Top 5 Training Trends

Trends that are on the horizon for 2015

By J P Medved

This year is shaping up to be a remarkable one for the corporate training and eLearning industry.
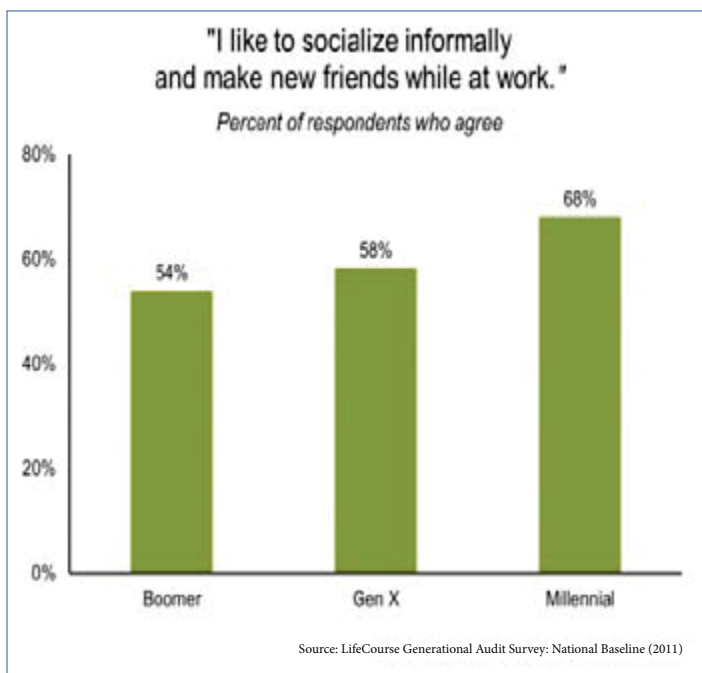
Last year we looked at seven major trends in eLearning, including gamification, social learning, MOOCs, and talent management integration.

While these trends continue to gain steam, others are now on the horizon for 2015.

They include:

Virtual Reality (VR)

With Facebook's purchase of VR headset company Oculus Rift for $2 billion, virtual reality is on the cusp of becoming mainstream. While Matrix-like 'jacking in' may still be some years off, expect to see early experiments with VR learning and training environments in 2015. These may take the form of immersive learning games, or augmented reality scenarios using something like Google's Glass technology, or they may be simply the use of VR technology to simulate a traditional face-to-face classroom.

"I like to socialize informally and make new friends while at work."

Percent of respondents who agree

Boomer: 54% | Gen X: 58% | Millennial: 68%

Source: LifeCourse Generational Audit Survey: National Baseline (2011)

Millennial-Targeted Training

Millennials (those born between 1982 and 2002) will make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, and already comprise one third of all employees in the U.S. Given that 65% of them say opportunities for personal development and training were the primary factor in choosing their current jobs, expect to see more and more companies creating training targeted to this younger generation. This means more gamification, mobile, and social aspects in training to appeal to Millennials' desire for visible progress, flexibility, and feeling of community.

More Mobile

Despite all the hype (including a mention in our trends piece last year), only 10% of companies are heavy users of mobile learning functionality. Expect that to change over the next 12 months as, not only are companies signaling an increased focus on mobile learning applications, mobile web performance support, and mobile performance support applications, but wider structural changes are happening as well. Almost 2 billion mobile phones are expected to ship in 2015 (compared to just 270 million PCs) and with such market penetration, and with people using smartphones more than PCs to access the internet, this can only mean a bigger importance for mobile.

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Actually Measuring Results

With record amounts of money pouring into learning and development (L&D) departments and corporate training courses, increased scrutiny comes as well. There's over $130 billion at stake, so expect more and more firms to demand observable results and clear performance metrics. This means more frequent skills testing, and more real-world practice during and after training.

Individualization

This goes beyond Personal Learning Environments, and into offering multiple paths for individual learners to complete a single training objective. Driven by Millennials' desire for flexibility, and a results-oriented culture looking to make training time as effective as possible, expect 2015 to be the year more employers move away from one-size-fits all videos and recorded presentations, and towards individualized eLearning. Course content will be developed for different types of learners: graphics for visual learners, voiceovers for auditory learners, or text for those who prefer reading to sitting through a lecture. **TEL**

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