



DEVELOP SOLUTIONS THAT ENSURE PEOPLE CAN PERFORM EFFECTIVELY

DON'T LET TRAINING BE A WASTE OF TIME

In this work we call training, we design, build, deliver, manage, and maintain courseware. We make it available 24/7 via e-learning, mobile learning, virtual, and traditional classroom instruction. We chase every opportunity we can find to enhance this courseware with ever emerging capabilities like gamification, collaboration, and communities of practice. We blend it, personalize it, and attempt to measure it. Sadly, in most cases, these remarkable courses we build and implement are a waste of time. They don't need to be, but all too often, the learners we train falter and fail to perform effectively on-the-job.

At a recent conference, a corporate training leader was honored for excellence. She and her team were praised for delivering over one and a half million hours of training this past year. There was no mention of the impact all that training had upon the organization. A quick look under their methodology hood revealed that their vast amount of training was most likely a waste of time. Why? Because there was no provision in that methodology to support learners at their fundamental moment of “Apply.”

Moment of Apply

On the whole, we have been negligent in addressing this most critical moment in any person's individual learning process — their moment of “Apply.” Preparing learners for this vital moment should have always been at the heart of our efforts. This is when learners meet the realities of what they actually learned, what they didn't learn, what they have forgotten, what they have misunderstood, the unanticipated nuances, and the challenge of a constantly changing performance landscape.

Our core mission should be to develop learning solutions that ensure people can perform effectively when they are called upon to act in their specific area of work. There is no way this can happen consistently without a fully-loaded performance support solution in place to provide intuitive, tailored aid at the moment of Apply — aid that ensures the most effective personal and collective performance. This level of performance support isn't accomplished with a simple job aid. It requires an intentionally created system that provides finger-tip access within two clicks and 10 seconds to the specific resources performers need to help them successfully perform on-the-job.

Supporting Today's Learners

Furthermore, today's work environment doesn't tolerate learners stepping out of their workflow to learn unless it is absolutely vital to do so. And the actual nature of 21st century learners is resistant to learning options that are delayed and removed from the here and now. They are self-directed, adaptive, and collaborative in their approach to learning. These kinds of learners will ultimately abandon outright our formal learning solutions if what we provide them fails to efficiently prepare them to effectively perform at their moments of Apply.

Responding to this need, of course, is the core calling of performance support. Its primary mission is to support people at the critical moment of Apply. The good news is that doing this doesn't require much more effort than what most are doing now. It most certainly doesn't require the overthrow of formal learning. It does, however, require a mindset shift where we look beyond the scope of learning events to the workflow. We should move much of what we do as far into the natural workflow of the organization as possible. And, we should avoid, when we can, pulling people from their work for large periods of time to learn. Doing this opens the door to more effective learning events.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway's character, when asked how he went bankrupt, replies: “First gradually, and then suddenly.” This will be the case for much of what we call formal learning today — unless we push our efforts more deeply into the organizational workflow and provide people the tools and preparation they need to successfully perform at the “Moment of Apply.” This must be at the heart of all we do. It should always have been the case. It is the only way to keep the training solutions we develop from being a waste of time.

For more information and resources on performance support, check out our Performance Support Community. To receive a community invite: www.thefivemoments.com.

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