Review of E- Learning as a Modern Tool for Enhancing Skills of Employees and Its Comparison with Traditional Class Room Training.

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Abstract

Classroom training is the more traditional, formal method of training that takes place in a classroom in front of learners, while e-learning is web-based and can be taken at any time from an internet-connected device. Training departments up until few years back did not worry about supporting E-learning to its employees. Training department historically was more used to design, develop and deliver in person training. However, the modern training department have additional responsibility of providing training on employees work stations and ensuring that they have resources available to do their work. As a result, training departments have evolved from “trainers” to “enablers”. In the current ever changing world managers want to keep their teams updated on the latest industry trends, but they at times cannot do that with constant change and the expectations of employees to have everything at their fingertips, E-learning provides a perfect solution here. This review paper discusses the increasing role of e-learning, using E-library for ease of e-learning, measuring E-learning effectiveness and comparison of E-learning versus classroom training. This review paper looks at possibility of having a blended approach to training by way of comparing E-learning and traditional classroom training. This review paper also looks at how the new learning model of 70,20,10 can be implemented by taking support of e-libraries for employees e-learning.

Keywords: Trainers to Enablers, E-learning, E-libraries

Introduction

Making training available without a trainer training departments up until few years back did not worry about supporting E-learning to its employees. Training department historically was more used to design, develop and deliver in person training. However, the modern training department have additional responsibility of providing training on employees work stations and ensuring that they have resources available to do their work. As a result, training departments have evolved from “trainers” to “enablers”. In the current ever changing world managers want to keep their teams updated on the latest industry trends, but they at times cannot do that with constant change and the expectations of employees to have everything at their fingertips, E-learning provides a perfect solution here. This review paper will cover:

1. The increasing role of e-learning
2. Using E-library for e-learning
3. Measuring E-learning effectiveness
4. Comparison of E-learning versus classroom training
OBJECTIVE

1. Understanding increasing role of e-learning
2. How E-library can support e-learning
3. Measuring E-learning effectiveness
4. Comparison of E-learning versus class room training
5. Possibility of blended approach to training by taking best of E-learning and class room training.

The Increasing Role of E-learning

E-learning is considered employee-driven activity that employees can use when and as needed. There are many forms of E-learning such as videos, podcasts, webinars, knowledge portals and e-libraries. E-learning is one of the latest approaches for skill upgradation as part of adult learning. E-learning has penetrated in the industries where there is knowledge workforce. E-learning gives opportunity to training departments to reach out to large number of employees with no dependency of infrastructure like class rooms, overhead projectors, chairs, air conditioners etc. E-learning allows training department to create a standard content and publish it to be consumed by large number of employees. E-learning shifts the onus of skill development from training department to employee as it shares the knowledge and allows participants to grasp it so that they can use or reproduce it as and when required. With all these advantages E-learning comes handy to organizations where they have to impart same skill set to large number of associates.

Using E-library for E-Learning

E-libraries are one of the best ways to support the increasing speed at which the employee needs new skill. It supports the changing needs and expectations for learning on the part of employees. This is especially important because most of the companies are moving to 70, 20, 10 model of its employee learning i.e. 10% learning happens via formal training like class room, course etc., remaining 20% happens through coaching, networking, mentor ship etc. and remaining 70% through actual experience or on job training.

Companies having 80% plus population as engineers and who mainly do programming, automation, design, implement and support IT, it becomes utmost importance that its employees stay up to date with emerging and latest technologies. However, getting engineers to a physical classroom for training on a day today basis is just not possible. Also one more problem is of sparing time of employees for class room training, which means the company has to find new ways to keep the employees exposed to latest technologies. So the solution is to provide employees with access to the newest technology-related books online. This not only keeps employees up to date on emerging technologies, but also supports their need for certification, reference and closing skills gaps. The use of E-libraries is growing because of ability of online books and e-records in general to make knowledge sources available to employees as and when required. These resources can be downloaded and read instantly on employee’s computer or on a mobile device.

E-libraries can also save time and improve productivity. Advantages of using E-library are -

1. Sources of knowledge can be accessed through multiple channels.
2. Saving time and opportunities while searching for solutions/answers
3. Experts available to employees run time.
4. Option available to employee to learn with own pace and during best time of their day.
Measuring E-learning Effectiveness

Measuring learning effectiveness had always been a substantial challenge for training departments. Companies find it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the training itself, the overall training function, the business value of training department, and training department’s contribution to overall business. Measuring the effectiveness of E-learning creates yet another measurement challenge.

Measurement of effectiveness of E-learning can be found out by following indicators -

1. Usefulness of E-learning to the employee
2. Percentage of adoption of E-learning into their day today work
3. Was E-learning able to solve their work/project problems
4. Would the employee recommend the E-learning to his peer (Net Promoter Score)
5. How well did the E-learning module use the employee time
6. Did the E-learning help the employee meet their customer need

Comparison of E-learning Versus Class Room Training

E-learning is by design is remote and has no personal touch. Class room training increases engagement by adding a personal element. Class room training is enjoyed by employees who are used to the traditional ‘teacher and class’ model of education.

In classroom training, the trainer is free to move around the participants, grouping them in different ways and laying out the class in a way that will make the activities run conveniently, whereas E-learning uses conferencing technology where no trainer is required.

In a classroom training the biggest difference from E-learning is that there is a physical classroom. E-learning on the other hand, converts the globe into a classroom or just the corner of your work station. Participants can stop and start when they want to, replay/review material during the course and even after. This isn’t possible in class room training.

During classroom training most of the material is presented verbally by an trainer, and sometimes by visual aids like presentations etc. But in E-learning the written and visual notes replace the trainer standing in front of the classroom which means the material must be written entirely differently.

Since there is no trainer which means that the focus of the course becomes the learner, which means the course has to be designed correctly. Because there is no trainer to answer questions directly, courses must play appropriate role of focusing on explaining required information to the participants with their vocabulary and abilities in mind. With correct use of tools and through clear explanations an E-learning course is likely far superior to an trainer-led course where there is a chance for human error. The trainer’s personal mood on any given day could also change the level of training session.

To sum it up, while there are differences between class room training and e-learning, in the hands of a well-trained trainer, both delivery methods can be used to achieve the same goals. Which one you choose depends on the logistics of delivering your training as much as the participants learning ability.

SUGGESTIONS

While there are differences between class room training and E-learning, in the hands of a well-trained trainer, both delivery methods can be used to achieve the same goals. Which one you choose depends on the logistics of delivering your training as much as the participants learning ability.

Classroom training can be focused on the collaborative elements of leadership, and E-learning courses for straightforward topics like compliance and time management.

Best of both methods of training can be implemented as blended training where advantages of both the training methods can be utilized for best training experience and adult learning.
CONCLUSION
The increasing speed, at which the employee needs of the company are evolving, as well as the changing needs and expectations for training on the part of employees, suggests E-libraries can fill an important need. As a result, many companies are taking an innovative approach to measuring the value of e-learning. If any organization is ready to begin the transition to a modern learning organization and is looking to leverage E-learning in the company, a simple starting point is providing E-learning support through E-library. The use of E-libraries is growing and is expected that trend to continue.

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