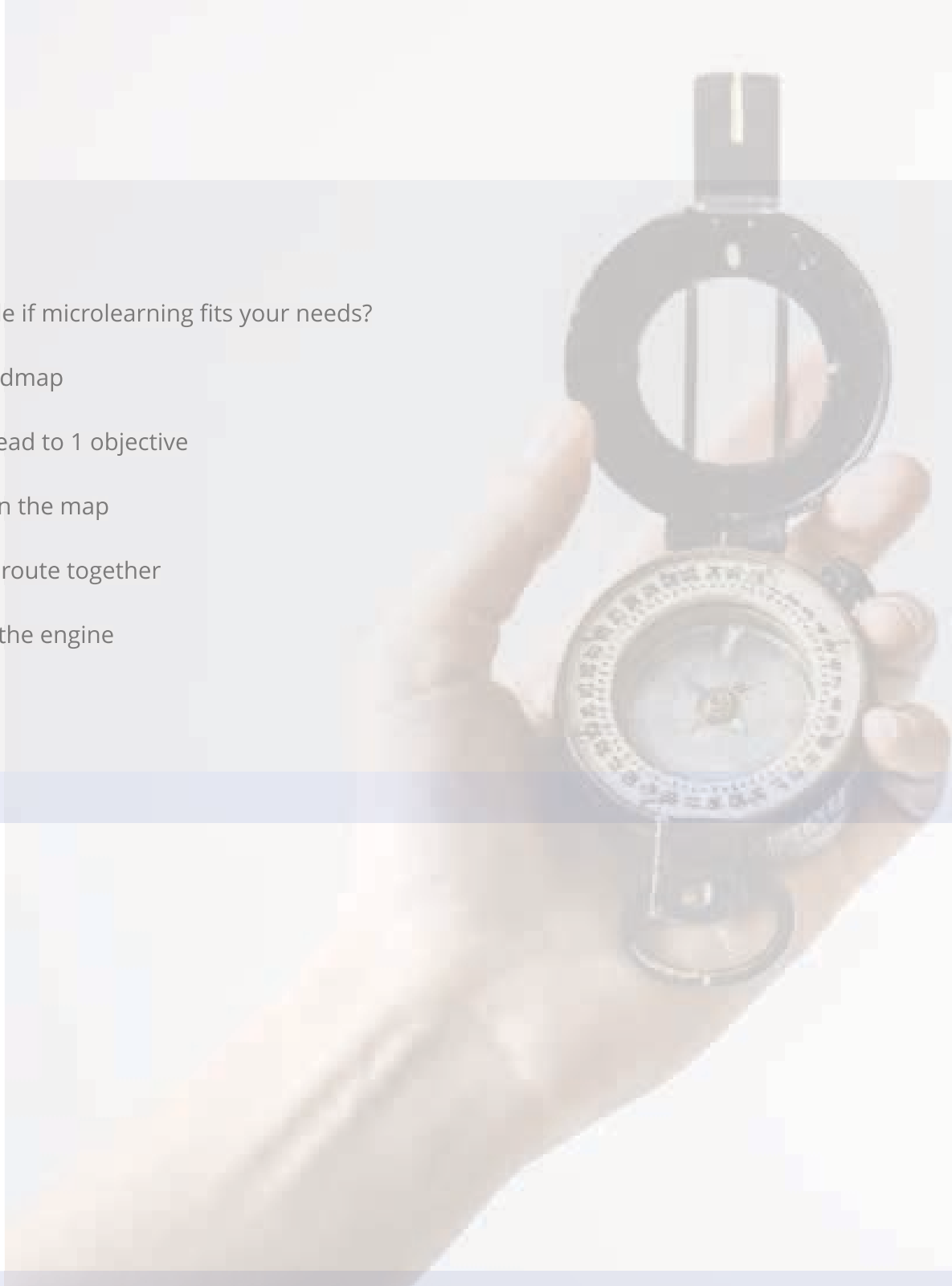




# 4 UNLEASH THE POWER OF MICROLEARNING STEP ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

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# INTRODUCTION

Microlearning has become a buzzword in learning and design circles of late. It's a top online learning trend according to talent professionals surveyed by [LinkedIn in 2018](#).

## BUT WHAT IS MICROLEARNING?

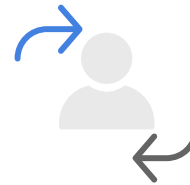
Microlearning modules are small content snippets between 2-10 minutes in length centered on one learning objective ([ATD](#)).



