White Paper: How to Create a Training Program

An engaging training program is a powerful tool. It can set your people up for success, and continue to educate them as they grow with your company. A lacking training program, can be detrimental. It drives your talent away, and fosters an environment where even the best people struggle to succeed.

Here's are our steps to success for creating, delivering and managing an engaging training program that works.

Set the goal for knowledge communication

▸ Before you begin creating your training program, focus yourself and your team on a single goal.

▸ The goal: Knowledge Communication.

▸ Definition of Knowledge Communication:

- Knowledge communication is a method for educating and relaying information that gives the learner the best opportunity to understand, retain and apply what they learn in the long term.

▸ Traits of Knowledge Communication:

- What knowledge communication in the workplace is:

- Engaging

- Effective for embedding information in long term memory

- A platform for applying information in real-world scenarios

- A confidence builder

- A launching point for success

- A continuous strategy that extends past initial training

- ▶ What knowledge communication in the workplace is not:

  - A quick process

  - Communicated via information overload

  - Memorizing facts and figures

  - Studying to pass a test

  - Easily forgotten

  - A one-time event

Thesis: When you plan to create your training program with the end goal of communicating knowledge to your employees, you end up with an effective educational platform that sets your people up for continued success.

Plan and outline

Plan out your training program by segments, starting with the most general concepts and narrowing to the most specified and skilled topics.

Begin with the highest-level information that everyone in your organization should know. For example, an introduction to the company, information about culture, rules and expectations, etc.

Then narrow topics down into sub-segments. Start by department, then move to specific job responsibilities.

Use a team to brainstorm each category and sub-category your training program should include. Ask people in-house to describe a typical day and what they wish they knew when they first came on the job.

Target your segments

Your master training program should be divided into several smaller training programs. They may all begin with the same information, but as your content funnels down, your target audience will change.

Organize your segments by dedicating each section to particular groups or individuals.

Training should be valuable and worthy of your employees' time. Avoid targeting your marketing department with sales specific material they will never use. Take the time to

target your training programs and your employees will quickly realize every piece of educational content you send their way is meaningful.

Design interactive content

When it comes to creating training materials, design matters. Create image-based, and professionally designed content to capture your audience's attention.

Use different forms of media like video, diagrams and photos. Color on the page holds a person's attention. Interactive materials keep employees engaged. Professionally branded content indicates to your trainees that your company takes pride in your training process. Pages of black and white text in a PDF is simply not effective.

Funds and time spent on designing an interactive, engaging training program will be returned to you through employee retention and success.

Create assessements

Pair each subsection of content with an assessment that gives the learner the opportunity to apply what he or she has learned.

Assessments and quizzes should not be built to trick employees. They should ensure the trainee has retained the information needed, and can put it into action.

Use a combination of multiple choice questions, and questions that present real-work scenarios that require employees to demonstrate a full understanding.

Build tools for recall

Training processes often require people to learn and retain a lot of information in a short period of time. Give employees tools that will allow them to search out answers when they need them.

Instead of expecting a member of your sales team to remember every detail of your new product, provide them a library of information that he or she can call up at a moment's notice. When people have the ability to find an answer on their own, they improve their ability to recall the same answer later.

Make all of your content and information available on any device. Whether your employee finds himself giving a presentation from a computer, or at a lunch meeting with only his smartphone available, he should be able to access the information he needs.

Deliver in bite-sized pieces to targeted audiences

The most effective training programs deliver content to targeted audiences, in bite-sized pieces.

Your employees' time is valuable. Use their time to teach them subjects and skills they need to succeed. Don't waste their time requiring them to read content they will never use.

Delivering training in bite-sized pieces promotes knowledge communication. Employees who tackle one concept at a time are better able to commit those concepts to memory and utilize them appropriately.

Make a plan to deliver content consistently, and to notify your people when that content is available. If your employees do not know where to find new information, or do not make it a routine to find it, your beautifully designed content will sit ignored.

Iterate and re-iterate

As you build your training program, weave concepts from previous lessons into later lessons. Demonstrate how topics and skills build on one another, and ask your trainees to make those connections in your assessments.

Learning is continuous. As your employees gain experience, push out courses and updates that ask them to formally re-apply their knowledge. This reiteration will insure your people stay up to date and improving at all times

Motivate and reward

Give your employees something to work toward. Gamifying your training program will encourage employee engagement by setting clear rewards for progress and encouraging friendly competition among peers.

Use leaderboards, virtual badges or physical rewards as motivation. Make progress visible, so your employees can see how their colleagues are improving.

Training and learning as a community inspires people to continue leveling up, and helps prevent people from falling behind.

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Follow-up and report

The fastest way to correct and improve your training program is to continually collect data and follow up.

Utilize reporting analytics to see how your trainees are progressing on assessments. See how much time it takes them to interact with content. If you see a common pain point, take the opportunity to improve that section of training so that it does not continue to confuse and allude your people.

Ask for feedback from your employees during and after the process. Use short surveys to find out what is working and what information is lacking, then act on the information you gather.

Conclusion

Creating an effective training program is an investment. It takes time, tools and funds to get it right. The more you put into it, the more your employees will get out of it.

The more your employees get out of it, the more likely they are to succeed and return your investment in their training in other ways.

When you plan to create your training program with the end goal of communicating knowledge to your employees, you end up with an effective educational platform that sets your people up for continued success.