



got content?

How to build strong employee learning programs with off-the-shelf content

**EBOOK BROUGHT
TO YOU BY:**



WHERE DO YOU START?

You have employees that need to be trained. Or, more importantly, you have employees who want to **learn and improve performance**. Where do you start?

- How is learning content defined in your organization?
- Do you have a learning content strategy?
- How do you plan to organize the content your organization needs to deliver to employees?
- How do you plan to deliver the content to employees?

Each of these are critical questions that deserve serious consideration and careful deliberate answers. You need a strategy that accurately reflects the current work place realities of pace, change, complexity, and demographics. A single-minded reliance upon traditional learning techniques will likely not be effective in meeting the needs of today's workplace, and a traditional approach to learning will almost certainly not meet the needs of today's knowledge-based employee.

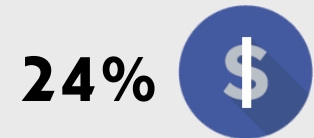
While content is king, context is queen. This is where organizing content is crucial. **Content curation provides a context and structure so employees can quickly find content and apply that content to meet their workplace needs or answer questions at the moment of need.**

CONTENT IS KING, CONTEXT IS QUEEN.

ACCORDING TO ATD,
COMPANIES WITH
COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING
PROGRAMS:



HIGHER INCOME PER EMPLOYEE
THAN THOSE WITH LESS
COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING.



HIGHER PROFIT MARGIN THAN
THOSE WHO SPEND LESS ON
TRAINING.



HIGHER SHAREHOLDER RETURN IF
THE TRAINING EXPENDITURE PER
EMPLOYEE INCREASES BY \$680.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

Which leads directly to the delivery of your learning content. Technology-enabled learning is not a luxury in today's work environment. It's really the price of admission for organizations determined to keep pace with the competitive demands of the market and the learning and performance demands that come with this current marketplace. What's more, a simple learning management system probably won't meet the needs of your newest employees without the ability to serve content on mobile devices.

THE THREE CRITICAL ELEMENTS TO GETTING STARTED WITH DELIVERING ONLINE CONTENT TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE:

EMPLOYEES WILLING TO LEARN AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

LEARNING CONTENT: ASSETS & RESOURCES

TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM TO DELIVER THE CONTENT TO EMPLOYEES

BUSINESS NEEDS

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Our job isn't to help participants learn; it's to help them solve real-world problems. The starting point for design should be what you want people to do when they leave. We can't ignore the desired business outputs; the trick is to find a balance between what learners need and what the business expects.

SOURCE: The Best and Worst of Bite-Size Learning, clomedia.com, by Sebastian Bailey

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CONTENT CHOICES: BUILD, BORROW, BUY

BORROW:

Many organizations look to fill this content gap by “borrowing” content. There are many resources available on the web today where employees might ALREADY be looking for training content. YouTube offers an amazing volume of content on an endless variety of topics. There are blogs, newsletters, and a whole host of other sources where organizations and employees alike can “borrow” content to fill gaps in learning content.

The problems with borrowing content are primarily two fold: **quality and reliability**. When people simply search online for something, you just never really know what they find. Sometimes the content might be excellent. But it's just as likely to be developed by someone with no subject matter expertise and by someone with no ability or training in instructional design.

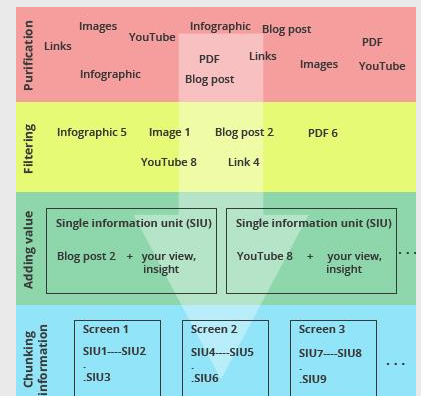
The goal is not (and probably it never was) to learn or memorize all of the information available out there. It's just too much even if we focus only on the very essence of it. The goal is to learn how to learn, to know where to look for something, and to be able to identify which parts of all the information available are most relevant to learn or achieve a certain goal or objective.

SOURCE: [Content Curation for Education and Learning by Robin Good](#)

CONTENT CURATION

What Content Curation, Chunking Information And Micro-learning Have In Common?

