

# T R E



# Take Every Trend 2014

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## SHIFTING TO BUSINESS-CENTRIC LEARNING

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FOR MANY YEARS, THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING LEADERS AND THE PATH TO SUCCESSFULLY CREATING HIGH PERFORMING TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS, HAS BEEN TO FOCUS ON THE LEARNER, WHILE MAKING SURE THEIR NEEDS ARE BEING MET. THIS WAS DONE BY ENSURING TRAINING PROGRAMS WERE CREATED AND READILY AVAILABLE TO LEARNERS, AND THE BUSINESS WOULD ULTIMATELY REAP THE REWARDS FROM IMPROVED EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.

This approach has been termed the learner-centric model for training management and has long been a revered and highly practiced approach.

But, times are changing.

As popular as this strategy was, it missed the mark on the most fundamental principle of success: ensuring that training is aligned to the needs of the business first. After training is strategically aligned to the business, the focus can then shift to how the learner receives access to training.

This model is termed the business-centric approach to training management.

There has been a movement in how leaders of high performing training organizations approach learning, including the administration, design and delivery of training based on researching the top trends reshaping the training industry. This movement represents the shift to business-centric learning in the training industry and has emerged as a key theme for 2014. Taking a look forward, here are some important trends to consider in the coming year.



## CONSISTENCY

While all training leaders are concerned with delivering solutions that conform to the needs of learners, the challenge is maintaining consistency in how learning initiatives are delivered across geographies, business units and the learners' levels within the organization. The focus on cost containment has often put consistency in delivery on the back burner, but now it is becoming a key focus as organizations seek to maximize business performance through process, execution and experience. High performing training organizations are leveraging learning technologies to blend the training experience into truncated learning elements such as virtual delivery, e-learning, coaching and informal content, allowing for content to be consumed in a more consistent manner, ultimately translated into consistent behavior across all learners.



## CONFORMANCE OF CONTENT TO MODALITY

Bring your own device (BYOD) has become a popular term that communicates the growing trend of allowing learners to utilize their own device during the training experience. Innovations in mobile device technologies have made it affordable for virtually all workers to have an electronic device, whether it's a mobile phone, tablet or laptop. Each of these technologies is a learning device and means that knowledge-based content can be delivered to the learner wherever they may be. The challenge is making sure that content gets optimized to all these mobile devices. Instructional designers are focused on developing content that can be configured to any device the learner chooses to use, and making sure the experience of consumption meets various learning styles.



## CUSTOMIZATION OF SERVICES & CONTENT

We are in a "want it my way" society where learners have immediate access to knowledge-based content at their virtual fingertips. This "want it my way" mindset is about relevance, and learners want content delivered to them in the most effective, relevant and convenient way possible. Today's reality is that we now have four generations of learners in the workplace – from millennials to baby boomers – and each has their own view of how they want to learn. In order to meet all these needs, training designers must be aware of the various learning styles and then design content that can be adapted to any device, all while making sure that the skills and knowledge is consistently adopted. Customization has the ability to increase learner engagement, which inevitably increases learning retention.



## OPEN ACCESS TO CONTENT

The availability of free, open source content for the purpose of learning is greater than ever before. The supply of courses and availability of "how-to" content in open access repositories such as YouTube and MOOCs have grown exponentially, making them attractive to learning leaders to leverage free content that aligns with the needs of the business. Standards and tools (Tin Can API/Experience API) have been created to help learning leaders measure the consumption of open and informal content, understand the impact of that consumption and ultimately steer learners to the best available content for the problem they are encountering. The challenge for leaders and learners alike is how to choose and curate the appropriate content so learners stay focused on what meets the needs of the business, as well as the learner.

## INTEGRATION OF VIDEO

Educational research shows that 83 percent of human learning occurs visually, and combining visual and audio demonstrations of a task can be quite compelling and effective to the learner. We already live in a highly visual world and learners expect to see how to do something, not just hear how to do it. High-quality cameras are now built into virtually every mobile device. And, this shift has been so remarkable that there are close to 3 billion how-to videos available on the Internet and growing exponentially every day. We are in a time where the cost of producing video is in line with the expectations of the learner. We accept reality-based TV, and expect reality-based learning. With the cost of producing video becoming more affordable, the challenge is how to create videos at an acceptable level and incorporate it into the learning experience.

## DEMONSTRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

It's no longer enough to say that we know how to do a job – it's become more important to demonstrate that knowledge. Demonstrating knowledge is a sign of capability and can validate skill sets. This simple concept is critical in protecting the liability associated with those responsible for confirming employee knowledge – whether it's the employer or the manufacturer of a product. Demonstration of knowledge was recently popularized with the growth in social badging, where learners can publicize they accomplished a task or completed training. The trend will grow to find more visual ways for learners to demonstrate knowledge, such as interactive simulations of skills or demonstration of talent. As the highest order of badging, the growth of certifications will also continue to increase, as well as the credentialing bodies issuing those certifications.

## BLENDING OF CONTENT

It's estimated that more than 90 percent of learning is obtained through informal means, and only 10 percent comes from structured training. Traditional training organizations have been more focused on that 10 percent, with the majority of resources being invested in developing, delivering and administering courseware. The 70:20:10 framework has become an accepted model for training leaders to understand how to blend informal learning methods with structured programs to create comprehensive learning solutions that appeal to the broader needs of the learner. We see a new set of emerging skills that the learning leader needs to foster in the organization, from the design of new short form e-learning pieces, reinforced coaching strategies, robust new performance support systems, collaboration and the curation of learning content.

## DIGITAL CONTENT

The growth of online content demonstrates our ability to effectively convert classroom training to a digital format. Even the growth in online content has been bundled with print and tangibly distributed course materials. E-book readers and ibook platforms have made the distribution of traditionally print materials more interactive than ever. The growth in digital content through e-book readers is being accentuated by version control, note taking, collaboration and sharing of materials. The security and protection of the intellectual property through technologies, such as digital rights management, make the use and access to digital information more feasible in the open access market. Digital technologies are also making the integration of other content, such as books, videos and proprietary information, an easy way to blend content for the various types of learning styles.





## CORPORATE SPEND TO GROW BY 1 PERCENT

The trend for companies to spend more on training is being impacted not just by a company's need to invest more in training, but by the various technologies and learning styles making training more efficient and effective. Some segments of the industry, such as IT training, are seeing considerable drops in investment from the introduction of new technologies and learning methods impacting the way people learn. Informal training also reduces the measurable cost of training. But, the risk of believing that the total cost of training is dropping could be a misnomer because the cost of using subject matter experts and time away from the job to participate in training is not always captured in the total training investment. Our belief is that the total cost of training employees and customers will continue to rise and the measurable investment in training is holding flat.



## JOB GROWTH REMAINS FLAT

The growth in professional training jobs continues to be tight, especially on the buy side of the market. Companies are doing more training, but not necessarily investing more for dedicated resources inside the training department. Driven by the growth in collaborative learning and coaching, the number of people participating in another individual's learning experience is growing faster than ever. On the supply side of the training industry, the growth in jobs continues to increase, especially for roles such as instructional designers, learning technologists and contract administrators.



## SOURCING ENGAGEMENTS REMAIN TACTICAL

The market for external training services continues to grow, albeit at a rate lower than what many vendors would like. The use of suppliers under short-term contracting and licensing agreements continues to be the predominant approach to sourcing engagements – the most interesting is the growth of large-scale selective outsourcing deals. In the past few months, there have been more large-scale deals than we've seen in five years, most of which have been substantial in scale, but focused only on one or two process areas like administration or content development. True comprehensive training outsourcing still appears nonexistent. While it's too early to say that the growth in training BPO engagements will last for an extended period of time, we do believe we will see the largest BPO deal in the history of the industry announced in 2014.

So, what perceived trends didn't make this year's list? The phenomenon of MOOCs and the concept of "flipping the classroom" are two notable areas receiving a lot of attention. MOOCs have seen phenomenal growth, but without a sustainable business model and funding source it's hard to say that this will become anything more than a fad. While the discussion of open access to content is what we consider a trend in learning, the current model of MOOCs must be modified considerably before they are accepted into mainstream corporate training.

The concept of flipping the classroom is a new term used to define an old widely-used strategy. Flipping the classroom is a popular approach in academia and refers to the idea of moving lectures to an online environment, and allowing for experiential learning and homework to

be done in the structured classroom. This approach is similar to what corporate training has been doing for many years by moving more rote memory content to an online environment, and providing practice in on-the-job environments, or even in simulated training labs. [↻](#)

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