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LEARNING TECHNOLOGY MARKET SEGMENTS

The learning technology market has been, and continues to be, one of the most fascinating segments of the training industry, now approaching a $5 billion market worldwide. Training professionals have become increasingly dependent on technologies for the purpose of managing training operations (LMS/LCMS) and developing and delivering e-learning.

But not surprisingly, the learning technology market is complex. Training professionals wanting to take full advantage of technology-driven delivery must understand the categories of solutions available. The market has evolved into five separate markets, with each operating somewhat independently of the others. That means there are specialists in each segment and few companies that truly operate across these five markets:

- **Administration Systems** — Traditionally called learning management systems (LMS/LCMS), this market has been around the longest, and is considered the standard platform that all companies must have to effectively run a training organization. By many accounts, this market has unfortunately become commoditized with the fact that you can now download an open-source LMS and configure it yourself.

- **Authoring Platforms** — This market may be considered the most dynamically evolving market since the advent of e-learning. Early days authoring tools was as simple as PowerPoint and audio recordings; now it has morphed into sophisticated tools for Web development, as well as rapid authoring tools for the subject matter expert to convert simple presentations to rich media programs.

- **Delivery Platforms** — Online training can be both synchronous and asynchronous, and requires a delivery platform to manage the experience of the learner. The selection of a delivery platform can be as simple as choosing from an online meeting tool managed by the IT department, to a sophisticated platform for remote and virtual access to content.

- **Social and Collaboration Platforms** — The newest of the market and considered by many as the hottest, as social environments are becoming commonplace in how informal learning occurs within the enterprise. This has been the segment with the most interest from investors, as companies have been consolidated by LMS, Talent Management, and ERP companies.

- **Technology Integration** — The most important but sometimes the least considered segment of the learning technology market are those companies who provide integration services and operate relatively agnostic to the specific technology platforms. The service model is to assist companies in selecting, configuring, integrating and deploying all the technology tools. The result of integration is what is now termed learning portals, where all four of the platforms mentioned are components of the overall solution.

From where I sit, the greatest challenge training professionals have is not what learning technology to deploy, but how to integrate and consolidate all of the various technology solutions they have. This is where value truly is added to the organization.

Doug Harward is CEO of Training Industry, Inc., and a former learning leader in the high-tech industry. Email Doug.
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SMEs need training too. Learning and development teams have an opportunity to effectively train SMEs to develop and deliver presentations.

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By Billy Biggs
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By Tom Kelly
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By Michelle Eggleston
Sharing knowledge is the essence of training. By employing a learning portal, the Colorado Secretary of State’s office is training on a broader scale.

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Hewlett-Packard is not only the world’s largest provider of information technology for consumers and organizations of all sizes, HP is also a company that relies on technology to deliver learning solutions to a vast and diverse employee audience. Meeting their needs means using the right technology, not just technology for technology’s sake.

HP is committed to delivering value to customers, investors and communities, and to creating a competitive advantage through our people. Our vision for learning and development is to establish HP as the employer of choice for professional development. We need to build confidence in sales people, encourage innovation in project designers, and inspire employees to deliver results and make a difference on the job and in their communities. We use technology to achieve these goals and drive business results.

HP employs a unified communication (UC) strategy to enable collaboration among employees around the world via online chat and click-to-talk technology. Used for web-based meetings and classes, our HP Virtual Rooms environment supports live desktop sharing, live video, private and group chat, discussion boards, and question capture.

HP Connections, our internal social collaboration platform, was established in part to help sales professionals locate the content and subject matter expertise necessary to move an engagement to the next stage. Based on the Jive social business software, HP Connections enables account teams to “meet” in private groups and collaborate with experts to support their accounts. We developed the award-winning Learn2Connect learning program to expedite adoption of HP Connections across the sales organization and supporting teams, and the tool is now used by more than 60,000 employees to share expertise, post regular blogs, and establish expert resource spaces.

Immersive virtual worlds allow HP to reach employees remotely without the travel expense of live events. Used for our onboarding program, HP Virtual Campus provides a “wow” first impression that shows new hires they’ve joined a company committed to cutting-edge, next-gen learning technology. Our recent virtual HR Career Development Fair provided opportunities to interact with executives and share knowledge.

Of course, using technology to deliver learning has to make sense globally. We currently employ several mobile delivery techniques to accommodate the need for learning “at the point of work.” We applied the same QR technology that we use on product packaging to help customer’s research product features to our learning solutions, providing faster access to learning and information they need.

Another new learning technology I’m very excited about is Augmented Reality (AR). AR presents information from the digital world in tight association with things in the real, or physical, world through learners’ mobile devices. This simplifies technical training and repair for customers and our technical teams.

For HP, new technology is the foundation of our business success and our workforce development efforts. I believe when using technology it’s critical to strike a balance between serving the needs of the business and those of the learner. The business always needs to control costs and optimize employee performance. Learners need access to career development opportunities and the skills and knowledge required for success. By employing the right learning technologies we can reduce training costs, improve performance, and give employees the tools they need to excel and advance their careers. HP’s success, like yours, requires us to view learning as a conversation supported by multiple technologies for collaboration, communication, interaction and innovation.

This Issue’s Guest Editor

As vice president and chief learning officer of learning & development, Chuck Battipede drives the strategic direction of learning initiatives for HP’s global workforce. His primary goals are to establish HP as the employer of choice for professional development and to maximize HP’s business performance by developing a best-in-class workforce. Chuck joined HP in 2008 to lead the L&D organization. Email Chuck.

Know someone who’d make an outstanding guest editor? Interested in becoming one yourself? Contact us at editor@trainingindustry.com.
The Future of Mobile Learning

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I’ve been thinking a lot about strategies to help organizations stay ahead of the pack, outperform their competitors and raise productivity. I know I’m not alone.

Recently, the focus has been on the gains possible through working in a consistent way across the entire extended enterprise; where organizations acknowledge the benefits of interlinking with their suppliers, their distributors and their customers — and even their competitors - to generate higher value.

Although forging tighter links will definitely bring benefits, something more is needed; organizations have to become not just more closely coupled but also pulling in the same direction. Most of all, they need to understand how to exploit and build on each other’s’ strengths, to be “operating on the same wavelength.” In other words, they need to be coherent.

Coherent enterprises can only emerge when, individually and collectively, they are adapting to the future at the speed of business. The foundation for this process is everyone learning together and in a coordinated way.

Developing Coherent Learning

You know that everyone inside your organization needs to stay current in their specialist area to best contribute. It’s the same whether you’re working in commercial, government, not-for-profit, or other environments. Training and development leaders recognize this and the majority have sophisticated processes in place to provide structured learning and development opportunities to help workers keep up and keep learning. Some are also looking to exploit the many opportunities offered by informal and social learning to extend development. However, few are thinking in terms of “coherence” and that even greater value will be released if thinking and planning extends to supporting coherent continuous learning across the value chain.

As my Internet Time Alliance colleague Jay Cross puts it: “Conversations are the stem cells of continuous learning, and social networks are the carriers of conversations. These networks operate behind the firewall and outside it. They can be personal or professional on either side of the firewall. The firewall itself is becoming porous; customers and partners are increasingly privy to what was previously considered insider-only information.”

So, how do we embrace the challenge of the coherent enterprise? We need to extend the idea of work beyond collaboration, beyond teams, and beyond the corporate firewall to make social networks, communities of practice, and narrative part of the daily workflow. We also need to move the business conversation away from military terms like target markets, strategic plans and campaigns, and instead talk in terms of complexity and cooperation.

The flow across a coherent enterprise moves from internal, structured, goal-oriented activity to informal, opportunity-driven activity that crosses divisional and organizational boundaries along the value chain.

In a coherent enterprise, there are development opportunities through work in typical in-company team activities, further opportunities across communities of practice, and even more opportunities within wider social networks. Communities and networks include participants across the entire value chain, and often outside it.

At the outermost level, social networks are necessary for tracking what’s happening and who knows what, looking for developments in related fields to help improve internal and value chain productivity. At the intersections, sharing is critical — both outward and inward sharing.

The major question for training and development leaders looking to enhance and exploit the emerging coherent enterprise is how to restructure their processes and practices to support collaboration and cooperation. Little value is created without these, and structured training alone is no longer adequate.