Check out this great article from Tadej Stanic. [Click here](#) or the image below. In the article, he presents a framework to help educators make a shift from designing long, information based online courses to micro-learning.



CONTENT CHOICES: BUILD, BORROW, BUY

BUY:

And this leads to the third choice. You can buy content. Off-the-shelf (OTS) content collections can meet the learning and training content needs of just about every organization, if the organization approaches the use of the OTS content wisely and with reasonable expectations.

The advantages of off-the-shelf content are:

Variety

You can generally find content on a wide variety of topics.

Speed

OTS is ready-now. So you don't have to wait to develop, test and deploy. Speed also applies from your employees' perspective. With a large OTS library of content, your employees can find and absorb the content they need without waiting for new content to come to them or to be built.

Quality

If you partner with a quality vendor, the content will be developed in accordance with sound design principles, good production values and best-practice online training principles.

The disadvantages are that you may not find highly specialized content, and sometimes the sheer volume of content can overwhelm some HR and learning professionals as they sort out exactly HOW to use the OTS collection.

NIMBLE APPROACH

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In a world of learning and development where complexity is the enemy, {organizations need a simple and nimble approach to delivering high quality learning, anywhere, anytime.

MICHAEL ROCHELLE
Chief Strategy Officer
Brandon-Hall Group

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THE EVOLUTION OF OFF-THE-SHELF CONTENT

Online training content has changed in the last 20 years. When eLearning first appeared, the content was primarily "slide show" inspired. The user would sit at a desktop computer, and "interact" with the content in some way. The interactions ranged from clicking on screens to answering questions embedded within the courses. Many courses were four to six hours in duration. These first generation courses were generally "linear" in design, meaning that no matter what choices the user made, the course progressed in the same order. Sometimes feedback and scores would be different, but the course content remained static.

Over time, online courses grew more sophisticated. Interactions evolved to the point where some courses offered learners immersive simulations where the content might have actually changed based upon the responses to the content from the user. But seat time remained long, and the underlying technology didn't progress.

Research about human brain science, adult learning theory and the effect of video on learning and information retention coalesced around a new generation of learning content. Today's best-in-breed online content is almost all video-based, and it's getting shorter and shorter. Research proves that humans retain only a few minutes of information in their short-term memory on a single topic before committing that memory to long-term memory. **Research also proves that the single best method for communicating to humans is video.** When you combine all of this together, short-form learning video emerges as the state-of-the-art online training modality, and top of the line OTS collections are short-form video-based.

80%

OF EMPLOYERS SAY THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A SKILLS GAP...

According to Matt Ferguson, CEO of CareerBuilder, and a survey of more than 2,000 employers.

40%

AREN'T DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT...

HOW TO USE OFF-THE-SHELF CONTENT

You've made the smart choice to purchase a best-in-class OTS content solution. How do you get started? What are best practices in applying and using these powerful and flexible employee training tools?

Like any other learning technology, OTS content takes some thought, planning and time to master. Unlike the technology platforms that host and deliver the content, the best practices for using the OTS content itself derive from our experiences as learning professionals and instructional designers. There are two strategic uses for your OTS content:

STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCE OR OBJECT

A LEARNING RESOURCE OR OBJECT WITHIN A BLENDED LEARNING SOLUTIONS

To get started, it's important to note, that these two uses are NOT mutually exclusive. As we dive into the variety of ways you can make great use of your OTS content, this will become clear. The one thing you should bear in mind as we explore the CURRENT best practices for OTS content is that these best practices will evolve and change over time. If we've learned just one thing about learning technology, it's that change and evolution are a certainty. Just a few short years ago, the "push and play" slideware form of eLearning was deemed "state of the art." Today, it's short-form video. Stay tuned. We know for certain more change is coming . . .

TOP PRIORITIES FOR TRAINING

30%

**DEVELOP
NEW
CONTENT**



29%



**IMPROVE OR ENHANCE
EXISTING CONTENT**

SOURCE: Cox eLearning
Consultants,
Learning Solutions Forecast:
2014 Edition

HOW TO: STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCES

There are three excellent use cases for OTS as "stand-alone" learning resources:

TO BUILD FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OR SKILL

TEACH HIGH-LEVEL OR BROAD-BASED SKILLS

COMPLIANCE OR CERTIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Off-the-shelf learning content works well to develop **foundational knowledge or skills** because you are not trying to delve deeply into complex learning or applied learning situations. The objective is to give the employee a working foundation of knowledge or skill from which the employee can begin growth into a job role. An example of foundational knowledge or skill might be for newly promoted managers and supervisors. As we promote employees into supervisory roles, there are core supervisory skills and knowledge. Off-the-shelf content can help that newly promoted manager acquire knowledge and skill in areas like the principles of delegation, time management, performance management, etc. It would be up to the newly promoted employee's manager to ensure these skills or knowledge bases are being applied properly, but the basics can be taught and learned using OTS resources very effectively.