"74% of employees voluntarily engage in 106 microlearning training sessions per year."  
- [Axonify](#)



"94% of workers like learning at their own pace."  
- [Towards Maturity](#)



"Improved student retention by 18%."  
- [Study](#) in the Journal of Educational Research Review.



"Reduce our development costs by 50% and increase the speed of development by 300%."  
- Ray Jimerez, [3-minute Elearning](#)

# HOW DO YOU DECIDE IF MICROLEARNING FITS YOUR NEEDS?\*

## PROS

- + Accessible anywhere (especially useful for deskless workers or global companies)
- + Promotes learner retention by providing additional skill practice
- + Gives users access to information for “just-in-time” learning
- + Creates a personalized learning plan
- + Fits seamlessly into an employee’s workflow
- + Fills the knowledge gap ([Axonify](#) found learners already knew 73% of the required skills)

## CONS

- Number of modules can overwhelm learners
- Modules can create noise, rather than behavior change
- Difficult to develop new, complex skills in 5-minute increments a day

# MICROLEARNING ROADMAP

No set definition of microlearning exists. Therefore, no set process exists. We've distilled the best practices from industry reports, academic research and leading industry professionals to provide you with a unique 4-step roadmap. This roadmap will help guide you through the decisions needed to make effective microlearning.

## 1 ALL SIGNS LEAD TO ONE OBJECTIVE

Experts agree microlearning should centre around one learning objective.

## 2 PUT A PIN IN THE MAP

Effective microlearning gives learners context to understand how this one skill fits into the bigger picture.

## 3 TRAVEL THE ROUTE TOGETHER

With new technology, the needs of the modern learner are evolving faster than ever. In order to keep up, L&D must start meeting learners on platforms they already use to optimize employee engagement.

## 4 FINE-TUNE THE ENGINE

Frequent feedback gives both learners and L&D the ability to track and improve their performance.

# STEP 1 - ALL SIGNS LEAD TO ONE OBJECTIVE

It's tempting to simply chunk long content into 5-minute segments. However, microlearning modules should stand on their own. Like all great instructional design, modules need a diagnostic assessment, informational section, skill practice with a formative assessment and summative assessment.

## IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Microlearning  $\neq$  Chopping Up Long Content

[Top tips](#) for re-purposing longer form content:

- Only include one learning objective in each microlearning module.
- Use infographics to communicate complex information.
- Only include “must know” concepts.
- Focus on explaining “how to” execute the skill.
- Discard any theoretical or background information, but include it in links labeled as “nice to know” information at the end.

## KEEP MICROLEARNING A COMPLETE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Even though microlearning is short by definition, designers still need to keep the whole instructional process in mind. Here's a few examples of suitable tasks for each part of the process.

### DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS

Reflection questions, competency checklists, 2-3 multiple choice questions, or activation of prior learning through storytelling.

### INFORMATION

Lots of people associate microlearning with video, but any written, visual or multimedia content consumable in 2-10 minutes counts as microlearning. Experts suggest presenting the information in whatever format best fits the learning objectives.

### PRACTICE

Scenarios, learning games, quizzes, flashcards, or task simulations.

### SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Examples from their real work, posts on a discussion forum, quizzes, case studies or reflection questions.

Check out this ebook, [5 Steps to Building Training Effectively](#).



## STEP 2 - PUT A PIN IN THE MAP

Intuitively, people understand that repetition leads to memorization. However, [research](#) shows people learn information faster if they explicitly connect new information to previous knowledge. At the beginning, designers can give learners a map of the overall learning progression then zoom in on exactly which part of the skill this module covers.

### STEPS FOR GIVING LEARNERS CONTEXT

1. Design backwards by starting with a large concept, then make a module for each smaller skill.\*
2. Develop a competency checklist for each larger skill so employees can create personalized learning journeys and access the modules they need on demand.
3. Tell your learner which part of the larger skill they are working on at the beginning of the module.
4. Incorporate “breadcrumbs” into the platform (those little strings of navigation menu that pop up on websites) so learners know where they are in their skill development.\*
5. Provide links to extra information at the end of the module.\*

### SUCCESS STORY

[Solenis](#) needed to get their sales force up to speed on highly technical knowledge. Traditional corporate training wasn't doing the job anymore. They had wide discrepancies in skill and knowledge levels between individual employees and were dealing with the learning demands of a new, younger generation entering the workforce. So, they turned to microlearning. First, they developed a competency checklist to ensure every staff member knew the expected learning objectives. Then they developed 1000+ modules to help fill in the skills gaps. Now, they have a competitive advantage because new sales staff immediately receive training on the highly technical knowledge required to sell their products.

