lives. This is a common challenge for compliance. Employees take compliance modules, and there are no follow-up activities to support the module they took. The learning is stuck in the screen, and there's no behavior change.

It doesn't have to be this way. Recently, we were asked in the comments section of one of our surveys: How can compliance courses engage employees with material that will enable them to practice and use what they have learned outside e-learning?

Here are five ways to make your compliance learning go beyond the screen:

1. Market your Learning

Campaigns aren't just for advertising agencies. You want results where learners actually absorb and apply the knowledge they have gained? Then you need a learning campaign with consistent communication in the form of videos, emails, face-to-face meetings, webinars, posters, awards and incentives, podcasts, infographics, 'lunch & learns', leadership endorsements, newsletters, memorable taglines and stories. You can get creative! Use a variety of channels to get your message out.

Here's a good example of an effective message:

"If you see something, say something."

The U.S. Homeland Security developed a great tagline that is seen on posters and announced at train stations and airports. This simple statement says it all, and implies that we should do something -- to trust our instincts if something seems 'off'. It encourages individuals to look out for the safety of others.



Can you develop something similar for your compliance communication campaign?

2. Device-proof it

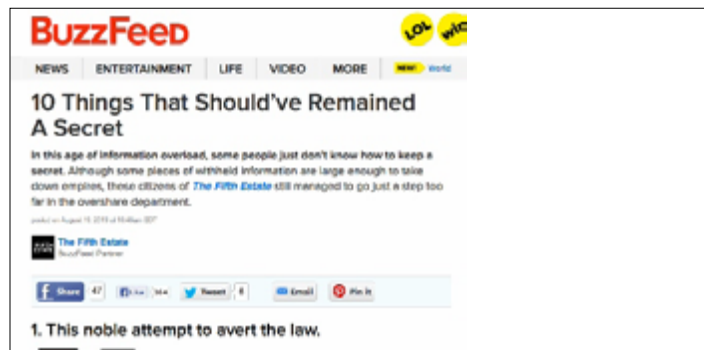
If your e-learning is stuck in desktop format, it might be time to think about making it friendly for multiple devices. Limiting it to one device is limiting exposure to content. Make accessing courses convenient and seamless to learners so they can take courses everywhere, from the airport to their daily commute to the waiting room. Give your employees flexibility.

Before I had an iPhone, I never anticipated I would use my phone as nearly as much as I do. But now, I use it to read articles, engage in discussions, research potential purchases, Tweet and Instagram. This small device has become a must-have for many, so making your learning responsive and mobile will make it easier for employees to stay up-to-date and engaged.

There are tons of creative ways you can make your learning solution mobile friendly, from apps and games to short videos and gifs.

Not convinced? Take a look at BuzzFeed. Their 'listicles' capture attention, and make for a fun, quick read. Make it light, entertaining and, if you're feeling bold, humorous. We all love a good laugh.

Could you incorporate something similar into your communication campaign? Something bite-sized and easy-to-absorb in a quick timeframe?



3. Make it Shorter and Stand-alone

We're busy and constantly on-the-go. One of the biggest shortfalls of compliance training is the way it is delivered. So often, employees feel chained to their desks with lengthy, mind-numbing content, and all they can think is, "When will this be over?" Instead of absorbing the content, their brains go into sleep mode.

Be mindful of your employees and give them learning that's in bite-sized nuggets. Deliver engaging activities they can complete between meetings and other deliverables. They will get more out of each module and recall key messages with sharper clarity. It will also make you more intentional about the content you wish to share.

4. Use more Channels for Viewing and Sharing

Using multiple channels for delivery will help move beyond the screen. Blend multiple touch points, including video, audio, webinars, face-to-face sessions, team events and action learning.

Seeing and doing are two different things. Give your employees opportunities to apply and discuss what they have learned with peers and managers. Create a culture that emphasizes sharing and encourages transparency.

5. Reality TV, anyone?

Spoiler alert! Compliance situations can be really interesting. Create some drama and narrative around your compliance stories. For some clients, we've created cliffhanger moments around what will happen next in the e-learning, extending life of the learning experience and driving up engagement.

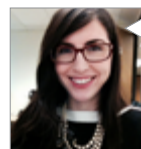
And of course, it's consequences that get attention. Everyone remembers the horror stories. Horror stories also make content more memorable. Just remember, don't waste your employees' time. Make sure the consequences and scenarios you share are realistic and relevant. Otherwise, your credibility will be lost, and employees will begin to tune out.

Most importantly, supply your employees with ways to apply their learning. Follow-up with a scenario-based test or a case study analysis.

