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BLENDED LEARNING
IN A CORPORATE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

by
Harold Snowden

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

March, 2009

ABSTRACT

Blended Learning

In a Corporate Training Environment

Classroom-based training by itself is becoming too costly and difficult to manage. Organizations that embrace a blended learning model of training increase employee learning by utilizing a combination of technology and face-to-face classroom facilitation. It is the responsibility of the training manager to design a blended learning program that is cost effective, strategically efficient, and yields motivated, skilled, and productive employees. In this project, this researcher provides data that leadership can use to make an informed decision on training strategies using the blended learning format. A PowerPoint presentation contains definitions and discussions about various electronic learning platforms, instructional design, and adult learning theory.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning can provide flexible and timely training that will enhance an organization's employee-learning program. The demanding tempo of new methods, concepts, theories, and technological advancements has increased the need for corporate training activities in comparison to previous years. Corporate training for employees has evolved beyond the need for just standard job skills training, such as an automotive worker assembling an engine. In the modern workplace, the need for soft-skill training has become customary. This phenomenon has occurred as employers have become astute about skills intended to enhance the workplace environment and increase work productivity.

Research substantiates the necessity for soft-skill training, such as leadership, management, and supervisory courses. Additionally, training in behavioral skills such as customer service, workplace harassment awareness, and personality profiling are important in an organization. In addition to these soft-skills trainings, various safety and compliance training sessions can benefit employee development and improve corporate safety and compliance standards. The delivery of these various training events presents the adult educator working in a corporate environment with a quandary about what are the right techniques to employ in designing training programs. Management of a corporate training program can be taxing on an adult educator who is responsible for designing, scheduling, and implementing multiple training events. As indicated, changes

in society and expectations of leadership for how training is delivered have increased the necessity for educating employees.

Classroom-based training by itself is becoming too costly and troublesome. Even if employees had time to attend all the courses and seminars required of them and if they had the time to read all the books and reports they should to remain up to date in their profession, the monetary cost of such training would be excessive to both learners and to their organizations. The blended learning method demonstrates potential for increased employee education while providing information utilizing current advancements in technology and innovations in the customer care industry in a timely and cost effective manner.

The need to transform how corporate training is provided to employees challenges the adult educator to develop more modern, efficient, and flexible alternatives. Research by Rekkedal and Dye (2007) on distance learning, for example, has recognized the use of electronic learning (e-learning), mobile learning (m-learning), video conferencing, web-based conferencing (webinar's), and personal digital assistants (PDA). Research indicates that by employing a blended learning approach using a variety of technological platforms for learning, accompanied by classroom-based learning with a balance of individual learning events, employees can benefit through increased knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Statement of the Problem

The corporate leadership and employees of the organization need an up-to-date, cost effective, and efficient blended learning program that yields motivated, skilled, and more knowledgeable and productive employees. There are many challenges to implementing a blended learning program, such as training team staffing, locality of the

learners, allocating training time, access to technology, employees' motivation for learning, partnering with leadership, and providing return on investment data. This research project is designed for a mid-level organization that provides multi-specialty healthcare services. The organization has a demographical footprint of 12 clinical branches, which spans two counties, with an employee headcount of over 600 personnel.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to provide the corporate leadership of this organization with information about the use and advantages of developing a blended learning program so they can make an informed decision on a strategy for future training. This researcher presents information to the corporate leadership based on research data on classroom-based learning and learning with technology. This data also includes the concepts of adult learning principles based on the theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1984). This researcher developed a creative training plan that involves both classroom-based learning sessions and a variety of technological approaches for use internally and externally of the traditional classroom environment. The information is presented to the corporate leadership in the form of a PowerPoint presentation.

Chapter Summary

Research confirms that educators responsible for corporate training programs can benefit through the use of adult learning theories and blended learning activities. New technologies make it possible to reach learners wherever and whenever the learner finds it convenient (Galagan 2000). In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, this researcher analyzes research to support (a) the background of blended learning, (b) definitions of

blended learning, (c) adult learning theory, and (c) partnering with leadership for learning.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this project was to provide the corporate leadership of this organization with information about the use and advantages of developing a blended learning program so they can make an informed decision on a strategy for future training. Adults are self-directed learners and are motivated through intrinsic and extrinsic desires. Knowles (1980, as quoted in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) drew on the assumption that “adults are self-directing and thus like to plan their own learning experiences” (p. 277). Additionally, Knowles (1984) called andragogy the art and science of helping adults learn.

Knowles (1984) explained the andragogical model, in contrast to pedagogy, by using the following five assumptions: 1) the learner is self-directing, 2) the range of experience among a group of adults, at various ages, will be vastly greater than among a group of 12 year olds, 3) adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know, or do something, in order to perform more effectively, 4) adults enter educational activities with a life-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning, and 5) although adults respond to external motivations such as a salary increase, the andragogical model predicates that the more potent motivators are internal (e.g., self-esteem and greater self-confidence).

Knowles’s (1994) andragogical model guides this researcher when working on the instructional design of a blended learning program. Research supports the supposition

that, in the course of engaging the adult learner, blended learning would provide the experiential and self-directed learning concepts that support the theory of andragogy. The importance of the theory of andragogy is essential to this review, as it involves consideration toward adult learning phases, learning styles, and other adult learning preferences such as transfer of learning and self-directed learning. To understand the impact blended learning can have on employees and their organization, one must first research the interpretation, characteristics, and background of the concept of this type of learning program.

Background of Blended Learning

According to Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal (2004), the blending of face-to-face instruction with various types of non-classroom technology-mediated delivery has been practiced for more than 4 decades. Some of these new technologies are the Internet, the World Wide Web, and personal computers. Dziuban et al. described this new phenomenon as an educational paradigm shift. For example, the move from traditional to non-traditional learning. According to Dziuban et al., research indicates that blended courses have the potential to increase student outcomes while decreasing attrition rates.

Blended learning should be approached as a redesign of the instructional model with the following characteristics (Dziuban et al., 2004):

1. a shift from lecture to student centered instruction in which students become active and interactive learners;
2. increase in interaction between student to instructor, student-to-student, student to content, and student to outside resources; and
3. integrated formative and summative assessment mechanisms for students and instructor. (p. 3)

The setting for Dziuban's et al. (2004) research was in a university; however, the data collected can also apply to the corporate workplace. Even if the data within the instructional model should change, this does not mean that the instructional design model could not remain consistent. In addition to the aforementioned, it is found that blended learning retains the face-to-face element, making it, in the words of many faculty, "the best of both worlds" (p. 3).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) reported that "self-directed learning is a process in which people take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences" (p. 293). Most learning is self-directed and takes place informally outside the parameter of formal corporate learning. Informal learning, such as a quick search for information on the Internet, working on a personal craft project, or seeking advice from a peer, is the way most people learn, yet it is often overlooked as a form of learning.

Woodall (2004) found that the quantity of informal learning is surprising. According to Woodall, "the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that 70% or more of work-related learning occurred outside formal training" (p. 3). Many companies have told employees that they must take responsibility for their own learning. Additionally, most of these companies did not help employees identify their training needs and failed to fund the necessary resources. Alonso, Lopez, Manrique, and Vines (2005) identified three event-based learning types that are necessary to understand when planning a blended learning program: 1) self-paced learning, 2) live e-learning, and 3) traditional classroom.

