



TIPS TO CONQUER THE LATEST MARKETING CHALLENGE

You can build a perfect learning programme using the latest learning architectures. But if it doesn't attract and engage learners, it will not succeed. Andrew Joly shares his top tips for success.

An immediate challenge is how we reach, engage and motivate learners. You can build a perfect learning programme but if it doesn't bring people on board, it will be a waste of time and budget. A key component of implementing innovative learning architectures is marketing. How you engage and motivate learners is crucial – and it's an issue that is too often overlooked.

Learning Architectures is a new way of thinking about learning. It's a move from courses to resources. It responds to the need to uncouple learners from courses and enables the dissolution of the course to the basic units of instruction.

Uncoupling learners from courses, however, is a challenge. Even though your audience might get their heads around the conceptual shift, the people leading your L&D initiatives will have many questions about how to implement the change.

COURSE-BASED TO RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

We now live in a world that has moved from a course-based to a resource-based model. We can no longer rely on the personal charisma of course leaders or trainers to keep learners engaged. We don't have the fall back position of structure and hand-holding which a linear online course provides.

In this age of the self-directed learner, programmes are delivered using a wide variety of online and offline media. Care must be taken to avoid fragmentation and to build a truly coherent experience. This begins with how the programme is presented and promoted to the learner.

It just doesn't make sense to create a learning programme without developing the marketing and communication initiative to promote it.



The huge potential of the programme will remain unrealised: firstly, by failing to think properly about the audience for the learning, and secondly, by failing to identify the specific character of the existing learning culture.

This includes the following factors. How does the audience perceive technology and learning in the first instance? How are they going to hear about the programme you are working on? How will they initially access and experience the learning?

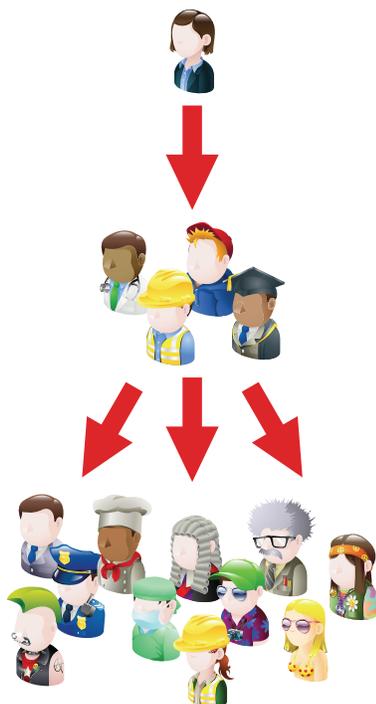
The use of technology in itself is becoming less of a blocker. But learners within today's organisations are only just beginning to understand the true value of the new ways of learning that technology provides. So the success of your new programme starts with the way it is presented to the learners. First impressions matter!

The marketing challenge for any new initiative therefore is threefold: firstly, to sell the benefits of the initiative; secondly, to bring the audience to the learning; and lastly, to grow a positive awareness.

Marketing the learning – six potential solutions:

1 Start with a user-focused marketing communications plan

Understand your audience, be aware of their current view of learning, and appreciate their preferences. Identify the key pain points and blockers, and focus on these in your communications and marketing of the initiative. Sell the benefits, focusing on 'what's in it for me?' Where



CASE STUDY

How BA fosters outstanding leadership

BA, alongside LINE and an embedded consultancy team, developed an innovative leadership programme. A key part of its success centred on the need to educate and involve managers in the leadership programmes in which their teams are engaged. The programme architecture includes video-based scenario materials, online challenges, a learning portal and workshop materials. These resources work within the context of ensuring those learners' managers are equipped to effectively coach their teams alongside the leadership-learning programme.

programmes are targeted at higher organisational levels there is also an opportunity to develop the 'what's in it for us?' message.

2 Use champions and advocates

The most powerful marketing comes from the inside, and often highlights ways of cascading key messages through an organisation. It is also necessary to realise that these key messages may change for different organisational layers or different territories.

3 Focus on senior management

As part of a cascade, take a look at the attitude of senior managers and leaders. Experience tells us that effective take-up only happens when managers are fully aware of, and integrated into, the learning programmes of their teams.

The power of the 20% (coaching, mentoring, and managing) within the 70:20:10 model is a critical yet often overlooked element of the formal/informal mix.

<http://www.line.co.uk/viewpoints/its-the-twenty-stupid>

We have also seen success from an exclusive 'club' concept, started at senior level, which encourages aspiration in junior leaders.

4 Integrate with other initiatives

Look closely at how your learning initiative can link to extend other successful learning and performance systems in the organisation. Is it possible to forge links with the annual performance, appraisal or bonus system, for instance?

5 Leverage early adopters

Marketing by conversation AKA the water-cooler effect. Think about how you can use the positive experience of early adopters to leverage the ongoing take-up of followers. Identify, create, and share; identify success stories; generate resources such as interviews, case studies, images, video; and share via social media etc.

6 Use viral media

Develop short, non-expensive media and distribute it around the organisation as part of the marketing strategy – maybe a quick game, a video, a PDF or a series of cartoons. Examples include the use of video teasers by BT for a new Performance Management Framework, and the teasers used by L'Oreal for an internal communications initiative.

These are exciting times for organisations to evaluate how to help people learn quickly and more effectively. Any organisation that wants to bring about significant behavioural and attitudinal change in its workforce must adopt an architectural, resource-based approach. The role of marketing communications in the success of such programmes cannot be overestimated.

CASE STUDY

How Ford of Europe engages learners across Europe

Ford of Europe developed and delivered its new online Learning Centre to 24 European territories. Challenged with engaging audiences effectively through online learning, the programmes' success centres on ensuring full buy-in to the new learning approach. Buy-in had to come from the very top of the organisation and also had to be carefully honed to each layer of the sales management structure.

Ford commissioned a comprehensive marketing cascade plan that tackled the pain-points and benefits for each audience from European Sales Directors down to individual Sales Consultants. The plan includes guided presentation packs print and other collateral to support the messaging.

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