Lastly, measure, measure, measure. Collect feedback and benchmark what earns the best results. **TEL**

Resources

Tip: [The science behind spacing theory](#)



Sabrina Leis is a marketing and communication strategist for Kineo US with a master's in communication from Northwestern University. With a background in creative communication campaigns, Sabrina is interested in the impact marketing has on implementing new e-learning solutions and change management.
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Tribal Knowledge

Five ways it can give employees the full picture

By Trey Tramonte

Between 100 B.C and 1300 A.D. the Anasazi Indian tribe flourished in environments where most of us wouldn't last two days. The civilization is well known for living in the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings that still stand in Colorado. They survived extreme droughts and adverse conditions by sharing their collective knowledge of skills such as farming dry lands and using plants like the Yucca for soap, food and sewing materials.

I believe a key aspect of their longevity was through a practice called Tribal Knowledge. This approach to maintaining and sharing knowledge likely helped the Anasazi improve and carry forward insights and innovations from their elders for decades. Younger workers made improvements with new ideas. Their successes as well as failures were recorded for everyone in the community to learn. This community of ideas and knowledge has helped cultures like theirs and others survive for hundreds of years.

Today, many successful organizations practice the art of Tribal Knowledge. [Six Sigma](#) describes it as any unwritten information that is not commonly known by others within a company and may be needed to produce a quality product or service.

Organizations that have formalized this form of knowledge sharing provide their employees with a complete picture of what they need to succeed, including historical archives of best practices and epic failures. Unfortunately most companies practice the complete opposite, giving their employees just [20 percent](#) of the knowledge they need to do their jobs.

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Today, many successful organizations practice the art of Tribal Knowledge. Six Sigma describes it as any unwritten information that is not commonly known by others within a company and may be needed to produce a quality product or service.

Big company off-sites are a perfect example of delivering the smallest amount of information in the most expensive and time-consuming manner possible. They'll bring an entire company together to hear from a handful of successful employees to share best practices. This approach is great, if everyone in the audience is fully engaged during that small window of time, which is rare after a night of 'team-building' parties.

Employee orientations often fall into the same trap as well. Employees endure a day's worth of videos and presentations in hopes that they'll capture the essence of their new jobs. The rest is up to a mentor to fill in the gaps, assuming he or she is adequately trained.

Tribal Knowledge gives us the secret sauce that members of our professional community require over time, not just one day. It helps us benefit from all our peers, not just a select few. And it provides

an opportunity for everyone to engage in a two-way conversation on how to improve operations.

It's about capturing new ideas from one day to the next, and recording them in a way that others can view and collaborate on at their convenience. Tribal Knowledge is about a community of people who share ideas and best practices that make each day better than the last.

A shared knowledge-base is one way to collect and manage Tribal Knowledge. It allows people to engage with that content in the context of a broader conversation so it can grow naturally. As more individuals begin to engage with that information, it can catch fire and spread throughout an organization. It becomes a mechanism to scale information at a very rapid pace.

If there were five tips the **Anasazi** could give us about Tribal Knowledge, I believe they would be this:

- **Capture and Maintain Generational Knowledge.** This is especially important with so many baby boomers entering retirement. As they leave the workforce, up to 50 percent of most company institutional knowledge is expected to leave with them.
- **Avoid the Information Silos.** Nearly all functions are interrelated or influenced by each other. It's important for everyone to look beyond their individual job function as it affects other aspects of the company. Find an opportunity or shared venue where subject matter experts can engage with each other to share insights, ideas and concerns.
- **Promote and Share Best Practices as they Occur.** The real-time aspect of this is extremely important. The ability to share a breakthrough or discovery in real time presents an opportunity for an organization to make immediate gains. This is especially important for companies that live and die by quarterly earnings. A breakthrough in sales with two weeks left in a quarter can make a difference in an organization's ability to hit its numbers.
- **Communicate the Good and the Bad.** Mistakes should never be swept under the rug. In a culture where employees are encouraged to take risks, it's important to share the lessons learned from mistakes. If someone discovers a problem in a design or process, others will be glad to not repeat the mistake.
- **Reach out to other Communities around You.** Find an opportunity to share knowledge with those in other departments, partners, customers and even your competitors. Take the time to reach out to others, and you'll discover how much more you can learn in the process.