ONLINE LEARNING MAKES SENSE

For companies that do make the investment in developing technology-enabled learning capabilities, the positive effects are felt in many ways:

- More efficient learning delivery
- Learning that is more easily adapted to changing conditions
- Learning that can be delivered regardless of location or schedule
- Learning that scales to reach more employees, with greater consistency
- Learning that has been proven to actually be more effective than classroom training in numerous studies
- Learning that can be delivered with a lower cost per learner than traditional approaches

HOW TO: STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCES

Additional topic areas where foundational knowledge or skills can be taught and acquired using OTS content include: sales, customer service, communications skills (like telephone skills or email), interviewing skills, and business writing basics.

There are a wide variety of similar topics, and each organization will likely have its own unique areas where foundational skills and knowledge can be taught using OTS content.

Off-the-shelf content also works well when the objective is to develop **high-level or broad-based skills**. The learning objectives are generally linked to developing an understanding of a business discipline or area such as accounting, human resources, or P&L statements.

While not always certain, most learning objectives for this sort of content do not involve day-to-day performance improvement application of the content. We are usually trying to educate the targeted employees to build a broader set of experience or knowledge.

Self-paced study in these areas will improve the professional capacity of the targeted employees, for instance, improved HR knowledge will assist managers with employee relations issues. A generalized understanding of business accounting might help client services and sales professionals make better business cases with prospects and clients. But these types of training topics are usually not targeted to specific performance improvement areas.

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

In this age of texting, tweeting, and posting **business communication** increasingly becomes short and informal. The Business Writing series outline below includes **short refresher courses** for your employees.

- Business Writing: Executive Reports and Memos
- Business Writing: Misused Words
- Business Writing: Proposals
- Business Writing: Abbreviations
- Business Writing: Acronyms
- Business Writing: Appropriate Language
- Business Writing: Processes
- Business Writing: Sentences and Paragraphs

To try out these courses and more [click here](#) for a free trial.



HOW TO: STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCES

Compliance and certification training are others areas where off-the-shelf resources are effective learning tools. In both types of training or education circumstances, employees and employers may need records of the training. Online, OTS content with the accompanying technology and reporting meets the compliance and certification business need for record keeping and reporting perfectly.

Additionally, for many employees, the classroom delivery of some compliance training has long outlived its effectiveness and utility. Self-paced, online, OTS content offers many advantages that include:

COST SAVINGS – less time to travel

LESS WORK DISRUPTION – employees can complete content on their time schedule and remain as productive as possible

IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS – online content shows higher rates of retention and better on the job application

VARIETY – with a best-in-class OTS collection, your employees may have multiple options for completion of annual compliance training so they do not have to repeat the same course each year.

ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSES FROM BIZLIBRARY

PHR & SPHR

Courses include:

- Business Management and Strategy
- Compensation and Benefits
- Employee and Labor Relations
- Human Resource Development
- Human Resources Core Knowledge
- Risk Management
- Workforce Planning and Employment

PMP – PMI PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Courses include:

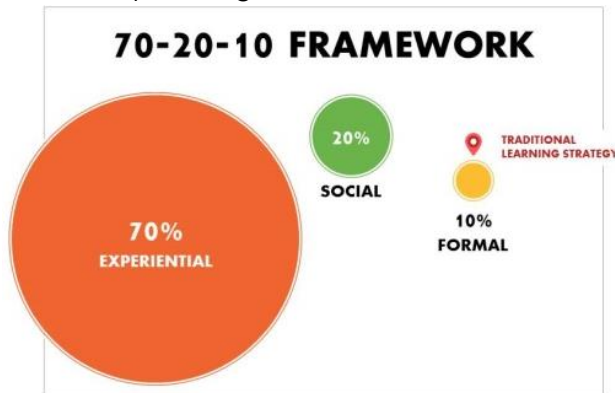
- Project Communication
- Project Costs
- Project Scope
- Values and Ethical Standard
- Project Scheduling
- Identifying Risks
- Stakeholder Engagement

SIX SIGMA ITIL®

AND MORE!