“The response so far has been great. New employees can target their basic skills training to just what they need to know when they need to know it, wherever they are. Experienced employees can still review individual skills if needed to freshen up their knowledge.”

- **Thomas Bernard** Solenis Senior Manager and Global Learning Leader.\*

## STEP 3 - TRAVEL THE ROUTE TOGETHER

 JOSH BERSIN, HR ANALYST

“Meet the modern learner: untethered, demanding, collaborative, empowered. And impatient!”

Employees only have 1% of their week available to learn, and yet, the modern learner desperately wants to do so. 94% of employees would stay at a company longer if they invested in their learning. The #1 challenge for talent professionals was “getting employees to make time.” So they suggest companies meet learners on the platforms they already use ([LinkedIn's 2018 Learning Report](#)). If you're thinking smartphones and social media platforms, then you would be right.

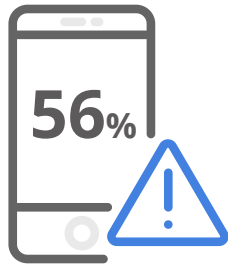
### TOP TIPS TO ENGAGE LEARNERS

- Package microlearning as you would a social media post—“on-demand, engaging, and media-rich.”\*
- Use interactive learning strategies (gamified learning, scenario-based, interactive pdfs, videos, and infographics).\*
- Consciously build a shared learning culture with these tips from [It's Time to Change How You Design Training eBook](#).
- Modern learners are also increasingly social learners because they learn from their networks.\* Create reflection and discussion groups for learners to network and grow from each other.

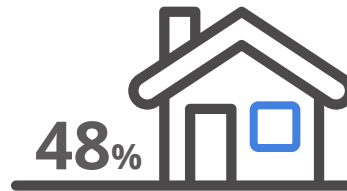


## STEP 3 - TRAVEL THE ROUTE TOGETHER

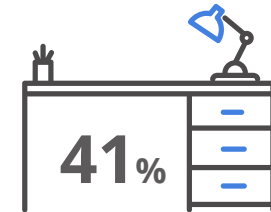
Elucidat's [infographic](#) highlights that traditional learning management systems aren't working anymore because employees learn in a wide variety of environments.\*



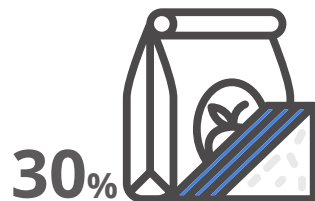
AT THE POINT OF NEED



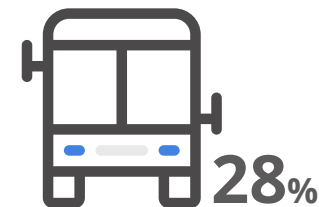
EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS



AT THEIR DESK



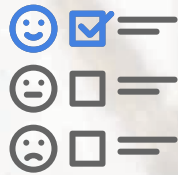
DURING BREAKS AND AT LUNCH



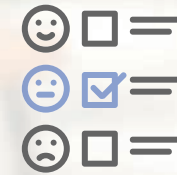
ON WAY TO OR FROM OFFICE

## STEP 4 - FINE-TUNE THE ENGINE

All cars need tune ups to function properly. Just like cars, all instruction needs to be tweaked for optimization. Microlearning provides the opportunity for optimizing instruction through frequent assessment. There are two types of feedback loops microlearning can create:



FEEDBACK ON  
STUDENT PERFORMANCE



FEEDBACK ON THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING

## STEP 4 - FINE-TUNE THE ENGINE

### 1. LEARNER FEEDBACK

Learner feedback always needs to be prioritized to ensure learners meet the learning objectives. In 3-Minute Elearning, Ray Jimenez encourages organizations to add performance metrics to elearning platforms. By adding performance metrics, organizations can identify gaps in their employees' knowledge. Employees can also take responsibility for improving these gaps.

