northpass

Getting Started with Training your On-Demand Workforce and Client Partners

Preserve your brand's integrity, improve operational efficiency and scale your business with a training program that delivers results

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An Introduction to this Check-list

According to a study by <u>WR Hambrecht + Co.</u>, online training improves retention by 25-60 percent over in-person training. The asynchronous nature of well-designed online training programs enables users to access the material when they are best able to focus on the learning process, as compared with conventional classroom training or even webinars where everyone must be present at the same time. On-demand online training fits the users' schedules and aptitude, thereby enabling them to proceed at a pace that is most effective for their own unique learning style.

Another major benefit is the knowledge-multiplier effect of online training from the standpoint of maximizing valuable trainer resources. Instead of repeatedly tying up your subject matter experts in a classroom teaching a finite group of people, an on-demand training program can enable them to channel their expertise into highly compelling and scalable online content that multiplies their reach by orders of magnitude.

The cost of not implementing an online training program is too high to ignore. For fast-growing companies who rely on their on-demand workforce and client partners to service their consumers, knowledge is the most important asset. Equipping your people with the knowledge they need to delight your consumers, uphold your brand, and grow revenue is your ticket to scaling operations.

Now that it has become clear that online training can deliver significant benefits to your on-demand workforce, client partners, and ultimately, your consumers, how should you start to implement an effective program for your company?

This eBook will cover the items listed below so you'll be ready to establish your online training program for your on-demand workforce or client partners:

- ☑ Understanding the costs and tradeoffs
- ☑ Determining your program scope and implementation strategy
- ☑ Establishing clear metrics
- ☑ Forming your team, defining roles, and setting a realistic timeline
- ☑ Choosing a partner

Understand the Costs and Tradeoffs
Begin by understanding the important cost factors and tradeoffs

involved with various approaches. Consider the unprecedented costs of using an in-house home-grown approach. Trying to manage a comprehensive online learning environment with a hodgepodge of spreadsheets, disparate file formats, separate databases and non-optimized authoring tools is a recipe for failure. When content is not delivered in a seamless interface, your on-demand workers or client partners will disengage and lose interest, making your entire effort a waste of precious time and resources.

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Your most valuable assets for the creation of any online training program are the subject matter experts who provide the knowledge that the program is designed to communicate. In most cases, subject matter experts can be found directly from within your organization. Whatever you can do to make their ideation and creation process conducive to authoring great content is a good investment toward overall success.

You also need to consider the costs of scaling, maintaining and extending your online training programs. After your internal team's upfront investment of creating content (regardless of whether you're investing time, money, or both), you definitely don't want the deployment process to hit-the-wall or require constant tweaking when scaling to serve larger audiences. You also need to be able to update the content easily, without having to start from scratch and/or impose heavy burdens on subject matter experts.

Perhaps the biggest cost to consider is the risk of the online training program not achieving its goal of delivering knowledge

to the target audience. To be effective at optimizing both learner buy-in and knowledge transfer, the end-user environment must be intuitive, engaging and easy-to-use. Providing a consistent interface and seamless integration of all the training assets (lessons, videos, chat, workbooks, tests, etc.) within a single easy-to-navigate platform is critical to avoid frustrating your on-demand workers and client partners. Learning needs to be fun and to feel like an adventure, not like a chore.

Determine the Program Scope and Implementation Strategy

As with any program implementation, you need to clearly establish the goals at the outset. Adding a branded online training program to your organization is no different than any other organizational change. It requires a clear purpose and well-defined outcomes. You need to consider stakeholders throughout the organization, beyond those who are directly involved in creating and deploying the training. For example, instituting new customer-onboarding training directly involves product managers and customer service but it also likely has implications for sales, operations, product development, and finance.

For companies with diverse product families, consider the importance of maintaining brand consistency across your training programs. Launching an online learning environment represents a major factor in your overall branding and customer-facing strategies. As with any such initiative, you want to reinforce corporate image and messaging objectives, and ensure it doesn't appear as a standalone ad hoc program.

Choosing a learning platform that supports cross-functional collaboration and ease-of-authoring along with the integration of all content within a consistent delivery model is critical to achieving both the immediate project ramp-up and the long-term program success.

