

## Pave the Way for mLearning with mSupport (Jun 13)



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Almost one-third of the global information workforce can work at any time, in any place they happen to be. The rest of the workforce have moments in their day when they ought to go mobile, and would if they could.

Look at sales, medical care, emergency services, transportation, repair and maintenance services, law, or anywhere else, for that matter. More and more, workers are on the move, and mobile provides the means for untethering them from the confines of a specific workspace. According to Gartner, over the next two years the number of PC (desk-based and notebook) devices will drop (14 percent), while at the same time, the number of mobile phones will grow from 1.9 billion to 2.1 billion, and tablets in the workplace will [more than double](#).

Although this mobile elephant's been in the room for a while, it's becoming enormous. No organization can or should ignore it. Nor should we limit mobile's usefulness with an mLearning-only mindset. We have understandably been mesmerized by the glimmering promise of mLearning for some time now. But mLearning barely taps mobile's capacity to deliver business benefit. Add mSupport to the mix, and you deliver immediate and measurable business impact and actually pave the way for a more sustainable mobile learning strategy.

### **Delivering measurable business impact**

Training has always struggled to directly connect an organization's learning investment to its profitability. ROI is elusive to training, whether mobile or not. This isn't the case with performance support. The difference? Performance support (PS) is, by its very nature, embedded within the workflow. This is especially the case when PS goes mobile. It's on the scene all the time, everywhere, while people are performing the work of the organization. This allows real-time measurement of business impact (See [Show Me the ROI!](#)).

When it comes to mobile, mSupport is a rising star. If an organization is intent on supporting workers whenever and wherever they are—exactly at their moment of need—then mSupport needs to be a key component in its performance-support strategy. It shouldn't be the only option, though. Learning and performance support need to be able to span the many mobile and not-so-mobile devices. (See [From Scattered Information to Transformational Performance Support.](#))

### **Pave the way for a sustainable mobile learning strategy**

Actually, if you take a hard look at existing mLearning solutions today and check their functionality against the [five moments of need](#), you will most likely find that many do not map to the moments of

*learn new* and *learn more*. Instead they primarily address the moments of *apply*, *change*, and *solve*—which is mSupport. The reason? mSupport is the fast track to business impact, and it is a very effective forerunner for mLearning.

If you are thinking about pursuing mobile learning ahead of mobile performance support, you take on some real challenges beyond measuring business impact. For example, we know the following principles govern effective learning:

- Gain and maintain attention
- Deliver content
- Provide meaningful examples
- Model skills
- Provide guided and unguided practice
- Integrate review
- Give meaningful feedback
- Check for mastery and remediate

Years ago, we developed a tool for assessing the integrity of eLearning courses against these principles. As measured by the tool, most eLearning falls short of fully supporting the principles. The same holds true with mLearning. Engaging these principles to facilitate optimum learning outcomes on any device is no small task. It can be especially so for mobile. It's difficult to balance methodology requirements with development and maintenance costs across mobile's many form factors—cloud and all. Certainly it can and is being done, but no matter how effectively you orchestrate these principles into an mLearning solution it will fail to deliver strategically.

Learning solutions, regardless of their mode of delivery (classroom, desktop, mobile) need to provide three things to an organization:

1. Measurable financial and strategic benefit
2. Optimum time to effective on-the-job performance
3. Sustained competency in an ever-changing work environment

Without performance support, even the most instructionally sound courses fail here (see [Make Effective Performance Your Reality](#)). Hence the need to consider mSupport along with mLearning.

Actually, the best-practice path is to let mSupport pave the way for mLearning. Doing this establishes the framework needed to facilitate measurement, the speed of skill transfer, and the ongoing adaptation of learning outcomes. What's more, mSupport can help secure the institutional will to make, and sustain, the investment required for effective mLearning.

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