Charles Jennings is the director of Duntroon Associates and a member of the Internet Time Alliance. Email Charles.
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Most trainers use a learning management system to launch and track online learning courses and materials. They also know that most employee learning takes place around informal situations, but don’t have a good way to track and report on this type of learning. With the introduction of an emerging standard called Tin Can, there is now a way to track informal learning.

Tin Can is an extension of the SCORM standard for tracking e-learning courses, maintained and updated in the past 10 years by the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) initiative of the U.S. Department of Defense. The problem with SCORM that Tin Can addresses is that LMS communications is mostly one directional between learners and their LMS. The name Tin Can reflects the desire of its developers to have communications in learning tracking systems be two-directional or even multi-directional. Up to the mLearnCon conference in June, a total of 11 vendors had committed to adoption of the Tin Can approach for their software. Many more are likely to follow.

It is important to note that both SCORM and Tin Can applications track “learning activities,” not learning itself. Learning takes place in a person’s brain (or within the networked storage facilities of “extended minds”), and does not automatically result from simply participating in an activity, whatever the intention of the activity’s designer. That is true for all learning management systems and e-learning courses - we can only assume or infer that learning has taken place based on a person’s participation in specified learning activities or the results of specialized activities called assessments. But, learning occurs in many different ways, most of which are not prescribed in a formal way by an institution or training department, and/or launched and tracked by a learning management system.

Informal learning events can range from learning from accidents that happen to long discussions over a glass of wine. Any non-institutional experience that results in a relatively permanent change in the behavior or understanding of a person about any aspect of human existence can be an informal learning event.

Tracking Informal Learning

Most informal learning is simply not tracked and reported. It just becomes part of our repertoire of knowledge and skills. But, in our society, organizations are generally run by managers who like to see reports, preferably with numbers that describe the results of the activities of the organization. This data, in theory, can then be used to make decisions about the direction and activity level of the organization. Because of the desire for managerial control, many organizations want to track evidence of informal learning in addition to the data that is being collected about formal learning activities. There is currently three ways to collect and track such data: the reporting of learning activities by learners themselves, monitoring by third-party observers, or by using software agents connected to sensors.

At first glance, it appears that Tin Can does not take into account many of the unique affordances of mobile learning, such as the importance of location, orientation, time and haptic feedback. But, Tin Can allows for levels of complexity in its statements that may cover this concern. Its developers acknowledge that many aspects of learning experiences can happen outside a Tin Can-based system. What Tin Can provides are standardized and comprehensive ways to make statements about learning outcomes so that they can be aggregated, categorized and shared.

Of course, most LMSs do a lot more than this, launching courses, giving assessments, and plotting career paths for each employee. But, from the perspective of what training managers want - good reliable data to use in their reports to senior management - Tin Can will provide additional data to report on learning, without the massive architecture and cost of most LMSs. Tin Can is not meant to replace SCORM, but to expand the picture of what is going on with employee learning.

There are other issues in the development of Tin Can to date, but to the credit of the developers, they are listed on the website as weaknesses to be resolved through more discussion. What a refreshing change from the hype of many vendors, who gloss over problems and pretend that their software can do anything.

Dr. Gary Woodill is CEO of i5 Research and senior analyst, Float Mobile Learning. Email Gary.
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People either trust you or they don’t

Can Your People Trust You?

It may sound cliché, but people don’t care what you know until they know that you care. Employees increasingly value leaders who connect with the workforce on an emotional level. A 2010 Watson Wyatt report found that the most desired attributes employees wanted in senior leaders were trustworthiness (79 percent) and concern for the well-being of others (67 percent).

But the reality is that today’s workforce remains largely disaffected and lacks trust in senior leaders. A 2011 employee satisfaction report from Maritz Research found that “Poor communication, lack of perceived caring, inconsistent behavior, and perceptions of favoritism” were cited by respondents as the largest contributors to employees’ lack of trust in senior leaders. As a result, the report identified that “only 10 percent of employees trust management to make the right decision in times of uncertainty” and only 12 percent believe their employer “genuinely listens to and cares about its employees.”

Four Leadership Behaviors that Build — or Destroy — Trust

Randy Conley, who heads up our trust practice, constantly reminds leaders that trust is not something that happens by itself. It is built by consistently demonstrating four specific behaviors using an easy-to-remember ABCD acronym.

• Able — Does the leader demonstrate competence, expertise, experience, and capability in getting the desired results accomplished?

• Believable — Does the leader walk the talk of a core set of values, demonstrate honesty, and use fair, equitable practices?

• Connected — Does the leader interact with staff on a regular basis, communicate and share relevant information, provide praise, and give recognition?

• Dependable — Is the leader accountable? Does the leader take responsibility for actions and consistently follow up?

How would you score yourself in each of these four areas? Are there some areas that could use improvement? Remember — people cannot see your intentions. They can only see your behavior.

No Such Thing as ‘I Sort of Trust You’

All four behaviors need to be in place to gain people’s trust. A leader cannot be strong in two or three areas and expect that people will give them a 50 percent or 75 percent trust level. Trust is an all-or-nothing concept — people either trust you or they don’t.

Conley suggests a five-step model to regain credibility if trust has been broken:

1. Acknowledge that there has been a breach of trust. Show the person that you recognize the situation exists.

2. Admit your part in the breach of trust. Own up to whatever you did that caused a loss of trust with that individual.

3. Apologize for it and make amends for whatever you did to break the trust.

4. Assess. Use the ABCD Model to evaluate what you did and which core elements of trust were broken.

5. Agree with the person on an action plan for what you’re going to do differently moving forward to help rebuild trust.

Leaders must not use the “ostrich” approach of sticking their heads in the sand, hoping the problem will go away or improve on its own. That rarely happens. Most often, the situation gets stuffed below the surface where the lack of trust works as a persistent drag on performance. When people are distrustful they are less willing to extend themselves, make themselves vulnerable, or do much beyond simply what is expected of them.

The Benefits of a Trusting Environment

For leaders who address trust issues successfully, the benefits are many.

At the individual level, leaders can expect to see higher levels of productivity, efficiency, creativity and morale. When there are high levels of trust, people are willing to invest their energy in achieving the goals of the organization rather than spending their time questioning decisions and gossiping about what’s going on in the rumor mill.

When there are high levels of trust at the organizational level, companies experience increased levels of profitability, productivity, and retention of talent, as well as higher levels of customer loyalty.

Scott Blanchard is the co-founder of Blanchard Certified. Ken Blanchard is the best-selling co-author of The One Minute Manager and 50 other books on leadership. You can follow Ken Blanchard on Twitter @KenBlanchard or @LeaderChat and also via the HowWe-Lead and LeaderChat blogs. Email Scott and Ken.
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Leaders of Tomorrow Need Right-Brain Skills

5 Critical Skills to Survive Tomorrow

Where “global knowledge” was once essential for leaders, IBM’s 2010 Global CEO Study cited “creativity” as the most important leadership quality for the future. This is one of many signals that the business world is evolving out of the Information Age, where left-brain technical skills, knowledge and expertise were king. Escalating business complexity and competition requires today’s companies to demonstrate more than knowledge or technical expertise: they must cultivate new skill sets that embrace and thrive on change.

The leaders of tomorrow need right-brain skills involving simultaneous metaphorical, aesthetic, contextual and synthetic processing. This is partly because the amount of new information about any given subject is constantly increasing. After decades of working with innovation leaders, we’ve identified the most critical skills needed to compete in tomorrow’s market:

- **Strategic Imagination** — Strategic imagination refers to “dreaming with purpose.” Today’s employee is so mired in busy-work that their ability to think long-term has waned. But employees of tomorrow must learn to actively imagine future possibilities and create scenarios to act on them. Spur teams toward this mindset by providing resources that fuel future thinking, such as Long-Bets.com, Springwise.com, and NewScientist.com. Follow up by inviting teams to envision their business unit in the year 2020.

- **Provocative Inquiry** — The ability to ask smart and often unsettling questions is known as provocative inquiry. Transformative power lies in asking questions that make us rethink the obvious. You can spark inquiry by sending team members a handful of questions like “What are the unshakable beliefs about client/customer needs in our industry … what if the opposite were true?” By encouraging curiosity, you fan the fires that create new ideas and improve current offerings.