HOW TO: STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCES

The final use case for OTS content is **performance support**. If we believe the “70-20-10” rule of employee learning, employees only learn about 10% of what they need to effectively perform their jobs in formal training contexts. That means that as a learning and development professional, when sticking to the traditional approaches to employee development, I am accepting that I am irrelevant to my colleagues’ learning 90% of the time. Well – that’s not very exciting to think about, is it?



70-20-10 framework says formal training provides only ten percent of the skills development employees need to successfully perform their jobs.

Traditional learning strategies and approaches rarely – if ever – really examined how we could improve employee performance right at the moment of need. That’s where a combination of great OTS content and a technology platform can flip that traditional approach to employee development on its head. Employees learn all the time away from work. They access information instantly, on demand, on any device, at their exact moment of “need.” In today’s continuously connected world, organizations have to meet their employees on the employees’ terms, and that means delivering content on the employees’ devices of choice when employees need content.

ONLINE PERFORMANCE SUPPORT FROM BIZLIBRARY

[The BizLibrary Collection](#) includes more than 3,000 desktop and IT videos that are short, relevant, reliable, and on-demand.

No matter what industry you’re in, things are changing fast. New technologies and products are coming to market faster than ever before. Job roles are in demand that didn’t even exist 3 or 4 years ago.

Having short performance support resources is critical to building an agile organization and adaptable employees.



HOW TO: STAND ALONE LEARNING RESOURCES

Performance support works perfectly to fit the Gen Y profile of learning and information access. Assume an employee is working on a project using Excel. The project requires a pivot chart. How would a Gen Y employee figure out how to insert a pivot chart into an Excel file?

If you answered, "They'd Google it," you're probably right. They'd also most likely go to the video result Google returned, and the video they'd watch would probably be no longer than 2-3 minutes. Why can't you provide that SAME type of performance resource with vetted, professional authoritative content? You can with an OTS content solution that is mobile optimized, and those solutions exist.



LEARNING AGILITY

"As the need for agility moves down the managerial chain and into the functional units, it can manifest itself in different ways. At the level of an individual contributor, agility is demonstrated by the ability to **quickly solve day-to-day business problems, to identify new processes and frameworks for speed of delivery, to cross global and functional lines without faltering, and to accept, respond, and initiate change.**

Employees who can identify opportunities, adapt, and thrive in the reality of change have a propensity to be high performers. Given the **right resources and investment in learning**, these traits are achievable across the entire organization."

SOURCE: The Impact of Work Force Agility on Business Performance
By John Ambrose

HOW TO: CREATE A BLENDED LEARNING SOLUTION

There are three basic ways to blend OTS content into a blended learning solution.

FLIP THE CLASSROOM

EMBED THE RESOURCE INTO AN INSTRUCTOR-LED SESSION

USE AS FOLLOW-UP OR REFRESHER CONTENT

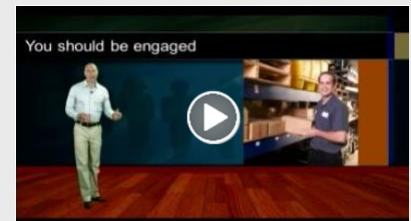
Just like use cases we outlined for off-the-shelf content as stand-alone resources, the use cases that are emerging for a blending solution continue to evolve and change. For instance, the “flipped classroom” is a relatively new concept, but it’s a powerful idea that can really amplify the impact of both elements of content – online and classroom.

In a **flipped classroom**, the online content is assigned before the classroom session. Each participant is expected to complete the online portion of the content before participating in the instructor-lead (ILT) session. The classroom time can move beyond a lecture to explain basic concepts and go straight to applying the basic concepts to complex situations. The classroom then becomes a far more engaged learning experience for employees, because they aren’t being told things. They are being asked things.

FLIP THE CLASSROOM

For example, if the ILT session is going to cover performance management and focus on motivating and engaging employees, the online portion of the class assigned ahead of time might include courses on the following:

- ▶ Motivation – Dream It. Walk It. Believe It.
- ▶ Effective Performance Reviews
- ▶ Employee Engagement: Managing for Engagement



HOW TO: CREATE A BLENDED LEARNING SOLUTION

The next use case is really a traditional use for online video and that is to **embed the content right within the ILT session itself**. Great classroom instructors know how to mix up sessions to engage participants. They find a variety of exercises to bring the participants into the content and engage their minds. Using video as discussion pieces and as natural breaks in classroom sessions is an excellent use of OTS content.