Self-Paced Learning

Self-paced learning is what the learner does by performing the e-learning process. Self-paced activities can be taken at the learner's leisure, that is, the learning can occur anytime and anywhere. It is important to the adult learner to access knowledge that is relevant and timely. "The value of self-paced learning is not only that it can reach everyone at any time and anywhere, but that it can teach the learner appropriately, providing the right skills at the right time" (Alonso et al., 2005, p. 231). One might consider a self-paced learner to be a self-directed learner, as intrinsic desires as well as possible mandated external reasons may drive the motivation for learning.

Live E-Learning

Live e-learning takes place in a virtual classroom, at a scheduled time, with an assigned facilitator, and a collaborative group of learners. In this scenario, the learner attends, just as they would a traditional class, minus the travel. Learners can collaborate, share information, and ask questions of one another and of the instructor in real time via the Internet. Essentially, live e-learning is an alternative way to teach and learn. Live e-learning is good for sharing information. According to Alonso et al., "this type of training works best if the class size is limited to 25 people to allow for optimal group interaction" (p. 232).

Traditional Classroom

Traditional classroom-based training will always be an effective means of learning. Mitchell (2001) wrote, "classroom training is still unbeatable for the amount of face-to-face interaction with both the instructor and classmates that is necessary to learn certain management, leadership, and other highly collaborative skills" (p. 1). Alonso et

al. (2005) proposed that the self-paced learning and live e-learning features of blended learning have the following properties:

1. Dynamic: have experts online, for the best sources and fastest access to information for quick reaction;
2. At real time: learners get what they need, when they need it;
3. Collaborative: because people learn from one another. Blended learning connects learners with colleagues or experts both in and outside the organization;
4. Personalized: each learner selects his or her activities from a personal menu of learning opportunities most relevant to his or her background and workplace skills;
5. Comprehensive: provides learning events from many sources enabling the learner to select from a variety of formats, learning methods, or training instructors; and
6. Enabling the organization: e-learning forms learning-communities whose members forge ahead.

Alonso et al. (2005) wrote: “Pedagogical principles are theories that govern good educational practice, and, as far as e-learning is concerned, good educational or instructional practice is represented by the instructional technology” (p. 218).

An efficient blended learning solution would include a mixture of the aforementioned three event-based learning types with the following ingredients (Alonso et al., 2005):

1. An instructor that directs training;
2. E-mail and telephone assistance for personalized learner support;
3. Virtual classes by means of computerized videoconference, in which the instructor explains specific learning subjects to the group and learners raise questions;
4. Interaction between learners and the instructor and between the learners themselves through the chat to stimulate group learning concept;

5. A support line for subjects related to learning management;
6. Assessment examinations; and
7. A certificate and diploma that certifies having taken or passed the course.

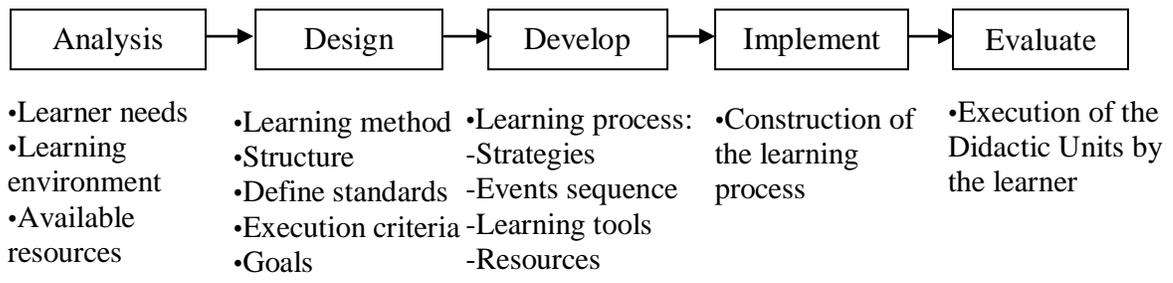
Instructional Design Models

Instructional design delineates a process to follow, through which a conception and understanding of a complex problem is derived. Instructional design is a set of rules or procedures for creating training, so that it does what it is supposed to do. Instructional design can be defined through numerous viewpoints; yet, according to Crawford (2004), “the basic tenet of instructional design is the simplistic explanation revolving around the distinct systematic process through which evolves an instructional product” (p. 413). Crawford added that the focus of instructional design is on the model’s implementation. A generic instructional design model known as ADDIE emphasizes five basic steps within the instructional design process: analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate.

ADDIE Instructional Design Model

Similar to Crawford (2004), Alonso et al. (2005) discussed the ADDIE model of instruction. Alonso et al. commented that what you think is knowledge determines your approach. You can view knowledge as: (1) something to be acquired from outside; (2) a cognitive state of the person that is the result of a thought process; or (3) a meaning constructed by social interaction. Crawford expressed that the simplistic nature of the ADDIE model, including its ease of application and the potential use towards the cyclical features of the process, enables a more expansive overview of the instructional design process.

Table 1
ADDIE Instructional Design Model



Note: Adapted from Alonso et al. (2005).

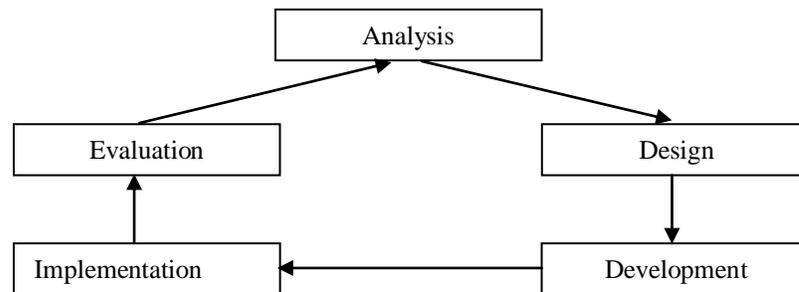
The analysis phase needs to answer the question, “What needs to be taught and what does not?” The design phase includes information about the setting of the training and how the training will be presented. The develop phase answers the question, “What should the end-product look like?” The Implement phase involves testing the plan and all of the assigned components in order to ensure success. The final phase is the evaluation. The evaluation is designed to answer questions that will help improve the training, such as: 1) What is the learner’s reaction to the course, and 2) were knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired?

Cyclic Instructional Design Model

Piskurich (2006) used the same ADDIE model, however with a different name and presented it in a slightly different format. Piskurich, much like Crawford, described the instructional design tool as the cyclic instructional systems design. This format provided a visual reference to the instructional design that will guide the instructional designer through all the necessary phases required of a well-constructed plan. According to Piskurich, instructional design is a set of rules or procedures for creating training that does what it is supposed to do. These procedures are:

1. Find out what the training is supposed to do (Analysis),
2. Let the participants know what the goals of the training are,
3. Ensure that everything in the training focuses on the goals, and
4. Determine how the goals have been achieved (Evaluation).

Table 2
Cyclic Instructional Systems Design Model



Note: Adapted from Piskurich (2006).

Eternal Synergistic Design Model

Crawford (2004) reported that the eternal synergistic design model offers a continual, synergistic growth process, with a central emphasis upon evaluation. The synergistic growth aspect of the instructional design model revolves around the birth, development, and refinement of the product. Offering an explanation of the analysis stage, Crawford wrote: “the analysis stage of the traditional instructional design model focuses attention upon the learning objectives, an analysis of the customer, as well as several other imperative features of the analysis stage before focusing attention upon the design stage” (p. 416). However, within the eternal synergistic design model, it is suggested that, unlike the traditional model (e.g. ADDIE), the analysis phase should be

integrated into the design and development of the instructional design process in order to ensure that the analysis phase is continually addressed, considered, and possibly revised.