- **Creative Problem-Solving Skills** — In tomorrow’s competitive market, employees will need to continually exercise their creative problem skills by applying the best practices from unexpected sources to create fresh solutions. Hone this reflex in employees at your next status meeting by utilizing an exercise called Re:think. Offer people an everyday object (paper clip, scissors, etc.) and ask them to pretend they’ve never encountered it before. What does this new product do? What are its benefits and how would they position it? Activities like Re:think can strengthen your team’s ability to approach problems in unconventional ways.

- **Agility** — Keeping pace with change is a challenge, yet meeting unexpected situations with quick thinking and resourcefulness is the very definition of agility. In a world where change is the only constant, a Plan B — and C, D, and E — is truly critical. Cultivate the mindset of preparedness by leading teams through a “Wild Card” scenario. Using a current project, ask the group to present a brief project plan. Then break into smaller teams and challenge each to succeed despite Wild Cards such as “50 percent less budget” or “Half the R&D time.” Planning for success under constraint helps employees gain agility and prepare for change before it is forced upon them.

- **Resilience** — Employees will also need to demonstrate resilience, which translates to tenacity and courage in the face of obstacles. Teach your teams to overcome barriers by practicing the art of “Impossible to Possible.” Ask groups to write answers to these questions: What would a customer say we should do for our product if the market position it? Activities like Re:think can strengthen your team’s ability to approach problems in unconventional ways.

The business world is at a critical inflection point and to compete in tomorrow’s market, today’s companies must demonstrate more than knowledge or technical expertise: they must cultivate new skill sets, many involving right-brain functions. To avoid extinction, we must fuel the kind of daily future thinking that will enable our teams to conceptualize — and handle — the blessings and burdens of a new era.

Lisa Bodell is the founder and CEO of Futurethink, and author of Kill the Company: End the Status Quo, Start an Innovation Revolution. Email Lisa.
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Expert Education: Training, Technology & SMEs

BY SHAWN ANDREWS

Your company has slashed your training budget, but expects high quality content and instructor-led technical training to be at the ready. What do you do? If you’re like the majority of trainers, you turn to your resident subject matter experts (SMEs) for help. SMEs are generally the technical leaders within a given industry. These individuals may have advanced degrees, such as Ph.D. or M.D., they reside in a wide range of departments, and they rarely, if ever, report to the training department.

In some cases, subject matter experts will not reside within a company and must be obtained externally. Examples of this are independent contractors or experts, such as a researcher or college professor. A vendor partner that specializes in a particular area, such as communication skills or urology, can also serve as an SME.

Another factor to be mindful of is whether SMEs want to be trainers. In most cases, hopefully, they will be open to the challenge. In other cases, it may be a necessity to utilize one or more SMEs to support your training, which will require more cooperation on both your parts.

Technology plays an important role in training your SMEs. Undoubtedly, you will need to train them on some form of technology so they can develop and deliver content in an interactive fashion. Various forms include learning technologies, communication technologies and social media technologies. It may be necessary to train them on learning technology, such as e-learning software or authoring tools, so they can...
Remember, They Are on Loan. SME Is Not a Job Description.

How to Identify SMEs

Identifying this important group of individuals can be like herding cats. If they are external SMEs, searching the Internet and using social media technology can be very effective to identify, locate and confirm these experts. If they reside within your company, they are usually in another department, and have a day job (other than the important task of working with the training department). Sometimes they are given to us and “come as they are”; nonetheless, you still need to prepare them regardless of what skills they may bring to the table. One recommendation is to create a standard selection process for all SMEs — a checklist is helpful in this regard. Sidebar 1 shows you some things to look for.

The more people you can elicit input from in order to make an informed decision, the better. Another option is to create a self-assessment to help the SME decide if becoming a trainer is what they want, and give them a sense of what is required. Remember, they are on loan. SME is not a job description. Whatever training projects they work on with you will be on top of their daily work responsibilities. Also, be mindful that their time is generally not billed back to the training department, and they may not get credit for serving as an SME on their annual performance review.

How to Mentor SMEs

So, now you’ve identified your team and have an established plan for assessing their performance. Here’s where your expertise comes in. Some SMEs will take to training delivery like a monkey on a cupcake, but most will need polishing, and practically none will have knowledge of adult learning or instructional design concepts. The good news is there are several areas where you can coach your SME. If you are working with a vendor, coach them on how to be an “advisor” to training vendors and their technical teams, such as medical writers. For example, provide clear instructions on what the SME is looking for, provide content that is concise and focused as to not overwhelm the learner (this is difficult for many detail-oriented SMEs), reinforce with them the “need to have” versus the “nice to have” in content development, and coach them on the importance of responding in a timely fashion when feedback is needed.

Be sure to share with them the goals, expectations and objectives of all training events. If they have a prominent role in supporting your sales force, coach them on their presentation and facilitation skills in the classroom (this is important since they are presenting for you and representing training). Also, coach them on how to give and receive feedback, and how to handle and respond to questions from the audience appropriately.

How to Train SMEs

Since your SMEs likely will have no background or experience in training, it is important to educate them on the need for adult learning and instructional design principles in any training resource they are developing or delivering. In addition, teach them about learning styles (visual, auditory and kinesthetic), what they mean, why
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF YOUR TRAINING EXPERTISE

they’re important, and how to develop content that speaks to each one.

Inevitably, we all rely on SMEs for help with content development. It will go a long way if you can provide them with instructional design templates (if you use them) or simple guidelines they can follow in creating content.

Once the content is developed, training your SMEs on how to use and deliver the content via technology will be imperative. Many companies are now turning to iPads as a sales, communication and training tool. You may need to train them on the best ways to utilize authoring tools, such as Articulate or Captivate, to create content. Some companies are also looking at iPads as a means for coaching and assessing competencies of employees, and your SME may play a role. Another form of technology that an SME may have an active role in is using audience response systems to create training discussions. It may be necessary for you to train them on both physical and virtual audience response pads for use on iPads, smartphones or webinars, and also train them on how to write questions using an audience response system.

Lastly, if you have the time and budget, one of the most important things you can do for your SMEs is to create training events. These can be once-time courses or series of courses that you lead, that provide them an opportunity to practice their skills in a safe, supportive training environment, such as a simulated training class. These events can be done in a virtual classroom where they practice interacting in breakout rooms, but a live classroom is preferable. This is an excellent time to teach or reinforce presentation and facilitation skills, and for them to practice using the various forms of technology. If you can, arrange for videotaping so they can see themselves in action, receive coaching and feedback from you and their peers, and correct distracting habits, as needed. Since some of your SMEs may be scientists, using the “see one, do one, teach one” model that is common in medical schools is often effective. To further support your new SMEs, co-teach the first few presentations with them, observe them, or at the very least, review their course evaluations and provide feedback.

In summary, there are many skills you will need to effectively work with SMEs. Never underestimate the value of your training expertise. Even though your SMEs have subject matter expertise, there are many areas where you can help develop their skills and competencies — and they can only get this from you. Your leadership and coaching skills are essential. You will need to demonstrate strong collaboration and communication skills. Your project management skills are vital in balancing the needs of your business, management, trainees, SMEs, vendor and timelines. You will need to possess the skill of influencing without authority. Remember, most SMEs will not report to you, yet you have commitments you need to keep as a trainer. Lastly, and most important, you will need lots and lots of patience.

If successful in employing the above skillsets, your coaching and collaboration will help SMEs so they can learn to efficiently provide their expertise for training content, and effectively assist you with facilitation of instructor-led training to help you meet your overall training goals.

Shawn Andrews has 20 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry and leads the global medical affairs training department at Allergan. Email Shawn.

Takeaways

Trainers in virtually every industry rely on subject matter experts for content development, clinical or technical presentations and they play a critical role in the achievement of our training objectives. However, many subject matter experts lack the training skills necessary to effectively develop and deliver training to your audience. As a trainer, you have a tremendous opportunity to turn your SMEs into best-in-class trainers.

• SMEs are generally technical leaders within a given industry, and most SMEs are accessible within companies to assist with training efforts.
• SMEs lend their expertise on the subject matter, and you lend expertise on training, adult learning and instructional design principles.
• Develop a standard selection and assessment process for all SMEs, since SMEs rarely report into the training function, to maximize efficiency and improve communications across departments.
• Technology plays an important role in training your SMEs to develop and deliver content. This includes communication technology, learning technology and social media networks.
• In order to develop SME skills and competencies, trainers need to demonstrate exceptional skills in areas of leadership, coaching, collaboration, communication, project management and influencing without authority.
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Okay, you get it! No longer are the terms SaaS and cloud new to enterprise software consumers or providers. Cloud computing is here to stay, and the push into true software-as-a-service (SaaS) Talent Management Systems (TMSs) is clearly on the rise. In recent months, major acquisitions (SuccessFactors acquiring Plateau Systems and Oracle acquiring Taleo) have set the stage for many organizations to start giving their TMS cloud transition projects serious thought. The reasons to shift to this new technological paradigm have been well documented by a number of analysts, industry experts, and providers. Yet, with these organizational benefits, consumers underestimate the associated challenges that come with a cloud transition.