Sharing and promoting Tribal Knowledge within your organization helps all employees learn and contribute on an ongoing basis. Everyone is a teacher and everyone is a student. With this shared knowledge, your organization can survive and prosper through the harshest times together. **TEL**



Trey Tramonte is President & CEO of Bloomfire, an enterprise collaboration software provider that enables people to share expertise and find information. Visit www.bloomfire.com Connect [Trey Tramonte](#)



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Social Learning

Increasing efficiency through shared process

By Michelle Albert



Babies are born with natural curiosity and become interested in what people are doing and how they are communicating right from the start. Social interaction in itself is a form of multi-tasking. We look, respond and seek to make contact, learning from others naturally through our shared environment. Social tools can be used effectively to advocate workplace harmony, efficiency and productivity.

Overview

Organizations have the opportunity to encourage the creative flow of communication between peers by developing communities around teams, roles, projects, and as a means of disseminating of information and resources that can be accessed 24/7. Communities can be defined narrowly or more broadly depending on corporate culture and issues at hand. The virtual environment can evolve over time and redefine its values. Content can be created with purpose to direct initiatives and moderated or archived and mined as needed.

All organizations have the potential to create interest based communities, where employees of like minds or common needs can come together to share or exchange valuable information. An organizational community can be a safe environment where employees find respite during the business day as well as a place for interaction for the greater good of the enterprise. Intensity and involvement may vary from person to person, but people learn from one another, and this continuum may evolve over time if this learning activity is nourished. New leaders may emerge from participation in communities, additional strengths can be identified, and weaknesses or issues further explored.

HR has potential to spearhead communities that include, pre hires, new hires, health and wellness, policies, cross departmental cooperation efforts, training, conflict management, careers and lead the entire organization through positive change. HR can allocate staff to moderate content and monitor discussions, track activity and analyze



data. HR can also govern communities with policies and protocol and encourage participation and continued involvement. Leadership cooperation and IT assistance is essential in order to facilitate change and succeed, with lasting effects, throughout the enterprise.

It is critical to embrace communities, content, practices and policies, in order to build a productive environment, to grow the community, to mine the data, to assess the health of the community, to analyze the results using metrics to reap organization-wide benefits. Policies must be established properly, providing guidance for staff, stating what is and is not appropriate in order to avoid repercussions. Seeking assistance from qualified legal professionals to eliminate potential difficulties and to ensure compliance is critical.

Environment

Working in organizations can often be a very isolating experience for employees. Jobs must be performed efficiently, and there is often insufficient time and adequate resources available to personally develop each and every employee. The impact of social communities, practices and policies can play a very large role in the training and development of employees and empowering staff. Communities can be created based on organizational needs, goals and initiatives and content can be creatively crafted to satisfy objectives

Technology used to Circumvent internal Manual Process

A technological process eliminates inefficiencies and can provide the audit trail for monitoring activity, together with easy access to important resources

Scenario 1

A department meets every Friday morning to discuss results from the previous week and review goals for the week ahead. Employees are required to attend this meeting from 8AM to 10AM. Often the meeting runs over 2 hours and employees leave grumbling about all the work they have to complete before the close of business on Friday, before the weekend.

A virtual community can replace the need for in person meetings.

Scenario 2

Emails are distributed weekly with attachments of documents to review and edit.

Documents can be distributed through an internal community for a project for reviewing, commenting, editing.

Scenario 3

Employees across the globe need to connect to the enterprise. They are on assignment abroad, need access to company policies, programs, the ability to communicate local issues, discuss any concerns that arise promptly and feel connection to the enterprise.

A global online community can fulfill these needs efficiently by providing these resources through community.

Scenario 4

Employees need a safe place to discuss personal problems that may be affecting performance and productivity. People are complex and may require support.

A community can serve to integrate people with sensitive issues so they are not alone and HR can assist with timely intervention if alerted to these problems, prior to escalation.

Scenario 5

Onboarding new employees is often time a consuming and repetitive function.

A community organized with heads of various departments, representative employee ambassadors and leadership, using various media such as videos and blogs can be very effective. Links to media, downloads, forms or documents can be posted as well together with

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welcome messages, including promotions and advertising of current corporate programs.

Approach to finding Products & Identifying needs

- What are your organizational requirements?
- Are you open to new and improved ways?
- Can you isolate the manual steps involved in your processes?
- Can you replace any tedious manual processes with technologies?
- Can you identify departments, teams, divisions, subject matters

or areas where people can benefit from continuous access to each other and to resources, thereby organizing and simplifying current workload?

Answer these questions based on your workflow, and then shop for and compare products that can implement these processes, including a user friendly environment, flexible setting and permissions, easy access to media, incorporating all of your requirements, and based on your budgetary constraints.

