

## 2010 - A Training Odyssey (Apr 07)

*William Doherty looks at the changing face of learning and development.*



The question, why have a learning and development (L&D) department, comes up year after year. The answer is straightforward: "To develop the people so they can increase the competitive advantage and value of the business!" If any L&D or training activity does not achieve this then it is inefficient and ineffective. The next few years (to 2010) will all be about performance. Only those training companies that perform, deliver results and exceed the customers expectations will survive!

Two key drivers for L&D in 2007 will be the need for productivity and efficiency. This means delivering the learning objectives not in a week, nor in a day or four hours, but in minutes! You might gasp, but this is already being achieved through e-learning.

According to the US magazine *Balance Learning and Training*, many organisations are seeking to reduce participant time away from the workplace by 50% and only 30% of their training will be delivered by instructors by the end of 2007.

### **Consultants**

Head of Global Learning at Reuters – Charles Jennings says that in the near future trainers will need to become performance consultants – able to diagnose the cause of a problem, explore who has ownership and be capable of facilitating a solution. This solution might have nothing to do with training but relate to not paying enough, not recruiting the right quality of personnel, having the wrong process or unrealistic objectives, not allocating enough resources and so on. The challenge facing business in 2006-2010 is to define the role, responsibility and accountability senior managers have towards developing their people and establishing that any problem around developing people or managing their performance is their problem – not the training managers problem.

Jennings makes the point that the training manager and the training function is not simply a fulfilment service delivering training on demand to line managers. In 2006-2010 training managers must help facilitate line managers' ability to identify the root cause of the problem, the size, scale and cost of the problem and, most important, define who owns the problem and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed.

### **Ideas and Opportunities: 2007-2010**

- Learning and development will focus around three key areas: knowledge management, performance management and behavioural change.
- Trainers will need to up-skill and become more like business transformation consultants, capable of working across the business, understanding key processes, metrics and business drivers.
- Traditional training departments will reduce in size – justified and measured by their cost, efficiency and ability to add value to the business.
- Training and L&D professionals may leave the CIPD and consider joining other institutes such as the CMI/IMC. The reporting relationship may change, away from reporting to the HR directorate towards the operational and strategic management directorate.
- Performance management issues and skill gaps will not be passed to L&D/HR but owned by line-managers.

- Off-site didactic delivery will reduce incrementally. E-learning will increase alongside web chat rooms and telephone coaching .
- Training departments will become digital hubs, providing and transmitting synchronous and asynchronous learning modules on demand.
- The traditional delivery model incorporating PowerPoint, course books and handouts will reduce, and be replaced by PDAs, MP3, podcasts and web chat.
- Out of course date notes, plagiarised models and suffocating delegates with PowerPoint slides will not be tolerated. Training organisations that pass off copyrighted material as their own will continue to be prosecuted. Online support and up-to-date e-support material will become the norm.
- L&D will engage closer with the supply chain – training not just internal but external suppliers and customers.
- A new role of knowledge management and intellectual property manager will be created. This person will ensure any original material is protected and properly stored; and that no infringement of copyright occurs that could expose the company to litigation and all material is formatted correctly, is current, accessible and transmittable on demand.
- New skills will be required in managing the L&D function, such as multi-media management, problem solving and consulting (IMC), IT data storage, media presentation, ie, audio and video recordings, web cam management and directing ability similar to that required in a TV studio.
- Reporting to operational management, L&D will become cross functionally literate – conversant with the clients processes, problems and performance targets. In partnership L&D will take on accountability for making/ creating measured improvement.
- L&D will be measured in terms of ROI, performance gap and added value created. Interventions will not necessarily involve training or L&D programmes – it could include process redesign, a review of recruitment, new technology, or restructuring.
- Demand for experiential training linked to leadership programmes, project management, CSR and graduate development will increase.

### **What will Training Delivery look like 2007-2010?**

- Simple/accessible/digital: Podcasts, iPOD's, MP3 players, DVD's.
- Scalable: Large numbers at the same time.
- Flexible: Can be easily updated.
- Quality: Challenging/personalised/professional/high quality
- Transferable and directly relevant to the workplace.
- Able to demonstrate ROI: Assessed/evaluated/linked to performance.
- Interconnected: Career frameworks, competencies.
- Motivating: Certification, recognition, reward, credit.
- Fun and challenging: Simulations/gaming.
- Digital: Transmittable and storable through all media sources.
- Upgradeable: Linked to the advent of new technology.
- Linked to business performance metrics and targets.
- Owned: by the delegate, their manager and the business.
- Measured and fully evaluated.