Security is obviously still the biggest hurdle in a cloud transition — but it’s not the only consideration.

Project Management
- Implementation Timelines — The biggest change in a TMS cloud implementation is the implementation timeline. Average implementation timelines have been measured in two to six months. Traditional implementations where behind the firewall hosting approaches are required can often double that.
• Preconfigured Environments — In most SaaS environments, organizations can now select from a set of preconfigured options, completing eliminating configuration workshops at the beginning of the project. This cuts out considerable time from the project schedule.

• Flexible Technology/Tools — Out of the box “connectors” have replaced many of the custom interfaces/integrations that were once necessary for data migration. These connectors can be leveraged by systems administrators of the application, so vendors don’t necessarily need to be involved in every phase of the migration period. Also, virtualization has allowed cloud providers to create new virtual machines as necessary. Whether it’s a new implementation or the anticipation of a mandatory training period, procuring additional physical hardware and components is no longer necessary.

• Changing Roles — It’s very common to have one person fill multiple roles in a cloud transition project. For example, some vendors provide a project manager who also acts as a solutions consultant who is considered an expert on the product.

Change Management/Control

• Releases or Forced Upgrades — One of the main differences around the SaaS business model is the ability to receive the most current package of software at no cost to the consumer. This is usually provided automatically on a quarterly basis and may include additional functionality, bug fixes, or both. However, some organizations are simply not agile enough to handle an enterprise software update every 90 days. This can become more of a “forced upgrade” where the organization is constantly behind the curve as it relates to change management, testing, or training strategies.

• Transparency — Transparency during the cloud transition/implementation process is key. Keep the entire organization updated on status and issues, as well as plans to address the issues. This will help stifle the rumor mill and keep attitudes positive. One approach that has been found to be successful is phased implementation. Acceptance of cloud is much higher when you introduce the technology in phases. An initial pilot to test the integration and implementation architecture is recommended. Remember that your job will ultimately be to SELL this new business model to your users.

• Control — Remember that you will have less control in the new SaaS environment. However, that also means you have less to be responsible for from an implementation/support perspective. The SaaS vendor will ultimately assume some of the control you once had in a traditional deployment.

• Team Roles/Responsibilities — There is a good chance that some of the members on your TMS team will no longer have the same roles or responsibilities they once had when you hosted your application in a non-SaaS deployment model. It will be necessary to either combine roles or have those folks focus on something entirely new within the organization.

Governance

• Change in Business Processes — A variety of business processes will need to be addressed as you move to a cloud deployment model. Potential changes can occur in data processing; data development; information retrieval; and processes detailing the way information is stored, archived, and backed up.

• Data-Security Standards — Moving critical business data “outside the walls” introduces a risk of data loss or inadvertent exposure of sensitive information. Assess your data-security needs, and ensure that the provider has measures in place to meet the standards you set.

• SLA Guarantees — The management contract between you and the SaaS provider takes the form of service-level agreements (SLAs) that guarantee the level of performance, availability, and security that the SaaS vendor will provide and govern the actions the provider will take — or the compensation it will provide — in the event that it fails to meet these guarantees. Ensure that these SLAs are in place, that the guarantees they make are sufficient to meet your needs, and that they provide a sufficient level of mitigation in even the worst-case scenario.

• Migration Strategies — At some point, you might want to migrate away from a SaaS application to another solution, so it’s important that you are able to take your existing data out of the application and move it to another one. Ask your prospective SaaS provider about any data-migration strategies and procedures it uses, including

KEEP THE ENTIRE ORGANIZATION UPDATED ON STATUS AND ISSUES, AS WELL AS PLANS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES
## Tips for Success

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Define your cloud strategy</strong></td>
<td>Key on those service management areas that are critical to your business, and ensure you have requirements built into your RFP/SOW for cloud vendors to address. If your cloud vendor cannot meet these requirements, it may be necessary to procure these services from a different vendor that specializes in Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) or other frameworks.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation plan</strong></td>
<td>Your implementation plan should address technology, business processing re-engineering, and some of the key areas mentioned in this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learn from others’ mistakes</strong></td>
<td>Early adoption is not always a good thing, so don’t be worried about “going first.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Address security</strong></td>
<td>Clearly still an important cloud variable—involve your security team early and often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure performance/availability of data</strong></td>
<td>There’s a major difference between the application being available and your data being available.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demand an SLA</strong></td>
<td>Uptime (both app/data), credits, and potential migration strategies need to be considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Has the vendor ever completed a cloud transition project for an organization your size, industry, demos, etc? Not just new implementation, but transition.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure your vendor can handle “cloud bursts”</strong></td>
<td>Cloud bursts have become a very interesting topic with regards to a mandatory training period when system usage is higher than normal. In a traditional hosted model, physical servers need to be added to the infrastructure to support these periods. However, due to the aforementioned technology (virtualization), this is no longer a cloud-computing best practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consider Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) if not sold on SaaS quite yet</strong></td>
<td>Hybrid SaaS model — Realize some of the cost savings of virtualization without giving up complete control, reporting, customizations, etc.</td>
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any provisions for data and code escrow.

- **In-House Integration Requirements** — Ensure that migrating to SaaS will meet any functional and data-integration requirements your organization has in place.

- **Reporting Services** — Because SaaS involves giving up direct control of some of your data, accurate and useful reporting is especially important. Determine what reporting services the provider offers and whether they are compatible with your business-intelligence requirements.

**Procurement**

- **Variable SLAs** — With the cloud model, IT managers can shop for new, on-demand services via online catalogs. That approach acknowledges that demands can change from month to month, or even more frequently. “From a contracting perspective, that’s pretty tough to deal with,” said Wolf Tombe, chief technology officer at Customs and Border Protection. He contrasts that variability with contracts that designate the technologies purchased and specify the delivery date.

- **Nonstandard Terms of Service** — Many organizations may try to negotiate cloud contracts that have custom services, which slows the procurement process. Remember, this defeats the purpose and does not promote the economies of scale needed to make the move to the cloud model. “Everybody thinks what they need is special,” said Michael Sorenson, director of cloud services at systems integrator QinetiQ North America. Some compare the approach to asking Microsoft to customize its Office suite before buying the product.

- **A Shifting Landscape** — Cloud providers bring additional uncertainties to service terms. In the past, when a software vendor revised a commercial package, companies could choose to install the new features or stick with the existing version of the application. But cloud providers regularly revise their service offerings, and the changes automatically flow to all customers, whether they ask for them or not. “This makes procurement uncomfortable because you cannot be sure what

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**Service Management Disciplines**

Companies should not turn to cloud computing with high hopes of saving money on infrastructure and labor, only to take on time-consuming and expensive management and integration tasks. As a result, consider identifying all the service management components, including staff and equipment that are needed to move an application to the cloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Management</td>
<td>Who can use the cloud</td>
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<td>Capacity Management</td>
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<td>Change Management</td>
<td>How to control changes without disrupting operations</td>
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<td>Release &amp; Deployment Management</td>
<td>How to control what gets added to the cloud</td>
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<td>Configuration Management</td>
<td>Know what you have in the cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Management</td>
<td>Know what happens in the cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incident Management get it fixed</td>
<td>Know when something is broken and how to get it fixed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge Management</td>
<td>Know where all of information is about your cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security Management</td>
<td>How to protect your agency and your data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Level Management</td>
<td>How to get the performance you need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request Fulfillment Management</td>
<td>How to handle user requests for new things in the cloud</td>
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</table>
Since cloud technology is relatively new, some acquisition folks might need training to help them negotiate and manage cloud contracts. “[Companies] don’t necessarily need to hire legions of new people, but they should make sure their acquisition workforce understands the difference in service acquisitions and why they’re different from products,” said Larry Allen, president of Allen Federal Business Partners.