Concluding Remarks

Powerful communities can replace traditional organizational processes provided they are established purposefully, systematically and together with the appropriate policies and guidelines, in order to keep communities operational. Ongoing product upgrades and support, product training, monitoring, metrics and leadership presence are all key ingredients for a positive outcome to successful communities enterprise wide. **TEL**



Michelle Albert is an HR Strategist with background and experience is HR and Business, which includes HR as a corporate function, HR as a service business, the HR Supply Chain, consulting with organizations on how to strategically integrate HR practices into the broader big picture business goals, and workforce education; in order to secure organizational strengths and competitive advantages in the market place.
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The growth of an enterprise social network at BASF

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Gamification

An overused buzzword; are we using it correctly?

By Gauri Reyes

Gamification concepts have been employed since the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, depending on whom you talk to and how you define the term. Others claim that gamification has been in use since 1912, when Cracker Jack boxes began to include prizes. Whenever the term originated, 'gamification' is certainly an important buzzword in business today. Though, perhaps it's technically incorrect to call gamification a 'buzzword' now, as the term was featured as Oxford English Dictionary's shortlist of 'Word of the Year', in 2011.

However, do we use the word 'gamification' correctly? It's hard to answer that question definitively. Complex ideas, such as gamification, are complex to define. "It's a terrible buzzword, but integrating principles of gaming and interaction into learning is not a bad idea," writes Helen Walters in her TEDblog post reviewing Anant Agarwal's TED talk on "Reinventing Education for Millennials".

I have been interested in gamification, and specifically the application of gamification to learning, for some time. So I jumped at the opportunity to attend Kevin Werbach's initial offering of his Coursera Gamification MOOC, and learned a lot about the meaning of 'gamification'.

So, what is gamification?

Gamification: A Definition

The definition of gamification, according to Professor Werbach, is. "The use of *game elements* and *game design techniques* in *non-game contexts*".

Game elements include digital objects that make an experience game-like. Some examples of game elements include social graphs, avatars, quests, badges, social discussions, leveling up, leader boards, and points. Without at least some of these elements, one can argue that you do not have a 'game'. With *only* these elements, one can argue that your game is pretty lame.

Game design techniques take the experience to the realm of true engagement. Games (addictive ones, anyway) are more than a jumble of spliced game elements. Games include systematic, thoughtful, artistic, and purposeful design. And, they are designed for fun (hopefully). Fun is critical for a truly engaging experience, as is relevance and application to a real business need.

Non-game contexts are important to the definition of gamification. Full gamification includes applying game elements *and* game design techniques to 'something' that is not really a game, making that 'something' appear game-like.

Gamification is Bigger than Learning

Non-game contexts can be found in diverse disciplines, from marketing, customer engagement and business needs, to personal improvement, and to social impact. Learning is a subset of the full non-game contexts of gamification. And, online training is a subset of learning.

A 'game' can refer to anything from finding a prize in a cereal box, to playing a board game, to playing a video game, to playing an immersive military simulation in preparation for an upcoming overseas deployment to the front lines. Technically, gamification does not need to be online or technology-focused.

There's also a semantic difference between *gamification of learning*

and *game-based learning*. In game-based learning, learners play a game that encompasses a learning objective(s). When learning is gamified, a game(s) is incorporated within the overall learning agenda.

Learner Psychology

A player has the choice to play a game or not. A learner has a choice to learn or not. As learning professionals, we can create an environment conducive to learning, but we can't force someone to learn. Ensuring learning success requires an understanding of human psychology.

Gamification, too, requires fluency in psychological concepts, including motivation, behavior, and personality. When creating training of any kind, whether including gamification or not, concepts of learning theory and educational psychology must be incorporated.

Criticism of 'Gamification'

The term 'gamification' is new, yet games in general are as old as the human race. It's no wonder that the term is complex to define, understand, and apply.

Critics of the term say that simply using game elements in a non-game context is boring, and creates a false sense of accomplishment. Many so-called gamification endeavors exclude the true artistry of *game design*, such as storytelling, narrative, and immersive experiences. Gamification in the arena of marketing has been suggested to be 'exploitationware'. And the critics go on.

Yes, the way that gamification is often applied bears serious criticism. However, perhaps it's not gamification itself that's at fault. Rather, in those cases that bear criticism, perhaps the people who incorporate gamification without real purpose are at fault. As in any discipline, a thoughtful approach to the application of gamification is required. Cobbling together random game elements does not make a game — at least not a fun, interesting, engaging, purposeful game that people want to play.

Advice for Gamifying Learning

Gamification is an involved discipline. If you are intrigued by adding gamification to your online training, dig deep to understand what type of games works for the problem that you aim to solve through your training. And, consider incorporating true game design techniques to your training games so that you are not simply jumbling together random game elements without a true learning purpose.