Once you have determined the goals, scope, and objectives, as well as the organization-wide stakeholders, it is time to start the implementation. Depending on your resources and schedule, the implementation can be handled either in-house or through an experienced agency. In either case, it is important to designate an in-house training coordinator to work with both in-house and external teams in order to keep the project on track and to resolve issues as they may arise.

Establish Clear Metrics

When your team of content creators have invested their efforts in designing and deploying an online training program, you need to be able to capture and analyze key metrics to make sure goals are being met.

Not all training platforms will allow you to track the metrics you need to determine the effectiveness or success of your programs. In fact, not all the metrics you may need for your programs can be measured by online learning analytics alone. In order to know how users are doing, during and after a course, successful program managers sometimes have to think outside of the online analytics box.

So What Should You Track?

In many cases, the metrics you'll want to measure will depend on your specific course. If your course is a compliance course, you won't be tracking the same things that you would be in a course intended to teach a specific skill. Below are some examples of what to track, how to track it and why you should care about it.

What to track: Participant satisfaction
How to track it: Survey

This is probably the most common type of assessment used in courses; an electronic survey is distributed to learners who have completed a course, and participants are asked to evaluate the course. While it may seem like a hassle to ask your learners' opinion of your course, these surveys can contain valuable information, telling you which parts of the course worked for them and which parts can be improved. And if your learners don't complete the survey itself? That's information, too.

What to track: Completion rates
How to track it: Your training platform's built-in analytics

Sometimes the best metric is the simplest one. Your training platform should be able to show you how much of your course has been completed by any learner. If you're conducting a basic course, you can track completion of the course over time, and you can learn where the choke points and "off ramps" are where you're losing some learners. As you tweak the course, you'll be able to see how those changes affect the completion rate. You can even take a deeper dive and look at the effect of course completions on performance.

What to track: Skills and knowledge
How to track it: An assessment or knowledge check at the beginning and/or end of the course to evaluate skills learned.

Many online courses do not include a knowledge check at the end of the course, and they are missing an opportunity to test the

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knowledge of their learners.

It may be more compelling, however, to test your learners behaviorally, evaluating their ability to perform a task they learned during your course.

For example, LiveseySolar Practice Builders, healthcare marketing organization in the UK which runs a course on telephone sales, tests its learners before and after the course with a series of mystery calls. Those calls enable the organization to understand what skills the learners need to master during the course, and how much they've improved afterward.

You can test your learners visually on a task even if your course is online and aimed at client partners or on-demand workers. After a course is over, training managers can require workers or partners to record themselves performing an activity. The learner can then send that video to their training manager.

Tracking your learners' progress through a course is important, but these metrics are just a starting point. Every online training initiative is different, and each organization needs to improve in different areas. Before you start tracking any metrics at all, take a long, hard

look at your course and your organization's training. Then make a list of your goals as a trainer.

Form Your Team, Define Roles and Set Realistic Timeframes

As previously mentioned, it is important to involve stakeholders across the organization but **your core team will typically consist of implementers with platform and project-management expertise**. Subject matter experts, too. The typical flow of a project goes through five key stages: Define, Outline, Build, Engage and Measure. Throughout this process, project staff are responsible for keeping the program on-track and supporting subject matter experts in the ideation and creation of content.

The timeframe depends on your specific goals, budget and capacity

but, it also is highly dependent on the quality of the tools, platform, and partners you select. Creating great content is partly an art, but it needs to be supported by a solid infrastructure and project plan to succeed. This plan must **provide time and space for ideation**, wireframing, prototyping, experimentation, and optimization.

Quickly deploying that great content requires a server and distribution architecture that is designed to scale while also monitoring, analyzing and optimizing results. Learner feedback is a key piece of this process so don't be afraid to take an iterative approach. Launch with one course to start, learn from your on-demand workers and client partners and improve upon your program moving forward.

Choosing a Partner

When considering an external partner to help ensure the success of your online training program, make sure that they bring together :

1) the platform features, scalability and adaptability to support your training objectives and
2) the knowledge of best practices, learning design and program management to ensure fast ramp-up and long-term success.

If you choose the right partner, the right platform and the right strategy, your efforts will promote retention and operational efficiency, while preserving the brand you've worked so hard to build.

Request a demo to get an inside look at Northpass: modern software for helping tech-enabled companies streamline and scale branded customer education programs.