In her study of the synergistic design model, Crawford (2004) suggested that, within this instructional model, the implementation of the product occurs at numerous points throughout the instructional design process to ensure that formative evaluation and feedback is obtained throughout the design and development processes. Based on this model, “the developer and or the development team will continually address elements of the product that may be of concern or consideration throughout the uninterrupted design and development processes” (p. 416).

The Threat of E-Learning

Computer-assisted teaching using the Internet has radically changed corporate training. As one can speculate, not all researchers are convinced that the use of a blended learning environment is necessary. Dziuban et al. (2004) stated that, “e-learning has done far more than simply make knowledge easy to access by a large number of people” (p. 25). They believed that the e-learning effects on the training profession are nothing short of revolutionary, and that it is challenging the classic instructional model of who “owns” learning in an organization. Galagan (2000) recommended that the focus of corporate learning should be seen as a strategic role. Galagan interviewed Peter Drucker and Roger Schank about the revolution of e-learning. Drucker (as cited in Galagan, 2000) suggested that, with the evolution of e-learning, the corporate trainer might become obsolete because he views the trainer as “built into the e-learning device” (p. 26). Schank (as cited in Galagan, 2000), supports Drucker’s concepts, as he noted that a computer can provide more one-on-one interaction than a human can when that human is dealing with 30 other

humans. In addition, he commented that “in a classroom, people who are curious, inquisitive, and questioning take up too much time” (p. 26). Both Drucker and Shanks (as cited in Galagan, 2000) agreed that the training profession is in the midst of a revolution generated not from within but by new players from other disciplines, such as the online supplier markets which sell learning technology services. As one can see in the *definition of blended learning* section of this review, the suggestion of e-learning as a threat is not supported by all researchers.

Definition of Learning

Alonso et al. (2005) stated that, “the conventional education system has focused on transmitting the teacher’s knowledge to students” (p. 217). Alonso et al. explained that the conventional education system has paid less attention to the other aspects of education, namely, learning. Fenwick (2003) addressed adult learning as located in everyday workplace interactions, home and family activities, community involvement, and other non-formal educational activities. Additionally, she defined adult learning as, “experiential learning has been appropriated to designate everything from kinesthetic directed institutional activities in the classroom, to special workplace projects interspersed with dialogue led by a facilitator” (p. 3).

The transmitting of teacher knowledge is comparable to that of the transfer of learning. Transfer of learning is the effective application by learners of what they have learned because of attending an education or training event. Transfer of learning is often referred to as the “so what” or “now what” phase of the learning process (Caffarella 2002). Learning a set of skills in the classroom-based environment, or through a

technology based method, would be worthless if not for the transfer of that knowledge to increase one's skill set.

Definition of Blended Learning

Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal (2004) asked the question: "What is blended learning? Is it web-enhanced classroom instruction, or is it classroom-enhanced online instruction" (p. 2). Dziuban et al. described blended learning as courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours. They added that blended learning is closely associated with terms such as web-based learning, e-learning, and asynchronous learning networks. Additionally, other names used to describe blended learning are: (1) hybrid learning and (2) mixed-mode instruction. It is the position of Dziuban et al. that "blended learning should be viewed as a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment" (p. 3).

A series of specialists on the subject of blended learning have offered their definitions to blended learning. As cited in Alonso et al. (2005), blended learning is used to describe learning that mixes various event-based learning types such as self-paced learning, live e-learning, and face-to-face classroom learning. Stubbs, Martin, and Endlar (2006) held the position that the term blended learning had been adopted widely to describe combinations of face-to-face and technology-based learning. A blended approach, in many cases, facilitates connection and engagement between students and the other aspects of their learning experience. Bersin (2004) defines blended learning as "the combination of different training "media" (technologies, activities, and types of events)

to create an optimum training program for a specific audience” (p. 323). Blended learning programs use many different forms of e-learning complemented by instructor-led training and other live formats.

As reported by Valiathan (2002), blended learning is widely used to describe learning that “mixes various event based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning, which combines multiple delivery media that are designed to complement each other and promote learning behavior” (p. 1). Blended learning programs may include several forms of learning tools that could be used within the classroom or in distance learning, such as real-time virtual and collaboration software, self-paced (self directed) web-based courses, electronic performance systems, learning management systems, mobile electronic technology devices, and face-to-face classroom-based learning with various experiential and skill learning activities.

Singh (2003) wrote that “blended learning mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning” (p. 51). He proposed to the reader that blended learning often is a mix of traditional instructor-led training, synchronous online conferencing or training, asynchronous self-paced study, and structured on-the-job training from an experienced worker or mentor. A well-balanced blended learning program will facilitate connections and engagement between students and educators while using technology, face-to-face learning, and adult learning theories.

Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) offered another perspective for the definition of blended learning. Blended learning is defined as combining face-to-face learning with distance delivery systems and with the internet involved; however, it is more than just

showing a page from a website on the classroom screen. This is an important statement for anyone designing a blended learning program. This statement points out the need for a well-blended learning program, which engages the adult learner in the learning experience. A good program will be one that utilizes the theories of adult learning such as andragogy. In addition, a good blended learning program will require committed organizational leadership, dedicated to technology and employee growth through learning.

Leadership Partnership

Few chief executive officers, or their training staff advisors, choose to move away from classroom training right away. Most training efforts are a blend of classroom-based learning and e-learning (Galagan, 2000). In an interview with Jeff Schwartz of Price Waterhouse Coopers, Galagan reported:

We are seeing a much more pronounced interest in learning from senior executives beyond the HR or training worlds. In boardrooms around the world, the same question is being asked: "How can I reinvent my company around the Internet before some Internet company takes me out?" E-learning enters the picture when CEOs realize they must transform their companies in 12 to 18 months, not in the three to five years it typically takes with a classroom model of learning. (p. 28)

Sallie-Dosunmu (2006) stated, "effective learning leaders drive change for the organization" (p. 61). She also noted that, to provide the visual value of the partnership, training managers must take a seat as important players, meaning that they need to build a partnership with the senior corporate leadership such as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and other key positioned leaders. In addition to the senior leadership, the information in Sallie-Dosunmu's article was dogmatic about the training manager needing to collaborate with middle management. She advocated that middle

management must to know the pulse of the organization. Based on this research data, the training managers in the corporate environment need to know the strategic plan, be able to communicate it, and set corporate training goals to support it. Sallie-Dosunmu interviewed Bob Weigand, who is the director of management for training, and development for St. Lukes Hospital and Health Network. Weigand proposed the following five basic steps for training managers to follow in order to develop a partnership with the corporate leadership: (1) understand the political horizon, (2) present yourself as a business partner, (3) build the relationship, (4) deliver results, and (5) follow up.

Understand the Political Horizon

According to Weigand (as cited in Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006), “each organization has an official organizational chart” (p. 62). Being aware of the organizational structure and the boundaries of leadership will assist training managers to integrate their learning ideas and interest while meeting the objectives of corporate leadership and their strategic plan. Knowing the culture and values of the organization will also help to align corporate learning or change strategy to create a win-win situation.

