

The State Of Training Industry

It's quite different from the reports you typically read!

By Chris Osborn

There are several reports published each and every year about the state of the training industry. Each of them share one thing in common. Each of them reports data points developed by asking questions from the organizational perspective. We don't want to diminish the value of some of that benchmarking. It's important to know that investments in employee training are rising, or that organizations are telling the industry that they are making some certain amount of training available to employees, and it's nice to learn more about the training topics organizations believe might be important.

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Now think about nearly every other industry. How do most other industries report on their health and vitality? How about electronics? Automotive? Telecommunications? Entertainment? Without exception, every other industry asks their consumers about the products and services they develop and deliver to gauge the effectiveness and health of their respective industries. How much credibility would any of us give a report about the state of the cable industry, if the only people surveyed are the cable providers? Aren't we really most interested in how the consumers of cable services feel?

We thought we'd like to hear from the consumers of the training industry's products and services – employees. Since there isn't any widely published data on the subject, we decided to ask employees ourselves. Starting in early June 2015 and running until early August 2015, we gathered 1,821 responses from employees about their employer provided training program. We asked three strategic questions:

- How effective is your employer provided training program at teaching you new things?
- How effective is your employer provided training program at improving your performance?
- How effective is your employer provided training program at preparing you for the future?

We were able to separate the responses into two broad categories. 1002 of the participants work at organizations that are not clients of BizLibrary. The remaining 819 participants work at BizLibrary clients.

What We Learned

First, online video is hands down the most effective method of delivering training content to employees. No matter how we sliced the data, the participants told us the same thing. Programs that clearly contained online videos outperform programs that center on ANY other type of training delivery method. When we controlled the results by examining the outcomes to the three key questions by

looking at results of the programs *without* online video, the drop in effectiveness was stunning. When we deleted in-person classroom, virtual classroom and traditional click and advance eLearning, the drops in effectiveness were not nearly as pronounced.

Consumers of training products and services are telling us some very important things, and it's important that we listen. They are telling us in clear terms that online video is the most effective means of teaching new things, improving performance and delivering content that prepares them for future challenges. They are also telling us that some of the “tried and true” methods of training delivery the industry relies upon are not always very effective.

The survey data also reveals a lot of great information about content, length of training and effectiveness by job role. We will be publishing that data soon. But like the data we are releasing now, it contradicts a lot of the training industry conventional wisdom that we've allowed to dominate much of the conversation about what does and does not work for years.

Emerging research in neuroscience and behavioral science are confirming the wisdom of the training consumers we surveyed, too. Short bursts of content on a single topic work best. Video images are great for encoding and helping us build the connections we need to make within our brains between new learning and exiting knowledge. Long-form training delivery isn't effective, and employees don't like it. The data in our survey is spot on consistent with the emerging data about how humans really learn. It's time we listened to both our consumers and the science of learning and make adjustments to our employee learning programs.

What Can We Do?

- Move as much content as practicable to online video, in short bursts (5-7 minutes).
- Diminish as rapidly as possible the traditional classroom approach to employee training.
- IF we choose to use classroom training, adopt scientifically proven methods to raise its effectiveness (interleaving, reflection, testing, etc.) To learn more about how that might work read [Make it Stick by Brown, Roediger and McDaniel](#).
- Broaden the way we make content available to employees. **TEL**

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This article first appeared on [BizLibrary's blog](#).



Chris Osborn is VP of Marketing at BizLibrary. Chris now leads BizLibrary's marketing efforts. Among the marketing initiatives BizLibrary is currently executing are weekly webinars (all are approved for HR CE credit), web marketing - including paid search, e-mail marketing and trade shows. Chris has a diverse background including executive human resources roles, attorney, higher education and speaker.

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