Video embedded into classroom sessions can spark conversations, provide a break in delivery and provoke reactions. Depending upon the content, you can also use video to open meetings to get conversations going and make for a more lively session.

After an instructor-led classroom session, OTS content is perfect for keeping your content “top-of-mind” for participants. One of the most challenging aspects of any training program is ensuring that the lessons taught are both learned and then applied to improve performance. Sending along short-form videos to reinforce learning after classroom sessions is a great way to keep the ideas and concepts fresh for employees.

This is another use case where current technology platforms make a huge difference. Sending links to courses and other resources can make accessing follow-up content quick and easy. Employees don't have to search or look for a course if they can simply click on a link in an email.

MEETING OPENERS

Meeting openers – short videos that inspire action – can be a great way to kick-off an event or meeting. Some BizLibrary favorites include:

A SECOND CHANCE

In this 5 minute video you'll learn why everyone deserves a second chance. A real, life-changing event that's so much more than back to business as usual. Based on the second chance choice Robert Frost made before his first poem, The Road Not Taken, was finally published, this video provides trainers and presenters with a tool to inspire people to take risks and move forward.



GUIDE: SELECTING AN OFF-THE-SHELF CONTENT PARTNER

With over 600 learning platform providers on the market, you might be tempted to think the options for off-the-shelf content are just as daunting.

Well – rest assured the choices are not nearly as challenging. For one thing, the questions you have to ask your self are not as complex as you narrow down your choices. This simple, easy-to-use guide should offer excellent guidance as you look for the best off-the-shelf content solution for your organization.

TOPIC AREAS

What are the most important topic areas for my organization?

COMMON TOPICS:

management skills, supervisory skills, leadership, desktop computing, IT skills, HR, compliance, sales, customer service, soft skills, emotional intelligence

Do we need specialized or industry-specific content?

QUANTITY

How many courses will we need?

Does it accommodate a variety of learning styles and preferences?

Are there filters, ratings and recommendations to help learners find what they need?

QUALITY

Who builds the content and how is it vetted?

How often is new content added or updated?

What technology is used? HD video, HTML5, mobile compatible?

How is access and learning tracked? Can I get data and reports on usage?

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Off-the-shelf content is a great addition to any employee training program. Very few organizations have the time, resources and in-house expertise to build content on the sheer volume of topics that employees need to access for success in today's business environment. Today's best-in-class OTS collections provide the breadth and depth of content most organizations need to maintain up-to-date learning resources on just about everything from IT to best practices on emerging skills like agile learning.

The key to successfully using OTS content, however, is not to simply buy a collection and then turn employees loose to find courses on their own. Allowing employees to search for courses is a great thing, but you'll need to balance that freedom with well-organized course collections, easy to use topic directories, and the ability to assign courses to employees as needed.

When you find an OTS collection, such as [The BizLibrary Collection](#), with 7,200+ resources, it can be overwhelming, until you realize just how that collection can be used.

With the complexity of today's business environment, an OTS content resource is no longer a luxury or a "like to have" for employee learning. It's really a necessity for organizations looking to sit at the leading edge of employee learning and development.

OFF-THE-SHELF LEARNING CONTENT

STAND ALONE LEARNING OBJECT



BLENDED WITH ILT



BIZ LIBRARY

BizLibrary is a leading provider of online employee training and eLearning solutions. The award-winning content collection contains more than 7,000 online employee training videos covering every business training topic, including [communication skills](#), leadership and management, sales and [customer service](#), compliance training, [desktop computer skills](#), and more.

BizLibrary's [LMS \(Learning Management System\)](#) and social learning technology platform help HR and Learning Leaders improve and manage employee learning.

[START MY FREE TRIAL!](#)

THE BIZLIBRARY COLLECTION INCLUDES:

7,000+ Video and eLearning Courses

Employees find everything they need in our growing library. 50+ new courses added monthly.

25 Topic Areas

A wide range of business and professional topics are available, including communication, leadership, management, compliance, customer service, computer skills, and so much more.

Unlimited Access

Employees learn what they want, when they want, from our entire course library. No limits!