

E-Learning Market Update (Nov 12)

This month saw the publication of a major [Learning Insights 2012 report](#) from e.learning Age and Kineo which highlights how learning and development departments are responding to business pressures and technology changes. The report highlights 10 key things that successful L&D departments are doing differently and the emergence of a new learning architecture.

One of the key things that emerged from the research is the growing confidence of learning technology professionals, despite – or perhaps, because of – economic challenges. They are confident their solutions are delivering real value to their business. As one L&D director commented: *“there has never been a better time for learning technology to demonstrate the value it can deliver to businesses.”*

The research identified ten key things that successful L&D departments are doing differently. They are:

- 1. Focusing on improving performance**

The good news is that whilst many budgets are being cut, businesses recognise the value learning technology can play in improving performance. Every project has a clear focus on how it will lead to improved business performance and learning is being integrated into the tasks that people perform, on a just in time basis. There is increasing investment in the development of learning on demand and as performance support.

“What matters is helping people do their job better, providing what they need, when they need it.”

- 2. Supporting informal learning**

L&D is playing a key role in supporting informal learning through the curation of content including the disaggregation and delivery of resources. L&D departments are helping learners find what they need when they need it. This involves providing resources rather courses in a format that is easily browsed or searched. People are time poor and want freedom to decide what they need. Resources to support informal learning tend to be short, often quickly produced, often with a short shelf life, and take multiple formats from videos to checklists.

- 3. Designing new formal courses**

Despite much talk and genuine interest in exploring alternative methods, the development and delivery of formal courses is still one the important tasks that L&D departments undertake. There is a key requirement for structured courses with assessments in areas such as compliance. These formal courses are increasingly blended with a greater use of learning technology such as self paced e-learning courses, webinars and technology in the classroom. Webinar use is growing substantially.

- 4. Preparing for multi-device learning solutions**

Online learning used to mean delivery to desktops or laptops. Now increasingly delivery needs to be to multiple devices including tablets and smart phones. The most common please was for *“a single version that works on all devices.”* They are exploring multi-device responsive html designs that adapt intelligently and using Flash less.

5. **Rethinking e-learning design**

This partly about designing for multi devices and partly about designing performance support objects. Even on desktops e-learning is shorter, more resource based, more task based, less linear, more creative and less on brand. As a general rule people want bite size, user led e-learning for a You-Tube generation.

6. **Providing experiential learning**

For many organisations learning on the job is fundamental and learning should be designed to support this through workbooks, performance support and coaching.

“Not enough attention is given to supporting learning through experiential learning.”

7. **Supporting line managers**

“The line manager has a key role to play in developing staff.”

With the growth in informal learning, experiential learning and performance support, coaching is growing in importance. Frequently line managers play a critical role as coaches and in staff development more widely.

8. **Developing appropriate assessment**

Whilst still critical in many formal learning courses there is less need for assessment in areas such as informal learning and performance support. Where assessment is required it is often built in as part of the learning and as on the job assessments.

“We need to assess learning less, what matters is how well they do the job. People may pass tests but it doesn’t change behaviour in the workplace.”

9. **Developing seamless learner journeys**

The new architecture needs to provide learners fast access to learning. Learning resources are increasingly accessed through role based portals, and the ability to search through peer rated content. Portals are also personalised and provide content based on role or experience. They are also increasingly available on any device.

10. **Evaluating the outcomes**

Successful learning departments are preparing a business case for projects and then evaluating the impact on performance. They are also ensuring learning is followed up with reminders and being transferred to the workplace. L&D departments can increasingly demonstrate the value that learning technology can deliver.