Key skills for a cloud-rich environment include project and vendor management. The IT Acquisition Advisory Council, among others, is working with the government to promote new acquisition methodologies that are better suited to the cloud.

Billy Biggs, MBA, PMP, is the director, public sector for GP Strategies Corporation.

Email Billy.
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Most managers and executives in training/learning organizations get asked monthly or quarterly about their “dashboard.” Some people call it metrics, numbers, reports, or something else specific to their view of your world. Whatever it is called, it is how you are viewed and discussed at the highest levels of your company, however rarely.

After a few of these quarterly queries, we all begin to realize that we probably don’t have the right metrics for whoever is asking. And if by some strange coincidence we do have the numbers they want, it’s not in the right format, or more likely, the right level of detail. Some of that we can fix, some is so idiosyncratic that we shouldn’t.

So we start to wonder whether or not we should have a separate report for each inquisitor, specific to his or her job function or their area of accountability. That sounds ludicrous to us and sensible to each of them, so do not propose it and do not entertain it if any of them suggest it.

What are the elements of a good dashboard? Let’s get the easy answer out of the way: Every company is different so there is not a universal answer to that question. OK, maybe we can think about it without answering it?

First, break your dashboard into two separate pieces: internal to the training group, and impact on the enterprise (or operations versus results). The metrics that inform a training group about its process, efficiency, quality, utilization rates, seats, units sold/delivered, etc. don’t mean much to the enter-
prise. Your CEO and executive team don’t really care about how long it takes to create a module or exercise. They do care passionately about your results and your impact on the enterprise. So separate your data and reporting into two dashboards.

**Operational Dashboard**

The standard “busyness” metrics about courses developed, videos viewed, average viewing time, development cycle times, revenue per product, trainer platform time, etc., are terrific for operational analysis. But these are generally not enterprise business metrics. They are training business metrics. In and of themselves, they don’t really reflect the impact of what you do for or to the corporation, but how the training organization performs. For example, if your team delivered 20,000 hours of training to sales, partners and support staff, is that a good metric? Some CEO’s and executive teams see that as 10 labor years lost in one reporting period. (One employee works about 2,000 hours per year in the U.S. for salary/comp purposes.). That is a busy metric, not a result metric. The result metric would be about the impact of those hours on the enterprise goals. The hours delivered or viewed metric speaks to your capacity, efficiency, reach and visibility. That is way more important to you than to the enterprise leadership.

This is the easy dashboard because this is what we’ve tracked and reported for years. It helps us manage our organization, our training business, and we can benchmark ourselves against other training groups because there are some standardized approaches, tracked by a number of industry experts and services.

The operational dashboard is where we decide what’s important to manage a great organization. It’s where we’re comfortable, and where other executives wander around questioning our value and impact because impact/results are not in these kinds of reports.

**Results or Impact Dashboard**

This is where most of us leave our comfort zone — tracking, quantifying and reporting results, not activity. The first thing we usually do is fall back on is reporting revenues. It is easy, and is a point of common understanding among executives, but our training revenue is not usually relevant. No matter what our training revenues are, they are likely less (probably much less) than 2 percent of company revenues. That means, if it’s a choice between investing to double or triple training revenues, or increase product/service sales by 5 percent, they will choose sales every time (and should). So don’t use revenue as a primary metric. Instead, focus on what you do to increase sales/top line revenue, not your own. If you have to talk about training dollars, talk about contribution dollars (profit), but again, it’s so small by comparison to the rest of the company that we make ourselves look irrelevant when that is our primary identifying metric.

**What should you emphasize on the results dashboard?**

The easy answer is things that make you relevant, that enhance your value to the enterprise. Training is a tool to be applied to enterprise problems. Show the results.

Figure out those key points where you have or could make a positive impact. Identify where your activity improves the success of individual products, organizations, sales, or other enterprise goals, and highlight your audience partnerships.

Ask yourself and your team some questions and identify internal corporate sources of data outside the LMS you’ve deployed. Here are some examples:

- Can you show any relationship between city and regional sales results based on training consumed? This is not individual training; it’s large numbers and trend lines over short and long time periods. Start tracking this kind of data and you will find areas to report/demonstrate strengths and weaknesses to be shored up.

Managers may care about which of their people are trained, but executives care more about regional performance than individual performance. Focus on the large numbers and organizational trends, not the individuals or individual performance.

Globally, executives want to know about the results of specific types of training content in different geographies and the successes, or lack thereof, instead of having the “cultural differences” discussion without any dashboard evidence.

Several years ago, an organization I led (partnering with sales) was able to demonstrate that once 30 percent of the sales force was “trained” on a new product or technology, sales rocketed up and to the right. Whether that took two days, three weeks or six months, the ramp in volume proved to be linked to training 30 percent of the sales staff. No one could definitively explain it, but it was repeatable.

- Can you compare support center differences based on training consumed? What makes a difference: volume, timing of delivery, or kind of content (video, audio/slides, text, games, courses, live or self-paced seminars)?

- Is the training activity reducing calls to tech support? Or just Level 1 calls? Maybe not through courses, but by publishing the Top 10 calls/complaints and solutions prevents calls for customers every week or month.

- Can you reduce the time spent on calls by having better search of training and technical documentation? Sending the steps electronically, so following the technical advice is easier/faster?

- Is customer satisfaction increased if training is done differently? For example: media differences, timing, early adopter training available before launch. How many of your potential customers come to
Training (classroom or other) before deciding whether or not to buy?

- Is there a link between customer or partner satisfaction and training consumed or certifications earned?

In another instance, our team demonstrated dramatically higher customer satisfaction and loyalty ratings from corporate survey respondents who were certified versus noncertified in our technology. That may seem logical (it does), but proving it and showing how dramatically higher the scores were made budget discussions much easier for the next several years. It was proven through meticulous research between satisfaction respondents and the list of current and past certificate holders.

- Is there a regional difference in new hire success that is at all related to the variety of onboarding processes in different geographies? Do you know the average time before a new-hire sales person achieves their initial target?

At a different company, my team demonstrated that if you conducted sales onboarding after the first 30 days (with a mandatory pre-test to pass before registration) instead of the “first week,” and before six months in the job, new hires achieved sales goals three months to nine months sooner than other regions who did it differently. It doesn’t matter that the sales targets are different; they are supposed to be realistic for their location.

These kinds of questions and data do not always evidence cause and effect relationships. They are indicators of a functional relationship that has many variables. They do demonstrate significant points of impact and results that can identify your organization as a strategic partner in the success of the enterprise. These kinds of data points can take the pressure off of an operational metric (revenue) and create visibility around the value of a well-managed, strategically important enterprise asset: the training group.

Finally, after identifying your important results metrics you want to show, build collaboration partners (those groups impacted, finance, whomever) that will funnel data to you frequently and automatically. When you explain what you are trying to show, how it benefits them and the company, and that you will help shore up any areas of concern, most of them will join in (though maybe not enthusiastically at first).

Lacking that cooperation, you can still put up the incomplete data and explain to the executive team that with better internal teamwork, the data would be much improved and more actionable.

Your results dashboard should be all about the touch-points in the company where you and an audience group are collaborating to meet or over-achieve corporate goals.

These relationships, plus these kinds of metrics, identify you and your training organization as strategic partners in the enterprise as results-oriented impact players.

The operational dashboard speaks to how well you do your job. The results dashboard speaks to the real reasons to fund a training function, and can move your training organization from the classroom to the boardroom.

Tom Kelly has 30 years of experience in various leadership and executive roles in the training industry at Oracle Corporation, Sun Microsystems, Cisco, NetApp, and as an independent consultant. Email Tom.

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**Takeaways**

- Create two dashboards — it’s actually easier than one
  
  - The operational dashboard helps manage the efficiency and operational excellence of the training organization.
  
  - The results dashboard demonstrates the impact of the training group on the enterprise.
  
  - The first is easy and familiar, looking inward at your group and your data.

- The second is harder and more complex because the data resides in other parts of the company, or outside at partner and customer sites.

- Results metrics should reflect impact on enterprise goals and initiatives; this will vary from company to company. Find area where you are or could have impact.

- Identifying the important metrics is a starting point. Then you have to create trusted relationships that provide data automatically. Not everyone wants to share.

- The data should be about large numbers and trend lines, not individuals.

- When, where and how content is accessed by the audience can lead to stunning changes in content creation and dramatic improvement in impact on enterprise goals/trajectory.

