Blended Learning and The Rise of Data-Driven Training Programs

How The Right Platform Can Double The ROI Of Your Training Program

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Hello There.

Introduction to Blended Learning

In ancient mythology, Janus was the Roman god of change and transition. Artistically depicted as having two faces positioned in opposite directions, Janus possessed the ability to see both into the past and into the future.

Now that technology offers so many varied options, a blended approach has evolved to mean the use of more than one delivery method to provide and enhance training and support. **This is the way of the future.**

According to experts, learning analytics, the educational application of data analytics, hold the potential to magnify the view into how teachers teach and how students learn. They also illuminate the environmental conditions under which learning occurs.

With learning analytics, we can debunk myths, supplant hunches, and confirm or disconfirm intuitions about teaching and learning. Decisions informed by learning analytics have led to a substantial rethinking of instructional methods and their benefits.

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The History and Evolution of the Learning Process

Classroom Training →
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1 **Classroom Training:**

While techniques such as simple training on the job and apprenticeships were employed in antiquity, the Industrial Revolution marks the beginning of the modern employee training. The drawbacks of classroom training then are largely the same as it is today — since workers were learning how to do their jobs out of context, they had to remember what they were taught in the classroom until they were back in the production line.

Additionally, due to the nature of classroom learning, their training was abstract and theoretical. This forced employees to translate what they had learned into practical action, adding to the cognitive load.

2 **Individualized Office Instruction**

Individualized instruction typically exchanges the teacher for self-study materials, thus cutting costs and increasing scalability. This method relies on programmed materials, or, job training that has been divided into easily digestible steps.

Still, individualized instruction is not without expense. It requires skilled people to prepare the subject matter in accordance with the job and supervise the process. Finally, like classroom training, it is usually off-task and out of context of the actual job.

3 **eLearning Tools for Employee Training**

As computers became ubiquitous during the late 80s and early 90s, computer-based training (CBT) was the natural next step. An eLearning method augments individualized instruction with digital tools, capitalizing on technology's speed, branching capability and visual display.

Webinars became the new classroom training, using video style lectures which can be viewed by employees from the comfort of their desks. Unfortunately, videos hierarchy, while excellent for initially training, pose difficulty for an individual hoping to brush up on material or searching for a specific term.

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4 Digital Adoption Platform (DAP)

In the age of digital transformation, organizations today face the challenge of software training. Much like the disruption caused by factories during the Industrial Revolution, the rapid influx of today's digital tools requires companies to once again rethink training methods and techniques.

The key to the future of employee training tools is context, eliminating the gap between theoretical training and practical use. By offering a hands-on approach to learning workplace tools, companies can cut training time and budget.

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Why You Need a Blended Learning Program, NOW!

Some of the advantages of using an effective blended strategy include:

- Designers and learners are not limited to one medium or delivery channel to meet the learning objectives.

- It promotes a continuous learning approach which is more effective at creating change and deep learning.

- It provides more opportunities for social learning, collaboration, increased participation and informal strategies.

- Technology-enabled delivery can reach a geographically dispersed audience.

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The Peril

The dissemination of digitized, instructor-driven content is not full blended learning. Though this can be viewed as a first step toward new models of learning, the peril lies in complacency. When blended learning is equated with digital workflow, candidates remain consumers of instructor-directed content instead of becoming creators of knowledge within a context that they can actively control.

The Promise

True blended learning affords candidates not only the opportunity to gain both content and instruction via online as well as traditional classroom means, but also an element of authority over this process. Freeing candidates from the confines of a hectic training schedule, the sole expertise of the instructor, and the pace of the rest of the batch, blended learning could fundamentally change the system and structure of training, and provide candidates with a more personalized, active learning experience.

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The Five Commandments of Successful Blended Learning Programs

1 Strategy Before Measurement

A clear strategy should drive the system of measurement and not the other way around. Measurement tells trainers if the strategy is successful or not and where there may be opportunities for improvement. Data is enormously valuable in analysing the teaching and learning processes. However, when one emphasizes metrics without the proper strategy in place, the result can drive behaviours that lead to data manipulation and other misuses of information.

2 Identify Your Candidate's Requirements

In training, inputs have long been treasured more than outcomes. These input measures include but are not limited to training selectivity, standardized training assessment scores, student-to-faculty ratio, class size and faculty credentials.

> **"** *Start with the ending; it's the best way to begin.*
>
> David Wilcox

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An evaluation of the training programs can reveal inconsistencies in introducing, reinforcing and evaluating course outcomes through learning activities and assignments. So before you start charting out the syllabus of your training program, understand the requirements of your candidates.

❸ The Key To The Success of Your Training Program is Engagement

Technology-enhanced curriculum provides opportunities to truly rethink how education is delivered. A clear understanding of learner needs, learning requirements, and of the potential ways learners and educators interact with learning technologies factor heavily in the success of technology-enhanced learning experiences.

> ❝ The bait needs to be attractive to the fish — *not to the fisherman.*

Some scholars suggest that success in digital learning is more likely if students serve as learning designers and engage in formative evaluation activities; i.e. an evaluation that takes place by the students before learning projects occur, with the aim of improving the project's design and performance.

❹ Ensure Your Training Program is Effective with Assessments

There has always been a way to examine the effectiveness of courses. Today the capabilities of our learning management system (LMS) allow us to examine student behaviors in relation to their academic achievement.

> ❝ *Every line is the perfect length if you do not measure it*
> Marty Rubin

Organizations can now examine data related to the time students accessed course information, whether they watched all or part of an assigned video, answered questions correctly, responded to and posted to discussion boards, clicked on a lecture, or opened up an email with assignment instructions. Pre-and post-training assessments also allow us to have actionable data about candidates who participated in the training, and how effective the training program was.

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⑤ **Our future is more data driven.**

Several trends suggest that the future of training will be more data driven. These trends include: (1) advances in technology; (2) looking at the softer side of training; (3) greater interoperability of data systems; and (4) adaptive learning technologies.

First, analytical software is becoming more advanced and more broadly available. LMS software is becoming more advanced as designers of the software respond to the increasingly sophisticated user by adding new features. Hardware and learning software are also becoming less expensive and more powerful regarding their computing capabilities.

Second, while economic measures such as enrollment and retention, course completion and grades were early indicators as dependent variables, increasingly, organizations are looking at the softer side of learning. These measures include candidate well-being, their active engagement, and the perceived relevance of the program as it relates to their personal and career aspirations that are believed to be related to their success later in life.

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Conclusion

Learning is dynamic – or, at least, it should be. As your business goals change, so should your training program. As your staff grows and changes, so should your training delivery change with them. And as your customers' expectations of your store(s) change, your training must adapt as well.

❝ *Quality is not an act; it is the result of intelligent effort.*

John Ruskin

There are risks in developing training at lightning speed. Sometimes, the need to be efficient takes over the need to be relevant. That's why it's important to look for training options that are grounded in content that's specific to your industry.

Find out more about how you can improve your training and development programs with a bevvy of assessments **developed by Mettl.**

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What is Mettl?

Mettl is a Saas based assessment platform that enables organizations to create customized assessments for use across the entire employee lifecycle, beginning with pre-hiring screening and candidate skills assessment, training and development programs for employees/students, certification exams, contests and more.

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+91-9555114444

contact@mettl.com

Plot 85, Sector 44, Gurgaon, Haryana, India - 122003

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