Present Yourself as a Business Partner

In its purest sense, the definition of a business partner is one who participates in daily operations of the business, and takes responsibility for the partnership’s debts and liabilities. Weigand (as quoted in Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006) reported that “a business partner must adopt a business language and framework for communicating workplace learning and performance initiatives according to the organization’s approach” (p. 62). Training managers working in the corporate learning environment will benefit by using

business language and avoid using training and development terminology when presenting their agenda of learning activities. Training managers should take the consultant role and be ready to present their ideas and initiatives according to how they drive the organization's strategic goals. When presented training opportunities, training managers should focus on how the training outcome will enhance corporate performance. Lastly, Weigand stated that the training manager should "figure out how to align his or her work to grow the human capital skills that drive business results" (p. 62). Documenting human capital skills growth will provide a benchmark for training managers to use when presenting future training initiatives to corporate leadership.

Building the Relationship

Training managers need to establish a partnership at the executive level. Weigand (as cited in Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006) also suggested that the training manager should gain the trust of the executive leaders. Once a level of trust is gained and training managers show their value, then they can request more access to executive leadership. Through the increased access to communication, training managers can continue to demonstrate their value to the leadership. This will assist in positioning the training manager to be in an active leadership decision-making position.

Deliver Results

Results and improved efficiencies are the bottom-line to corporate leadership. Benchmarking is essential in order to provide the ongoing training consultation to leadership. According to Weigand (as quoted in Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006), "workplace learning professionals who wish to establish and maintain strong executive-level partnerships must move beyond activity and deliver measurable results that matter to

business” (p. 64). Results from a 2006 University of Pennsylvania and American Society of Training and Development survey were described:

The results were a comprehensive study that profiled 153 learning executives, and 92 Chief Learning Officers with a budget of more than \$1 million and companies of more than 100 employees. According to the survey, Chief Learning Officer’s cited communicating and measuring value as their primary workplace learning and performance challenges. (Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006, p. 64)

In addition, she recommends that strategies need to address more than just attendees’ training hours. Training managers can use Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation for measuring training value, which are: Level 1- reaction, Level 2- learning, Level 3- application, and Level 4- impact on business results.

Follow Up

As reported by Weigand (as cited in Sallie-Dosunmu, 2006), to ensure ongoing success, training managers working in the corporate learning environment, must continue to network with corporate executives to stay focused on what is important to the business. Partnering can make the difference between effective ongoing learning and programs only offered on demand.

Chapter Summary

A blended learning program that combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours offers the adult learner a self-directed learning format. This format allows the adult learner the opportunity to engage in a self-paced learning environment that is conducive to the adults’ style of learning based on the theory of andragogy. By implementing a blended learning program, the organization’s leadership benefit by means of a more skilled pool of employees, and training managers are seen as change managers. Training managers need to maintain

continuous open dialogue with the corporate leadership in order to foster a partnership and thus prove they can be a valuable business partner.

Workplace training, just like other functions, is a process. By actively planning and creating a good, solid program consisting of a blend of learning activities and technology, learning happens, the training transfers to job productivity, employees experience success, and the employer sees an increase of fiscal return on investment. In Chapter 3, Method, this researcher describes the method used to develop a PowerPoint presentation designed to educate the corporate leadership about the use and strategic advantages for implementing a blended learning program.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project was to provide the corporate leadership of this organization with information about the use and advantages of developing a blended learning program so they can make an informed decision on a strategy for future training. The goal is to develop a PowerPoint presentation designed to provide information that supports the advantages of a blended learning program for the employees and corporate leadership of the organization. The presentation includes adult learning theories, types of technology that can be utilized for training, how the technology can augment traditional classroom-based training, how training impacts employee motivation, the partnership between corporate leadership and the training manager, and how a blended learning program can increase revenue.

Target Audience

The material within the presentation provides the corporate leadership of this author's employer with information that can be included in future strategic planning for the training and development of employees in the organization. The corporate leadership team is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, Chief Medical Officer, and Departmental Directors. The Departmental Directors include the Director of Human Resource Services, Director of Adult Primary Care, Director of Specialty Care, Director of Business and Health Management, Director of Facilities and Support, Director of Marketing, and Director

of Finance. Ultimately, this PowerPoint presentation may affect all employees of the organization following the approval and implementation phase of the blended learning program.

Organization of PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation was developed for the corporate leadership of this author's employer. The information for the presentation was compiled using research data from various authors and adult learning professionals that provides information supporting a blended learning format. The presentation opens with data on the current state of training for the organization, followed by sections describing: 1) the definition of learning and blended learning, 2) selected adult learning theories 3) the background of blended learning, 4) elements of blended learning, 5) how employee motivation can be influenced through training, 6) technical, classroom, and training personnel resources, 7) how a blended learning program can increase return on investment, and 8) the importance of the partnership between corporate leadership and the training manager.

Following the presentation, the corporate leadership team will be asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire requesting feedback on the presentation content, the relevance of material, and the presenters' presentation skills. This feedback will be used as a continuing education and growth tool for the training manager.

Peer Assessment Plan

The Director of Human Resource Services, Director of Adult Primary Care and the senior training specialist of this author's employer were asked to provide preliminary feedback on the PowerPoint presentation content. These individuals reviewed the PowerPoint presentation for content and clarity. Their feedback is discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

This researcher developed a PowerPoint presentation with information supporting the advantages of implementing a blended learning program. The presentation is designed for the corporate leadership of this author's employer. Research suggests that an appropriate blended learning environment, which combines technology, classroom-based face-to-face learning, and adult learning techniques that incorporate experiential learning, can enhance the learning experience and generate intrinsic motivation to learn on the part of employees. In Chapter 4, this researcher provides a PowerPoint presentation that supports the goals of this project.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The corporate leadership and employees of this author's employer need an up-to-date, cost effective, and efficient blended learning program that yields motivated, skilled, and productive employees. The purpose of this project was to provide the corporate leadership of this organization with information about the use and advantages of developing a blended learning program so they can make an informed decision on a strategy for future training. Presented in this chapter is a PowerPoint presentation, which contains research information on the subjects of blended learning, adult learning theory, the partnership between the training manager and corporate leadership, and how using a blended learning program can improve revenue.

Blended Learning In a Corporate Training Environment

By Harold Snowden



Introduction



- Corporate leadership and employees need up-to-date, cost effective, and efficient learning programs that yield motivated, skilled, and productive employees
- Blended learning programs generate alternative learning methods and deliver results



1. The need to transform how corporate training is provided to employees challenges the adult educator to develop more modern, efficient, and flexible alternatives.
2. A blended learning format takes the learner out of the confinement of the traditional classroom and increases learning opportunities in an adult learning environment.
3. A properly designed and implemented blended learning program may have a positive influence on employee motivation and corporate revenue.