- Done well, these two dashboards can help quickly evolve training into a strategic partner in the enterprise and a respected participant in future planning.
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Laughing, screaming, frustration and the sense of immersion are behaviors and feelings that occur when you play a video game. In contrast, e-learning modules are often accompanied by feelings of boredom, a vague sense of dread and even a frown or two. But it doesn’t have to be that way. It is possible to design an e-learning experience that is engaging, interesting and that immerses the learner. More importantly, adding elements of engagement will increase retention and recall, and make the learning more effective. This increase in engagement can be accomplished through the addition of game elements to the design of e-learning modules. It might sound a bit far-fetched but it turns out that many of the design techniques and methods employed by game designers to engage and motivate players can be used to successfully engage and motivate learners.

5 Gaming Elements for Learning Success

While it is not always feasible or desirable to create a full-fledged game for every e-learning experience, it is possible to add game elements to traditional e-learning modules. Here are five elements traditionally found in the design of video games like Halo, The Sims and Angry Birds that can be applied to e-learning to add engagement and motivation.

Contextualization

Many video games occur in a definable space and time. They are tied to a specific place like a space station, the Wild West or a neighborhood or jungle. They also are typi-
People are Naturally Driven by Curiosity and Game Developers Take Advantage of That

For example, drop the learner into the middle of an audit and explain that within 24 hours he or she is required to produce the requested documents. Force the learner to complete the correct document request forms, retrieve filed information and take it to the auditor’s office all within the space of the e-learning module. The goal is to give the learner contextual clues like visual and audio indicators as to when and where the content being learned needs to be applied. Curiosity

Inevitably, when playing a video game, players become curious. They explore the gamespace to see what happens. “What if I don’t slay the dragon and just run away?” “What if I tax my populous at 50 percent?” “What if I run in a straight line to that building?”

People are naturally driven by curiosity and game developers take advantage of that by creating different levels and places to explore within games. Game developers allow players to do tasks or take actions more than once so they can explore different alternatives. Curiosity is used to motivate players to stay in the game and to engage them with the game environment.

Most e-learning does not use curiosity to drive the learner through the instruction, instead e-learning tends to be based on telling the learner what he or she needs to know in bulleted lists or paragraphs on the screen. Telling a learner what he or she needs to do throughout an entire e-learning module doesn’t motivate action or create a desire to continue through the learning.

Leverage a learner’s natural sense of curiosity by providing a novel or exciting environment. Highlight areas of inconsistency, incompleteness or even inelegance in the learners’ knowledge base. Give the learner an activity in which they want to find the answer, want to learn the correct process and want to solve the problem. Setting up these types of learning experiences tap into the curiosity of the learner and will propel them through the instruction in the same way video game players are propelled through a game. For example, give the learner various choices and then let them replay those choices to see what would happen if they chose an alternative or give them a space to explore and to discover new information and content.

Resources

Check out these books about game design and game-based learning to inform your e-learning development and design:

- The Gamification of Learning and Instruction by Karl M. Kapp
- Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman
- Chris Crawford on Game Design by Chris Crawford
- Learning by Doing by Clark Aldrich
- What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy by James Paul Gee

Explore these game-based learning experiences to get an idea of how game design and instruction intermingle:

- Third World Farmer
- The Blood Typing Game
- Atlantis Remixed and Quest Atlantis
- Crash Scene Investigation
Control

In video games, the player controls a great deal. He or she can decide what direction to explore, how many inventory items to gather, where to angle the bird to hit the pig’s house and other decisions. Most of the time, the player can even decide the level of difficulty he or she wants to experience. This is especially true of online social games like FarmVille.

In contrast, most e-learning is a linear, one-size-fits-all approach. Every learner goes through the instruction in the same manner and doing the same activities. Often there is one difficulty level and everyone progresses through that level.

To increase engagement and the effectiveness of e-learning, provide learners with a great amount of control over the learning activity. Let them have input into what to initiate or terminate and activity, with what direction they want to pursue in the training and even the level of difficulty of the instruction. These subtle but important control issues allow the learner to feel a sense of autonomy, self-direction and motivation.

For example, create three different levels of entry into the instruction. One would be a “Show Me” mode where the learner is shown what he or she needs to do. Another could be a “Guide Me” mode where the e-learning allows the learner to interact with the content but corrects the learner if he or she gets something wrong. The last level could be a “Test Me” mode where the learner is not given any guidance or tips. He or she simply enters into the instruction and is scored at the end with no instruction along the way. These three modes can appeal to different levels of learners.

Cooperation/Socialization

In many games, cooperation and working with others is required for success. Many online games such as the role-play game World of Warcraft require players to work together to accomplish a goal. This is the social aspect of games that many players enjoy and seek out in game play. In online games, the more individuals work together, the more they are able to achieve. This is especially true of online social games like FarmVille.

E-learning tends to be a solitary endeavor. Rarely are individuals learning together in an online setting. This lack of cooperation or socialization is a huge reason why learners feel isolated and unmotivated. Learning with others can be highly motivational, learning in solitary not nearly as motivational.

Create tasks or learning outcomes that require group work and cooperation. Give different learners different content and have them work together to combine the content to solve a problem. Design opportunities where learners can share their insights and ideas with each other within the context of learning. For example, ask a question during an e-learning module and link it to a discussion board so that learners can converse about the answer or embed a text-chat feature for real-time discussions and reactions to the content.

Engagement/Interactivity

Games are interesting and engaging because they require interactivity from the very beginning of the game playing experience. When a player first enters a game, he or she takes action, moves in a certain direction or makes a choice. Some type of action is required.

A list of instructional objectives is typically the first item encountered in an e-learning module. This is usually followed by an overview of topics and then instruction followed eventually by a multiple choice question. Typically there is no interactivity or engagement with the content until near the end of a module or after content has been introduced. In most e-learning the learner is not making a choice or selecting an option until well into the instruction.

When the learner first enters the e-learning module, have them make a decision — force them to interact. For example, start the training with an action. Tell the learner that one of their co-workers has embezzled money and ask them what they should do first. Give them choices and let them make decisions early in the training.

Conclusion

Game designers and developers have been creating interactive, engaging and motivational products for years. Using the same elements as game designers, it is possible for instructional designers, trainers and other learning professionals to create engaging and motivational e-learning. Borrowing the elements of game design and enhancing what we know is effective for learning and will provide a robust and exciting way to ensure learners are immersed in the learning process and that the learning is applied on the job.

Karl M. Kapp, Ed.D. is a professor of instructional technology at Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, PA and a consultant to many learning organizations. Email Karl.

Takeaways

Use these following game-based elements to enhance your e-learning:

- Provide the context for the application of the learning you are presenting. Give audio and visual cues as to the time and place when the content should be applied.
- Appeal to the learner’s natural sense of curiosity.
- Give the learner control over the learning process.
- Design the instruction so learners can cooperate and interact with each other. Socialize the learning.
- Force the learner to be interactive with the content almost immediately. Have them make a choice as soon as they are being the e-learning.
Raytheon Professional Services provides transformative training solutions that enable you to take advantage of emerging technologies. By aligning training programs to your business goals, we ensure measurable results and improved learning outcomes.
Let's Get Multi-Platform Training Right

High-performing employees can become a powerful competitive advantage for an organization. Here are six keys to help the CLO create a high-performance workforce by making multi-platform training more productive.

Focus on Accountability

The typical evaluation form that employees fill out after a training session is often called a “smile sheet” and that’s for good reason: One employee feels the instructor was cool and another is relieved that the training’s over. Both write positive reviews. Courses that entertain tend to get higher grades than those with a challenging curriculum. Given how predictable their results are, smile sheets aren’t taken very seriously. The problem is they’re the most common metric used in training and for the vast majority of programs the only metric.

A more rigorous approach is needed. At any organization, if training’s results can’t be documented the function might be the victim of the next round of cost-cutting. The CLO must lead the effort to focus on accountability. The gold
standard model for evaluating training, which regrettably is little-used, takes measurements at four different levels. Developed by Donald Kirkpatrick, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it measures (1) what the employees thought and felt about the training, (2) what they learned, (3) how well they’re using their new skills on the job, and (4) what results their changed performance is providing.

As you create the metrics to be used for measuring training’s effectiveness emphasize the employee activities that contribute to the bottom line rather than those that are easy to measure. As productivity experts often phrase it, monitor what matters. Do away with metrics that provide reports nobody consults anymore. Every organization has them. Guard in particular against metrics that can be counterproductive. For example, measuring how long it takes a help desk to resolve customer problems without also measuring customer satisfaction can cause customer service quality to quickly deteriorate.