Learning is much more than the textbook. Online training is much more than the hardware and software. And gamification in learning is much more than points, badges, and leader boards.

How do you define 'gamification'? How have you used gamification successfully in learning, or online training? **TEL**

The article first appeared on online training platform [Mindflash's](#)

[The Daily Mindflash blog](#)



Gauri Reyes is a talent developer and learning leader with extensive experience in roles ranging from software management to managing the learning function in organizations. She has now added to her digital audit trail the admission that she is wary of her own digit audit trail and what it says about her, but hope that the admission encourages others to participate in the conversation. She is Principal Learning Strategist and CEO at Triple Point Advisors and Founder of the YOUth LEAD program.

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Mobile Learning: Part 1

Can your organization benefit from it

 By Heera Edwin



A few years ago the concept of providing learners with learning on the go came into being, and the world awaited with anticipation the realization of this concept. While some wondered whether this was even possible, eLearning specialists created learning courses for the learner who was 'on the go'.

From classroom training to online training to blended learning – and now mobile learning – technology has now made it possible for learners to access learning whenever and wherever they want to. A very exciting prospect indeed, but is mobile learning meant for everyone?

Let's take a look at what mobile learning is, and if your organization can benefit from it.

What is mobile Learning?

It is, "Leveraging ubiquitous mobile technology for the adoption or augmentation of knowledge, behaviors, or skills through education, training, or performance support while the mobility of the learner may be independent of time, location, and space." (ADL Mobile Learning Handbook, Basics, retrieved nov 1 2012).

Put simply, mobile learning is the use of mobile technology in online learning, allowing learners to access their learning on a mobile device with or without the use of internet connectivity.

When Mobile Learning is Beneficial

Today's organizations and employees are faced with new training challenges, and very often mobile learning comes to the rescue. These challenges include:

* **A Mobile Workforce:** Most of today's workforce is mobile – from the busy sales executive who is on the move to the bank manager who is deployed in a remotely located branch, this workforce is faced with problems such as low bandwidth and/or no internet connectivity.

* **A Mobile-Savvy Workforce:** Over 60% of today's workforce is made up of Gen Y employees. Unlike previous generations, this generation has grown up with technology, is technology savvy, and is used to instant gratification via technology. This generation demands immediate answers to pressing problems. They also prefer to access

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From classroom training to online training to blended learning – and now mobile learning – technology has now made it possible for learners to access learning whenever and wherever they want to.

information on their own devices rather than via a laptop or desktop.

* **A Shortened Attention Span:** Today's workforce suffers from a shortened attention span. As a result, long, intense, classroom-training sessions are a failure. Arduous training sessions give rise to boredom and prove to be disastrous. As a result, organizations are faced with the problem of providing training that is relevant and at the same time successful.

* **Low Shelf-Life of Information:** Knowledge changes at the speed of light. By the time a course is created and rolled-out to employees, it is time to rewrite the course once again to update knowledge. This is especially true in certain industries such as medicine and pharmacy. For an organization to be successful, it is essential that the training provided is up to date at all times. Keeping up with the latest knowledge and providing it on time is a challenge that is hard to overcome.

* **Inconsistency in Training:** Training a globally-dispersed workforce uniformly can be challenging when trainers and training methods differ across locations. Classroom training can be inconsistent as well (changing from day to the next and from one trainer to the next), causing confusion, disassociation and the lack of interest among employees.

For all of the above problems, mobile learning has proved to be the most obvious solution.

Fifty seven percent of Indian businesses have adopted the new bring your own device (BYOD) concept. A learning management system (LMS) that can cope with that change is what is called for.

In the second part of this series we will look at how mobile learning can address the problems that have been detailed above. **TEL**

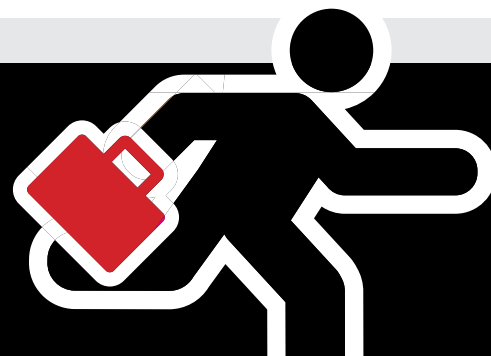
The article first appeared [here](#).



Heera Edwin looks at the Content Marketing initiatives at 24x7 Learning. 24x7 Learning is one of the foremost pioneers in the eLearning field. Visit www.24x7learning.com Connect [Heera Edwin](#)



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