Agenda

1. Definition of Blended Learning
2. Current State of Training
3. Definition of Learning
4. Adult Learning Theory
5. Background of Blended Learning
6. Elements of Blended Learning
7. Technology
8. The Advantages
9. Leadership Partnership
10. Return on Investment
11. Summary



Definition of Blended Learning



- Blended Learning
 - Is used to describe learning that mixes various event-based learning activities such as self-paced learning, e-learning, various other technology based platforms, and face-to-face classroom learning
 - Is the process of incorporating many different learning styles that can be accomplished through the use of “blended” virtual and physical resources
 - ❖ Simply stated: It is a combination of training strategies

1. Simply stated, a Blended Learning program will change how employee’s currently are required to attend training events by means of:
 - Reduction of early and late work hours to attend trainings (overtime)
 - Decreased travel time expense
 - Less classroom time away from work (productivity)
 - More educated workforce
 - More informed workforce
 - Increased employee motivation
 - Higher employee retention numbers
2. Blended Learning gives management more control of employee-to-patient work time and reduces budget expenses

Current State of Training



- Training delivery
 - Management personnel are consistently scheduled to attend specified group Audio conferences and Webinar's that provide information on current "trend" events related to healthcare and other management related topics
 - In addition, management personnel routinely attend outside training vendors for a variety of sessions related to enhancing their leadership skills
 - The organization has no technology based training available for employees at this time

1. The training subjects have been on topics such as Stark Law, Family Medical Leave Act, Employee Motivation, and Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act.
2. The training manager has researched Learning Management Systems (LMS) however there is currently not a budget line for this.
 - E-learning, although usually asynchronous learning can be informative and provide "Just-in time" training that will transfer directly to work-skill opportunities.
 - E-Learning will be discussed later in this presentation however it is important to note here that e-learning is just one part of a blended learning format.

Current State of Training

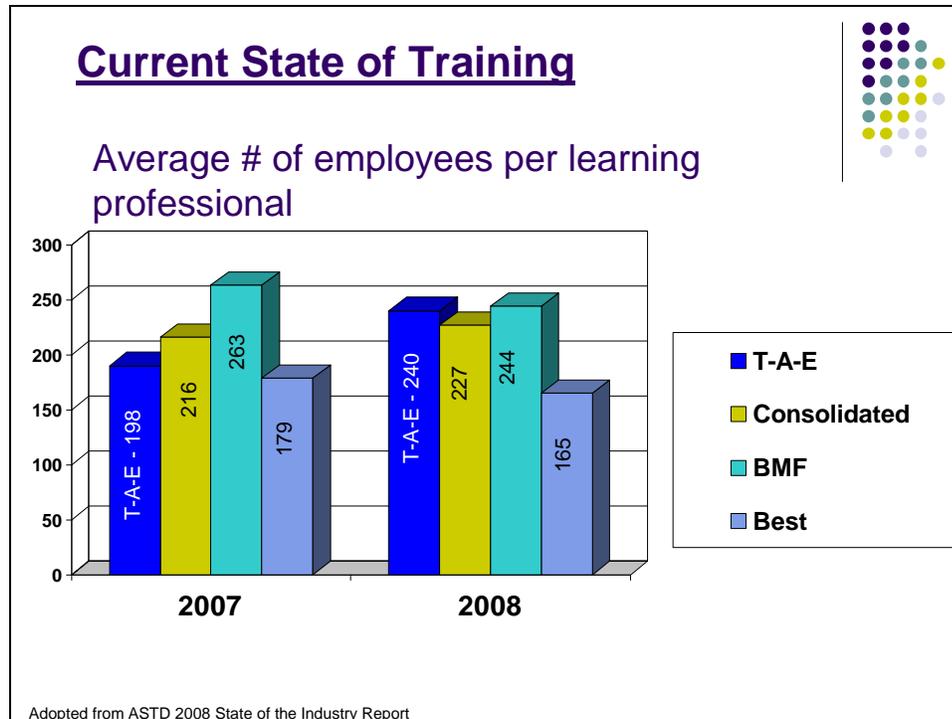
Continued



- Training delivery
 - All other organizational training is face-to-face classroom facilitation
 - The training staff visits all 12 locations at various times while trying to minimize patient care interruption
 - The annual trainings are:
 - Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act
 - Compliance plan
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration
 - Customer Service
 - Workplace Respect (Cultural Sensitivity and Anti-Harassment)

With an employee base of 495 (+/-), scheduling to train at all 12 locations can be a challenge and quite time consuming.

- On average, it currently takes 30 days to complete one training event.
 - It will take an average of 5 months to complete these five annual training events.
 - That does not include the instructional design and administrative time spent consolidating sign-in rosters and generating attendance reports.



The following definitions (minus T-A-E) are adopted from the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) 2008 State of the Industry Report:

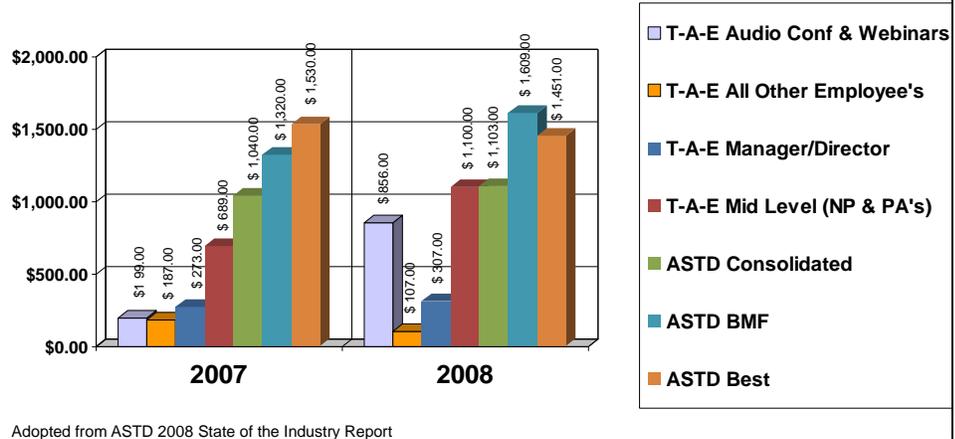
1. Best – Best awards program recognizes organizations that demonstrate a clear link between learning and performance across the enterprise.
2. BMF – Benchmarking Forum organization members are typically very large global organizations, most of which are based in the United States.
3. Consolidated – Consolidated organizations are a combination of BMF organizations, and the BEST Award winners.
4. T-A-E – This Author’s Employer.

Current State of Training

Continued



Average direct learning expenditure per employee



Training Events	2007	2008
T-A-E Audio Conf & Webinar's	\$ 199.00	\$ 856.00
T-A-E All Other Employee's	\$ 187.00	\$ 107.00
T-A-E Manager/Director	\$ 273.00	\$ 307.00
T-A-E Mid Level (NP & PA's)	\$ 689.00	\$ 1,100.00
ASTD Consolidated	\$ 1,040.00	\$ 1,103.00
ASTD BMF	\$ 1,320.00	\$ 1,609.00
ASTD Best	\$ 1,531.00	\$ 1,451.00

Definition of Learning



- Transmitting of knowledge
 - Facilitator to learner
 - Learner to workplace skills
 - Transfer of learning



The transmitting of teacher knowledge is comparable to that of the transfer of learning.

- Transfer of learning is the effective application by learners of what they have learned because of attending an education or training event. (Applying what was learned back at the workplace)
- You can view knowledge as 1) something to be acquired from outside 2) a cognitive state of the person that is the result of a thought process, or 3) a meaning constructed by social interaction.
- Adult learning occurs in everyday workplace interactions, home and family activities, community involvement, and other non-formal educational activities.

Definition of Learning

Continued



- Behavioral modification through experience or conditioning.
 - Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivations to learn

- Experiential learning
 - Learner driven
 - Collaborative



1. Behavioral modification through experience or conditioning:
 - Adult learners are driven by Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivations for learning:
 - Intrinsic – Self esteem, accomplishment, interested in mastering a topic, rather than just rote-learning, the enjoyment of the topic.
 - Extrinsic – Job security, Increase workplace competency, manager referral, organizational driven. Both will affect the workplace environment and productivity.