Your reports to senior management should focus on the fourth of Kirkpatrick’s measurement levels — the bottom-line benefits that you helped provide. Reports that focus on number of learners registered or classes held can only reinforce the idea that training is a cost item rather than profit generator.

Arrange for measurement systems to be created and administered by an independent third party to assure that there will be objectivity. Benchmark training’s productivity results against other companies to further improve results.

**Meet Critical Goals**

What skills do your employees need? Let the organization’s strategic planning be your guide.

Is the company blazing new trails in technology — or does it want to? A wide range of programs for creating, inventoring and disseminating technical knowledge of all kinds is available. Are you in an industry where you’re competing on cost? New programs can help you increase efficiencies in a wide range of employee functions — not only technology but also project management, sales, accounting, HR administration, supply chain management and manufacturing, to name only a few. Is your company’s growth being hampered by its inability to recruit employees with particular skills? You can attract those employees by offering cutting-edge technology training and certifications that will enhance their credentials and earning power.

Is the organization facing new challenges due to changing environmental regulations? Are employees using email carelessly, possibly risking loss of intellectual capital or causing ill will? Is the company vulnerable to charges of unethical behavior, whether it’s financial impropriety, discriminatory hiring practices or sexual harassment? Look into the availability of specialized learning programs that deal with these problems.

The CLO’s best source of information about the skills employees need is their managers. Stay in close touch with them so you can keep current about the problems they’re encountering and their ideas for how to increase productivity. Be sure you understand the issues being faced by the HR director, the CIO, the CMO and other C-suite officers — including, of course, the CEO.

Today’s skills set might not be suitable for tomorrow if the organization is planning to change its direction — expanding or contracting its scope of business, entering new markets, creating a new value proposition or making any other significant change. Be sure you’re in the know about what’s happening. The CEO is no doubt the most reliable guide.

The CLO must act as — and be seen as — a change agent who’s helping the organization meet its critical goals. Be certain that the programs you’re offering are aligned with them.

**Combine Expert-Facilitated Instruction with Technology**

The best way to teach employees is to combine expert-facilitated instruction with training technology. Used together, the two formats provide better results than either one used alone. Too often, however, they’re seen as competitive and there are turf wars.

The CLO must work with the CIO to create the optimal mix of expert facilitation with technology. The advantages of each format: The instructor acknowledges what the trainees already know, assures their continuing involvement, answers questions and gives encouraging feedback. Training technology assures uniformity of the content, gives the trainees time and place flexibility, allows them to use their personal devices when possible, reduces the costs that come with off-site training and makes it easy for the learners to study the curriculum...
after the training ends — at leisure or when needed. Combining the two formats in the right way can improve training’s results by dramatic margins.

Look for programs that make full use of your organization’s technology capabilities. Make certain they allow access from personal devices because increasing numbers of employees greatly prefer using these devices for learning. Select a provider that incorporates in its curricular animation and other rich media that keep the learners engaged — in the classroom and beyond it.

Insist that the provider offer you 24/5 multi-language phone support, along with chat, e-mail and facsimiles as well as an e-commerce site available 24/7. Global organizations will be best served if the provider offers fulfillment in currencies that include USD, CND, GBP and EUR and multiple global delivery centers operations.

School’s Over

In too many organizations employees are being taught the way they were in school. The problem is adults resist education that tells them what they need to learn before it tells them why the learning will benefit them. They want the training to be in synch with what they already know, based on previous learning and their life experiences. They want the training to relate to the work challenges they’re facing. They’re less interested in mastering a body of knowledge than in mastering their work, moving their projects forward and advancing their careers.

How to Demonstrate Training’s Payoff

Senior management wants training to provide bottom-line results. Make certain your reports to management focus on ROI rather than commonly used metrics such as the number of employees trained.

• For a technology skills learning program, for example, show how the improved skills are helping speed transactions.
• For sales training, show how prospecting has improved or how many more sales are in the pipeline or the increased percentages of proposals that result in sales.
• For customer service training, provide data on increased customer satisfaction rates.

It’s best to build into every program a way to measure its effectiveness. When programs are already being rolled out and the metrics aren’t there, you can get informal data from the managers the learners are reporting to. Even anecdotal evidence can be persuasive. (These conversations also can help you identify future needs for training.)

Here are some thoughts on how to sell the value of training in a presentation to senior management:

• Focus on the outcomes of the learning program, not its methodology.
• Keep it short. The higher the level of management, the shorter is the attention span.
• Anticipate the questions you’ll be asked and prepare persuasive answers to them.
• Use management language. Don’t talk about “cognitive reasoning,” “dualistic thinking” or “multiple intelligences.” This isn’t the place to demonstrate your knowledge of adult learning. You’re there to present learning as an essential element in the company’s effort to meet its strategic goals. Stay on message.

Don’t wait to be asked to justify learning’s payoff. Take the initiative and ask to present an evaluation of it.
They want the instructor to be a facilitator of their learning, not a font of knowledge from which they’re expected to drink. They respond best to instruction that provides access to further resources rather than a curriculum with a dead-end stop. They’ll do better with a program that creates internal motivation rather than one where they’re asked to comply with the demands of an instructor. They might resist training that excludes them from the planning and evaluation of the learning.

Malcolm Knowles, the educational theorist, coined the word andragogy to describe the ways in which adults learn. The word is Greek for man-leading, as opposed to pedagogy, for child-leading. His teachings should be reflected in the way employee training is structured. As you plan the curriculum, emphasize programs that teach reasoning and strategy, as well as content.

**After the Training, What?**

Learning is hard. Unlearning old habits is even harder. For programs that teach new ways to accomplish a task, encourage the employees to use the learning one skill one at a time, because it’s unrealistic to expect a total changeover in the way they work.

Whatever the curriculum, managers must help employees apply their new skills on the job. Encourage them to review the course materials right after the training and to use the summary sheets or wallet cards the training provided. Learning aids that use acronyms to identify the training’s key points can be particularly helpful. Provide the learners with a variety of post-class resources and encourage them to regularly engage with the content. Prompt the employees to learn more from the company’s expertise directories. Provide a way for them to ask questions and get fast feedback.

Debrief the learners as soon as the training’s over — the entire group and person by person. Use individual development plans, group exercises, paired coaching, shadowing with experienced employees, company communications media — all focused on the trainees’ current projects.

Encourage the employees to begin using their skills right away. Unless they do this quickly they might not begin using the skills at all. Suggest to those who were taught behavioral skills to put them to use with low-risk partners who can help them refine the skills rather than with internal or external customers who might represent a greater challenge.

Make it clear to everyone that the training is part of a significant company initiative and has senior management’s full support. Reward the successful application of the new skills — publicly.

Managers also have an upfront responsibility — preparing the employees for the training. For multi-day programs help them free up their workload so they can focus on learning. Encourage them to make a self-assessment to identify the particular skills they need, to complete pre-class work thoroughly, and take an active role in the exercises. It’s sometimes advantageous for managers to receive the same training their direct reports take; in other situations it might inhibit open discussion, though.

Managers can sometimes actually undermine the training. One might imply training’s unimportant because it takes time away from the job. Another might insist employees use existing processes rather than those the training taught — sometimes because the manager doesn’t understand the curriculum. Leadership training in particular should be modeled by the manager. This training’s results can quickly be undone if the manager doesn’t deploy the skills taught.

**Changing the Culture**

Employee skills training is not a quick fix activity. To create lasting change, the organization must train a critical mass of employees. This isn’t always possible with existing learning staff. In those situations the CLO should arrange for the training company to provide the needed staffing or to certify internal staff for training delivery. As new employees are hired they should receive the same training their peers received. As the organization meets new challenges, new skills must be taught.

Look into developing other learning strategies to maintain the organization’s learning leadership. They can include executive education for managers who show potential for senior positions, tuition reimbursement, formal mentoring programs, performance reviews that focus on development rather than evaluation, job rotation, stretch assignments, self-assessment exercises, assigned reading and participation in interdisciplinary teams.

These functions often are managed by managers other than the CLO. Partner with these managers to help improve these functions’ results. Your knowledge of learning
can provide valuable insights. Better yet, if your company doesn’t use these capabilities-building initiatives take charge to create them. You’ll improve the organization’s performance while also enhancing the CLO’s power, prestige and productivity.

