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SYNOPSIS

The use of online learning, or e-learning, as a training and development tool in organisations has been growing at a rapid rate during the past five years, with predictions that this growth will continue until the global corporate e-learning market reaches an estimated worth of \$50 billion in 2010 (E-marketer, 2003). “Vendor push” is encouraging HR departments to turn to e-learning service providers for hosted training/learning solutions as they promote benefits for going this route including anytime, anywhere employee access to training, employee development tracking (including succession readiness tracking for potential executives), and reduced training costs.

However, the current research into the effectiveness of e-learning lags far behind these developments in practice. Many factors influence the potential success of the adoption of these programmes in business – these include the national and workplace cultures involved, the perceived reasons behind the adoption of online learning, the characteristics and demographic make-up of staff, the fit among teachers, learners, content and technology, support from senior management and the involvement of professional organisations including universities in the learning programmes.

The objectives of this panel are to provide an opportunity to explore these issues, to seek the input of practitioners and to provide an opportunity to them to raise concerns and perceived successes of this form of learning.

Keywords

Online learning, e-learning