2. Experiential learning is everything from kinesthetic directed institutional activities in the classroom, to special workplace projects interspersed with dialogue led by a facilitator.

Adult Learning Theory



- **Andragogical model**

Five assumptions of adult learning:

1. The learner is self-directing
2. The range of experience among a group of adults, at various ages, will be vastly greater than among a group of adolescents
3. Adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know, or do something, in order to perform more effectively



Research supports the supposition that, in the course of engaging the adult learner, blended learning would provide the experiential and self-directed learning concepts that support the theory of andragogy.

Knowles (1984) explained the andragogical model, in contrast to pedagogy, by using the following five assumptions:

1. The learner is self-directing
2. The range of experience among a group of adults, at various ages, will be vastly greater than among a group of 12 year olds
3. Adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know, or do something, in order to perform more effectively

Adult Learning Theory

Continued



4. Adults enter educational activities with a life-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning
5. Although adults respond to external motivations such as a salary increase, the andragogical model predicates that the more potent motivators are internal (e.g., self-esteem and greater self-confidence)



Knowles five assumptions continued:

4. Adults enter educational activities with a life-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning.
5. Although adults respond to external motivations such as a salary increase, the andragogical model predicates that the more potent motivators are internal (e.g., self-esteem and greater self-confidence).

Background of Blended Learning



- Blended Learning
 - Has been around more than four decades
 - Became widely used in University settings by blending face-to-face instruction with various types of non-classroom technology
 - Involves mediated delivery of instruction



Background of Blended Learning

Continued



- Has created a shift from lecture to student centered instruction in which students become both active and interactive learners
- Has increased interaction between learner to instructor, learner-to-learner, learner to content, and learner to outside resources



1. Blended learning retains the face-to-face element.
2. Blended learning provides an opportunity for “self-directed learning”
 - Self-directed learning is a process in which people take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences.
 - Most learning is self-directed and takes place informally outside the parameter of formal corporate learning
 - Informal learning, such as a quick search for information on the Internet, working on a personal craft project, or seeking advice from a peer, is the way most people learn, yet it is often overlooked as a form of learning

Three Elements of Blended Learning



1. Self-Paced.....



2. Live E-Learning.....



3. Traditional Classroom.....



Alonso, Lopez, Manrique, and Vines (2005) identified three event-based learning types that are necessary to understand when planning a blended learning program:

1. Self-paced learning
2. Live e-learning
3. Traditional classroom.

Three Elements of Blended Learning

Continued



1. Self-Paced Learning



- The learning method which involves asynchronous methods such as e-learning
- Activities can be taken at the learner's leisure
- The value of self-paced learning is not only that it can reach everyone at any time and anywhere, but that it can teach the learner appropriately, providing the right skills at the right time (Just in time learning)

1. Self-paced learning involves the e-learning process as well as hands-on learning.
2. Self-paced activities can be taken at the learner's leisure, that is, the learning can occur anytime and anywhere.
3. It is relevant and timely.
4. One might consider a self-paced learner to be a self-directed learner.
 - Intrinsic motivations as well as possible mandated external reasons (Extrinsic motivations) may drive the motivation for learning

Three Elements of Blended Learning

Continued



2. Live E-Learning

- Takes place in a virtual classroom, at a scheduled time, with an assigned facilitator, and a collaborative group of learners
- The learner attends, just as they would a traditional class, minus the travel
- Learners can collaborate, share information, and ask questions of one another and of the instructor in real time via the Internet

1. Essentially, live e-learning is an alternative way to teach and learn.
2. Live e-learning is good for sharing information.
3. This type of training works best if the class size is limited to 25 people or less to allow for optimal group interaction.

Three Elements of Blended Learning

Continued



3. Traditional Classroom

- Classroom training is unbeatable for the amount of face-to-face interaction with both the instructor and classmates that is necessary to learn certain management, leadership, and other highly technical skills such as clinical procedures



Example- Blended Learning Design



- A blended learning event may include:
 - 1) Self-paced learning
 - Pre-course online work, computer based training (CBT), e-learning, podcasting, or written assignment followed by face-to-face collaborative classroom learning
 - 2) Live e-learning
 - Pre-course Interactive media
 - Group or classroom *distant learning* via:
 - Podcasting
 - Live classroom learning system
 - Tele conference
 - Videoconference



1. Computer based training - training via a CD-ROM.
2. Interactive media- training that allows multi-user synchronous interaction or exchange of information, such as video conferencing.
3. Videoconference - Virtual class via computerized videoconference. An instructor explains specific learning subjects to the group and learners raise questions.

Example - Blended Learning Design

continued



3) Traditional Classroom

- The instructor helps the learners to bring it all together (pre-course work, online etc.)
 - Adult learners contribute knowledge and experience to the event
 - Collaborative interaction between learners and instructor
 - Collaborative interaction between learners and learners
 - Experiential learning occurs
 - Allows immediate assessment of skill competencies

Blended Learning Design



- An efficient blended learning solution could include a mixture of the aforementioned three learning types with the following ingredients:
 - An instructor that directs training
 - E-mail and telephone assistance for personalized learner support
 - Virtual classes by means of computerized videoconference, in which the instructor explains specific learning subjects to the group and learners raise questions

Blended Learning Design

continued



- Interaction between learners and the instructor and between the learners themselves through a *chat* room to stimulate the group learning concept
- Assessment examinations
- A certificate and diploma that certifies having taken or passed the course



Technology



- Blended learning programs may include the following Face to face classroom-based learning mixed with the following technology:

*** Within classroom facilitation and during distance learning.*

- Self-paced web-based courses
- Real-time Virtual Learning
 - Live video conferencing e.g. *Live Classroom*
 - Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
 - Interactive Webinar's
 - Blogs, WIKI's, Chatrooms, etc...



A Blended Learning program may include several forms of learning tools that could be used within the classroom or in distance learning, such as:

- Face-to-face facilitation
- Virtual Learning
- Webinar's
- Tele conferencing
- Videoconferencing
- E-Learning

Technology

continued



- Mobile electronic technology devices (M-learning):

- Personal Digital Devices
 - I-Pods (Portable On Demand)
 - Smart Phones e.g. Blackberry
 - Pocket PC's



M-Learning increases access to learning however access to technology is the *resource* not yet available to all employee's.

- Smart Phones
- PDA's: I-Pods etc...

Technology

continued



- Electronic learning (e-learning) – *Asynchronous*
- Tele conferencing
- Web-based conferencing
(Interactive or Non-interactive Webinar's)
- Podcasting



1. E-Learning is non-linear. The learner determines how, what, and when they access the information.
2. Tele conferencing is interactive communication between three or more people via any telecommunication medium.
3. Webinars consist of a combination of dial-in via telecommunication and projection of multimedia linked to the sponsors internet site. This is typically broadcasted over projector to larger groups. The training sponsor displays PowerPoint and or other software required to cover the course content via their personal computer. Sometimes the webinars are followed by a Q&A period which then makes the session interactive.
4. A Podcast is a series of audio or video digital media files which is distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers.