### 2. FEEDBACK FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

If microlearning includes frequent assessment, it can generate big learning data. This data can pinpoint the modules causing employees the most frustration. Designers can then accurately assess which skills need the most improvement in their business's workforce. Using this data, they can focus on training for performance-based skills that will push the needle in terms of meeting key organizational objectives.

Microlearning reduces the expense of redesigning longer-form courses since only one or two small modules might need to be re-designed or improved. Since microlearning provides data on the exact part of the skill where employees require assistance, businesses can respond in a more agile way to the training needs of learners. It also enables a more agile approach to closing those learning gaps as quickly as possible.

### JUST-IN-TIME TRAINING

By changing the paradigm of leading training from a top-down model to a coach-model, Solenis empowered their employees to drive their own learning with competency checklists. They created microlearning modules matching these checklists in order to provide just-in-time training for their staff.

"Our technical experts can now refocus on helping our sales teams grow by providing technical support, instead of reading technical slides to a group of bored, head-bobbing millennials in hotel meeting rooms or over Skype screen sharing sessions,"

- **Thomas Bernard** Solenis Senior Manager and Global Learning Leader.\*

## NEXT STEPS

In today's rapidly evolving business environments, spending tons of money and time on traditional course development methods does not make sense and does not allow L&D to keep pace with business. In fact, [Josh Bersin](#), global HR analyst, predicts expensive, portal-based LMS systems will become increasingly obsolete as organizations move to systems that allow employees to learn "in the flow of work."\* Microlearning provides one option for moving beyond traditional forms of elearning design.

A Learning Design System can help make the transition to more flexible elearning experiences, such as microlearning. With an LDS, learning and development staff can easily collaborate with SMEs, ensure course content connects to larger business objectives, best practices are followed, and silos and bottlenecks associated with training development projects are broken down. A Learning Design System helps L&D build better training, faster. Microlearning has tremendous potential to harness social learning within an organization and build a shared learning culture. But we need to be confident enough to let go of top-down models of education in favor of collaborative models.

### SYNAPSE'S LEARNING DESIGN SYSTEM

See how our Learning Design System can dramatically reduce the time and costs involved in creating training. Schedule a demo today!

[SCHEDULE DEMO](#)

### OTHER L&D RESOURCES

Our client, Solenis, built 1,000+ microlearning modules for sales enablement. See how it helped them achieve corporate goals in this case study.

[DOWNLOAD CASE STUDY](#)

## \*SOURCES

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- LinkedIn: [2018 Workplace Learning Report](#)
- Ray Jimerez: Excerpt from [3 Minute E-learning](#)
- Association for Talent Development: [Just how Micro is Micro-learning?](#)
- Axonify: [2018 Microlearning Global Benchmark Report](#)
- Towards Maturity: [The Transformation Journey – 2019 Annual Research Report](#)
- Gona Sirwan Mohammed, Karzan Wakil, Sarkhell Sirwan Nawroly: “[The Effectiveness of Microlearning to Improve Students’ Learning Ability](#)” published in International Journal of Educational Research Review.
- Kristy Greany: “[Microlearning Learning Examples For Effective eLearning](#)” published on Elearning Industry
- ShiftElearning: [Converting Long Form eLearning Courses to Short-Form: An Invitation to Microlearning](#)
- Synapse: [5-Steps for Building Effective Training](#)
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- Sudarshana Ghosh: [8 Tips for Creating Effective Microlearning Courses](#) published on Training Industry
- Synapse: [Solenis Uses Synapse To Build 1,000+ “Learn It Now” eLearning Modules For Its 2,000-Member Global Sales Team](#)
- Josh Bersin: [Meet the Modern Learner Infographic Tweet](#)
- Elucidat used data from Towards Maturity’s [Bridging the Divide Report](#) for part of their Modern Learner Infographic
- Karla Gutierrez: [Numbers Don’t Lie: Why Microlearning is Better for Your Learners \(and You too\)](#) published on ShiftElearning
- Dr. Ayesha Habeeb Omer: [4 Fundamentals Of A Microlearning Strategy](#) published on Elearning Industry.
- Amanda Major and Tina: “Beyond Chunking Microlearning Secrets for Effective Online Design” published in Distance Learning, Vol 15.
- Synapse: [It’s Time to Change Your Design Training E-book](#)
- Josh Bersin: [A Whole New World \(of Learning\): The end of the LMS as we know it is coming](#). Published on the Chief Learning Officer