Technology

continued



- **Blackboard Learning Systems**

- An online learning management system that:
 - Delivers a course in an online only format, or
 - Supports a face-to-face course, or
 - Provides a blended (mixed) learning format
- Allows discussions (chat) between students
- Learning is wherever and whenever the learner finds it convenient
- Not tied to a typical classroom schedule
- Reduced time away from work



1. Blackboard System is an area of shared memory, or workspace, in Computer Science
 - Assignments are posted by the instructor online
 - Work is assigned and completed in an asynchronous environment\
 - Learners can communicate via online forum (Chat)
 - Instructor to learner
 - Learner to instructor
 - Learner to learner
2. With this technology, the instructor can monitor the learner's use of the system and provide feedback.

Technology

continued



- Live Classroom Learning Systems (*synchronous*)
 - Is a *synchronous* two-way Internet based audio and web conferencing system designed for teaching and learning.
 - An instructor can show a PowerPoint presentation, website, use drawing tools, conduct polls, as well as archive a session for later review



Live Classroom: Example- Real-Time live webcast media with open telecommunication and or live chat.

- Workshop “Labs” can be assigned to learners
- Work progress can be viewed by instructor with live discussion

Example- Blended Learning Platforms



Live Classroom learning format (*synchronous*) :
Course Title: Time and Attendance

The screenshot displays a web application interface for a training platform. The main window is titled "SCHEDULE EDITOR" and shows a table of employee schedules. A blue arrow points from the "BY EMPLOYEE" tab to the "BY GROUP" tab. Below the table is a "COMMENTS" section. A secondary window titled "Training Manager" is overlaid on the right, showing "Participants & Communications" with a list of participants and a chat area.

Name	Totals	Job	Sched Grp	Sun 1/25	Mon 1/26	Tue 1/27
Johnson, Megan	0.00	RN				
Jolly, Ezra	0.00	GA				
Jones, Mary	0.00	LPN				
Knoff, Rachel	0.00	RN				
Leiby, Jim	0.00	Radiology Manager	Salaried 9-5			
Lombard, Gary	0.00	Radiology Techni...				
Marsch, George	0.00	Radiology Techni...				
McConnell, Tony	37.50	Assembler A	Second Shift	7a - 330p	7a - 330p	7a - 330p
McMurphy, RP	0.00	Radiology Techni...				
Miller, Mark	0.00	LPN				
Scheduled Hours	1,878.00			7.5	368	368
Number of Emplo...	80			1	51	51

Example- Blended Learning Platforms

Continued

Live Classroom learning format (*synchronous*):

Course Title: Time and Attendance



The screenshot displays a software interface for a training session. On the left, a red-bordered box titled "Scheduling Summary" contains a list of learning objectives:

- You should now be able to:**
 - Explain Key Scheduling Terms
 - Describe Schedule Editor Functions
 - Outline How Schedule Editor Process To:
 - Create Pattern Template
 - Create Shift Templates
 - Build a Schedule
 - Define a Group & Assign Employees
 - Maintain a Schedule
 - Access Schedule Audits

In the center, a "Leave Training Session" dialog box asks, "Do you want to leave this training session and teleconference now?" with "Yes" and "No" buttons.

On the right, a "Hands-on Lab" dropdown menu is open, showing a list of tasks. A blue arrow points to the first item, "TRNG02 [users] ASSIGNED".

The interface also shows a "Call connected" status at the bottom left and a Windows taskbar at the bottom with the time 9:37 AM.

Example- Blended Learning Platforms

Continued



- Electronic (e)-Learning (*asynchronous*)
 - Lessons are designed to guide students through information to help them learn specific tasks.
 - Information based e-Learning content communicates information to the student
 - In performance-based content, the lessons build off of a procedural skill in which the student is expected to increase proficiency



Two types of e-learning content:

1. Information-based content – There is no specific skill to be learned, only information to be given such as organizational updates.
2. Performance-based content - Skill competency learning occurs. The desired results is a learned skill.

Example- Blended Learning Platforms

Continued

E-Learning (*asynchronous*)

The screenshot displays the 'Essential Learning' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'My Learning', 'Learning Catalog', 'Collaboration', 'Resources', 'Learner Quick Guide', and 'Build Your WRAP Plan'. A user is logged in as 'Sally' on 'Tuesday, September 09, 2008'. The main content area is titled 'My Learning' and features a table of courses. The table has columns for 'Status', 'Title', 'Type', 'Availability', 'Required by date', and 'Completed On'. Courses are grouped into 'Curriculum: Annual Training All Staff' and 'Curriculum: Developmental Disability'. To the right, there are 'Announcements' including 'General Announcements', 'Lunch and Learn - Stress Management', 'Health Care Benefits Review', and 'Welcome to our New Employees!'. A sidebar on the left contains news items about new courses and video courses.

Status	Title	Type	Availability	Required by date	Completed On
Curriculum: Annual Training All Staff					
○	Environmental Safety	Online - Recurring	Open	7/15/2008	
○	Sexual Harassment & Workplace Harassment	Online - Recurring	Open	7/15/2008	
Curriculum: Developmental Disability					
○	Cultural Competency for the DSP	Online - One-Time	Open		
○	Employment Support for Individuals with DD	Online - One-Time	Open	5/16/2008	
○	Person Centered Planning for Individuals with DD	Online - One-Time	Open	5/16/2008	
○	Principles of Positive Behavior Support	Online - One-Time	Open	5/16/2008	
○	The Power of Strength-Based Educational Strategies in DD	Online - One-Time	Open	5/16/2008	

1. The learner can log onto the learning website at their leisure and select any of the assigned courses that they choose.
2. Management can monitor training completeness and competency scores via self-reporting capabilities.

Example- Blended Learning Platforms

Continued



Face-to-face and Online learning format:

Course Title: **Creating an Inspiring Work Culture**



In this module you will learn how to:

- Build an energizing, motivational work climate
- Develop high performance by choice not by demand
- Celebrate and reward success

3 hours of **classroom** (or **web conference**) instruction followed by a series of **web-based reinforcement tools**.

Length:

Purpose of this module:

To learn how you can create and influence an inspiring work culture. Highly motivated employees with a clear sense of their purpose make fewer mistakes, have better morale, lower turnover, and higher productivity. Learn the secrets to creating a work culture that values excellence and celebrates it, and how this can impact your bottom line.

1. In this example of Blended Learning, the module can incorporate Classroom facilitation, Web conference, and Self-paced web-based reinforcement tools.
2. Students may be required to complete individual work; discuss online with facilitator and students; and participate in face-to-face classroom.
3. Great tool for Management and Leadership courses.
 - The CEO and other corporate leadership can provide learning experience via the online forum.

The Advantages of Blended Learning



- Decreased travel time expense for training events
- Reduction of overtime
 - Decreased training outside traditional work hours
- Less classroom time away from work
 - Increased productivity
- Less temporary labor cost
 - To cover employee while at training



1. A Blended Learning program will change how employee's currently are required to attend training events by means of:
 - Early and late hours (overtime)
 - Travel time expense
 - Classroom time away from work (productivity)
2. Blended learning can be faster than pure face-to-face classroom learning because people who are curious, inquisitive, and questioning take up much time in the classroom.

The Advantages of Blended Learning

Continued



- More educated workforce = increased work efficiencies
- More informed workforce
 - Internal communication through e-learning platform
- Increased employee motivation
- Higher employee retention rate
- Accommodates all learning types



Our Partnership



- In its purest sense, the definition of a business partner is one who participates in daily operations of the business, and takes responsibility for the partnership's debts and liabilities



1. Training managers are responsible to the corporate leadership for the training and professional development of the organization.
2. Through proper training and development practices, organizational cultures can shift toward more efficient business aptitudes (e.g., morale and culture).

Our Partnership

continued



- Training manager as consultant
 - Presents ideas that support the strategic mission and vision
 - Aligns their work to grow the human capital and skills that drive business results
 - Focuses on how the training outcome will enhance corporate performance and create operational efficiencies

1. Training managers should take the consultant role and be ready to present their ideas and initiatives according to how they drive the organization's strategic goals.
2. When presented training opportunities training managers should focus on how the training outcome will enhance corporate performance.
3. Training managers should "figure out how to align his or her work to grow the human capital skills that drive business results."

Our Partnership

continued



- Training manager as consultant
 - Delivers measurable results that matter to business
 - Benchmarking is essential
 - Document human capital skills growth
 - Results and improved efficiencies are the bottom-line



Training managers who wish to establish and maintain strong executive-level partnerships must move beyond activity and deliver *measurable results that matter to business*.

1. Business results and efficiencies-

- Revenue will increase
- Employees will feel more confident
- Retention will increase
- Workplace dynamics will be enhanced thus strengthening the organizational culture

2. Benchmarking is essential in order to provide the ongoing training consultation to leadership.

- Training managers can use Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation for measuring training value.

Our Partnership

continued



- Training manager as consultant
 - Partnering and working together toward a common goal for employee and organizational development can make the difference between effective ongoing learning and brief, low knowledge, programs only offered on demand



Return on Investment



- Financial calculations can be based on the reduction in time taken to complete tasks, the ability to carry out activities not possible before, or increases in the quality of activities
- Increase in quality activities = enhanced efficiencies which = better customer service which = word-of-mouth marketing which = increased revenue

Return on Investment

Continued



- Adopting a blended learning format increases the potential for more annual learning activities
- The future average direct learning expenditure is likely to be considerably lower
- Research indicates that companies can experience a 40-60% cost savings when comparing instructor-led courses with technology-delivered courses

Return on Investment

Continued



- Training time will be reduced, given the ability to take just the required training modules (or “opting out” by showing competency in a pre-test) rather than having to attend an entire course.
- The technical aspect of the blended learning format will empower individuals to develop their own skills when they want, and will enhance employee motivation and reduce staff attrition which will lead to savings in recruitment costs

Summary



- Workplace training, just like other corporate functions, is a strategic process
- By actively planning and creating a good, solid program consisting of a blend of learning methods and technology:
 - Learning will happen
 - Training will transfer to job productivity
 - Employees will experience success
 - The organization will benefit from an increase of fiscal return on investment

Chapter Summary

Blended learning embraces more than the use of technology alone. It is best accomplished by employing a mix of face-to-face classroom activity, written coursework assignments, and by the use of technology that offers the learner asynchronous and or synchronous learning opportunities. A methodically designed and implemented blended learning program can optimize employee learning and increase organizational revenue. By educating the corporate leadership about adult learning theory, the elements of a blended learning program, and the training manager's role as a consulting partner, this researcher anticipates leadership will embrace a positive change in learning culture. In Chapter 5, this researcher discusses the contributions and limitations of this project, addresses peer assessment feedback, and provides recommendations for further development.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Research demonstrates that a blended learning format has the potential to increase learning outcomes while minimizing lost work hours and revenue. Dziuban et al. (2004) offers the explanation that blended learning should be approached as a redesign of the instructional model. Dziuban et al. also suggested that blended learning is a shift from traditional lecture while increasing interactions between learners and the instructor. By blending technology with a variety of classroom learning techniques, blended learning retains the face-to-face element while engaging learners in their own learning experience.

Contribution to the Project

Adult learning is a process in which people take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences. This researcher believes that by adopting a blended learning culture, employees will feel self empowered and will experience an increase in their intrinsic motivation to learn. A contributing factor for adult learning is to be self-directing. A blended learning format allows the learner, to some degree, to decide everything from specific activities of learning to location and time. Another contributing factor, however, is that the blended learning format involves communications and collaborations between other learners and their classroom instructor. This format is a balance between face-to-face classroom learning and synchronous and asynchronous learning technologies.

Limitations

Technology is the critical limitation for implementing a blended learning program. Many organizations are equipped with workstation computer technology that can make e-learning accessible; however, other technology such as I-Pods, Smart Phones, and Pocket PC's are not a common issue to employees. Provided leadership does upgrade equipment, another limited resource may be the support from the organization's Information Technology department personnel. An additional limitation is the "training time" that employees will need in order to complete the self-paced asynchronous learning sections of a blended learning format. Management personnel would need to integrate training time into their employees work schedules. One last limitation may be the coordination of resources, such as training space; however, this limitation may also be encountered if the organization's training manager only offers traditional classroom format instruction.

Although these restrictions are recognized, this researcher believes that, because of increased efficiencies, an organization will increase revenue and employees will experience enhanced workplace motivation. Limitations are merely operational hurdles for the corporate leadership and the training manager to overcome if they are genuinely committed to organizational growth and employee success.

Peer Assessment Results

Three colleagues reviewed this PowerPoint presentation and assessed it to be thorough and important information for employee learning and corporate growth. Two of the colleagues are directors and part of the corporate leadership team. The third colleague is a training specialist. They all agreed that the presentation provides revealing and useful

content. They also all commented that the flow of the presentation was logical and brief with supporting notes for discussion. Two of the three reviewers had not heard of the term “blended learning” prior to reviewing this presentation. They both agreed that the data they reviewed has educated them on a learning format that will redirect the way training and learning is provided in the corporate environment. One reviewer expressed that e-learning, as part of the blended learning format, will be helpful in the healthcare industry due to the difficulty of taking employees away from patient care. She also agreed, however, that while e-learning can accommodate some learning, other training, such as clinical competency skills, needs to be done in the traditional classroom format. This reviewer suggested a section be added that illustrates types of clinical training that can be accomplished through a mix of online and classroom learning.

Another reviewer was intrigued by the section of “partnering.” This reviewer agreed that training managers should be employed as training consultants. The reviewer suggested that training professionals are often disregarded as stakeholders in the corporate strategic planning process. After reviewing the PowerPoint presentation, this reviewer said it is clear that the corporate leadership should reevaluate their relationship with the training manager. This researcher agrees that creating a partnership with corporate leadership is essential. A positive partnership between training managers and corporate leadership will enable corporate success through the learning growth of employees.

Recommendations for Further Development

This researcher believes that the emphasis on the blended learning format and design should address more key questions about: (1) the theory of self-directed learning,

(2) the diversity of technological learning tools and how they are maintained, and (3) the classroom-based activities required to achieve desired learning outcomes.

Further research needs to address:

1. What are adult intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for learning?
2. What face-to-face and other non-traditional learning activities best engage the adult learner?
3. What is a good balance between classroom-based learning and self-paced technology-based learning?
4. What are the more common methods for learners to access technology?

Project Summary

The purpose of this project was to provide the corporate leadership of this organization with information about the use and advantages of developing a blended learning program so they can make an informed decision on a strategy for future training. Internet delivered learning combined with face-to-face classroom led instruction creates the potential for more effective corporate training events. Blended learning programs reduce the cost of learning, both direct and indirect, and increases employee motivation and retention. In addition, it enables the training manager to be more creative as to how learning programs are customized and managed for operational efficiencies. Traditional classroom alone is no longer the focus of adult learning. A blended learning format provides the means to deploy knowledge more efficiently throughout the organization.

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