**Onward**
Multi-platform training programs are helping organizations improve their productivity by dramatic margins. Keep these six keys in mind for helping your company make even greater gains.

**Takeaways**

Need to train large numbers of employees? Need to train them quickly? You can meet both aims with high-yield multi-platform training. Here’s an approach for getting the best results:

1. Build into the program a way to measure its contributions to the bottom line. This will get the program easier approval from C-suite management.
2. Plan the program so it helps meet the organization’s critical goals. You can’t do this unless you’re current on what challenges the company is facing, its strategy for meeting them and how well its existing initiatives are succeeding.
3. Using a blend of training technology and expert-facilitated instruction will give you better results than using either of these formats alone.
4. Describe the personal payoff learners will get from the training — such as greater job satisfaction and improved career prospects.
5. Managers should encourage employees to put their new skills to work.
6. To create lasting change, the company must train a critical mass of employees. As new employees are hired, they also should be trained.

High-yield multi-platform training can help create a workforce that becomes a major competitive advantage for a company. Keep these six keys in mind as you plan your program.

*Bill Rosenthal is chief executive officer of Logical Operations, Inc., a 30-year-old business that provides next-generation expert-facilitated multi-platform learning systems. Email Bill.*
CONGRATULATIONS
Top 20 Content Development Companies

The Top 20 Content Development is a service provided by Training Industry, Inc. Due to the diversity of services offered, no attempt is made to rank "Top 20's".
In the world of training, distributing knowledge that will ultimately improve performance and knowledge-base is the goal. This purpose is shared with businesses of all sizes and calibers, including state government. While most companies spend corporate dollars to train employees, some organizations are in the business of educating customers. With its recent implementation of a learning portal, the Colorado Secretary of State’s office is training on a broader scale by concentrating its efforts on educating the Colorado community at large.

Historically, the Colorado Secretary of State’s office was primarily a filing office, with much of its work done on paper. Wanting to change the way it serves its customers, Colorado Secretary of State Scott Gessler sparked an idea to focus on technology as a means of reaching and educating customers. This idea led to the creation of a learner community platform.

“In some ways we’re subject matter experts,” said DJ Davis, senior project manager for the Colorado Department of State. “We’re not going to tell you A to Z how to start a business, but we certainly know about the registration process to start a busi-

“[CASEBOOK]

Colorado Secretary of State’s Office: Launching a Learning Portal

“...as we move forward into new technology there’s both a requirement and an opportunity to put a good deal of our knowledge online as a service to the people of Colorado.”

— DJ Davis, Colorado Department of State

BY MICHELLE EGGLESTON

In the world of training, distributing knowledge that will ultimately improve performance and knowledge-base is the goal. This purpose is shared with businesses of all sizes and calibers, including state government. While most companies spend corporate dollars to train employees, some organizations are in the business of educating customers. With its recent implementation of a learning portal, the Colorado Secretary of State’s office is training on a broader scale by concentrating its efforts on educating the Colorado community at large.

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Watchers and Observers

This course covers the basics of poll watchers and other elections observers. This course is written for staff, however, it is available here for political parties, watchers and the general public.

At the end of this course, participants should be able to:
- Describe what a poll watcher can and cannot do in the course of his/her observation;
- Describe the Certificate of Appointment process; and
- Define the various types of watchers.

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ness. The broad idea is that as we move forward into new technology there’s both a requirement and an opportunity to put a good deal of our knowledge online as a service to the people of Colorado.”

Designing a Learning Portal

The Colorado Secretary of State’s office is primarily split into two divisions: elections and voting, as well as business and licensing. The office is charged with many areas of focus including the regulation of bingo and raffle across the state, notary public, registration of charities that want to solicit donations, training on how to run a voter registration drive, and business registration, just to name a few.

To gain a better perspective on the capacity of customers served, the state of Colorado has roughly half a million business entities active/inactive registered in the state, 10,000 charities required to register by law, 80,000 notaries, and 1,200 games managers, who run bingo and raffle games. Designing a robust learning portal to serve these large business functions was imperative.

Over recent years, the Secretary of State’s office has made great strides to ensure that training for elections and voting staff is as convenient and effective as possible. E-learning has been a part of the curriculum for several years now, but prior to online training the Secretary of State’s office conducted classroom training twice a year in various locations around the state. Proving quite time consuming and costly, county clerks — who administer elections at the local level — and their staff were not always able to travel to these training programs, ultimately concluding that a change in delivery method was needed.

Training for voter registration drives (or VRDs—third-party groups that run drives to register voters) has also been enhanced in recent years. The participating individuals were also required to travel to the Secretary of State’s office to attend training classes or join via conference call. To alleviate travel and ensure convenience, this practice soon changed. A recorded webinar is now available on the website that VRDs can watch on their own time, and can take a test upon completion.

With a notion of developing a learner community platform that would not only serve to train internal staff, but also the Colorado community at large, the Secretary of State’s office turned to LearnSomething to make this idea a reality. The office selected roughly five SMEs on staff with a vast amount of knowledge across the field to identify necessary courses. The SMEs worked with the e-learning team who acted as a resource for instructional design as well as course development. These two groups worked together to identify courses, gather the appropriate content, and then proceed to design and develop the courses. The courses vary in length from a two-minute tutorial to more in-depth programs, presenting a large range of offerings for customers.

“Recognizing that our customers often have to work with us, which is where we differ from a traditional business, we want to provide the most convenient services possible,” said Andrew Cole, spokesman for the Colorado Department of State. “A robust e-learning platform helps us meet this objective.”

Developing Coursework

The learner community platform will be utilized broadly by the people of Colorado — essentially anyone who would come into contact with the office. On the business and licensing side this would include anyone from business owners to members of non-profit groups that run bingo games. On the elections side, the audience would include county clerks and their staff, as well as groups that run VRDs.

With a training team in place, a long list of coursework has emerged with roughly 30 courses in the pipeline. The two divisions of the Secretary of State’s office will be reaching different audiences through the platform. The elections and voting side is primarily focused on internally training the county clerks and recorders who administer elections throughout Colorado’s 64 counties, as well as their staff. The platform will host coursework on topics such as rules and laws surrounding the proper security for handling of ballots, and how to navigate and use the electronic statewide voter registration system.

In a move to reduce the cost of compliance and add value to customers, the development of learning content for the business and licensing side is a new initiative for the office. Programs fall into two general categories: courses that help
customers complete tasks such as filing documents on the website, and courses that inform customers of rules and regulations (in some cases in order to meet certifications).

“There’s going to be a large range of offerings and experiences largely due to having instructional designers on staff,” said Davis. “They are in the best position to understand the needs of the student and the goals of the course, and match those up in an appropriate instructional design.”

**Solving a Business Problem**

By embracing technology, the Secretary of State’s office has increased efficiency and convenience to its customers, transforming from a filing office to a technology-forward business. This portal has reduced the cost of compliance and increased the amount of information accessible to the community. While it’s not a return on investment in the public sector, there are certainly a number of entities or people the portal will impact with the availability of the courses.

“With this platform, we are addressing business problems, but we are also seeking to address a business opportunity,” said Cole. “We are looking for opportunities to share our knowledge with the people of Colorado in a new way that just hasn’t been done before.”

Michelle Eggleston is associate editor of Training Industry Quarterly magazine. Email Michelle.
EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS UTILIZE LEARNING-ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

Technology has transformed the way we learn and it’s up to organizations to keep up or risk being left behind. It plays a vital role in supporting key change initiatives across the organization and studies show that the most effective organizations utilize learning-enabling technology more often than their ineffective counterparts.

Training Industry, Inc. recently completed two studies to better understand the best practices for the training organization when working on broad-scale change initiatives and on strategic initiatives specific to sales. Both studies showed that less than 26 percent of learning leaders felt their organizations were very effective at supporting important change initiatives. This clearly shows there is vast room for improvement.

Across both studies, the organizations that were effective at supporting change initiatives acknowledged three critical areas to consider when implementing training:

• Partnering with or purchasing from a company or individual with experience in the type of change that your organization is trying to implement;
• Customize the content to goals and learner needs;
• Communicate more often and ensure buy-in support.

We analyzed what essential skills learning leaders were seeking from the marketplace to support their program. As Figure 1 illustrates, the top three skills were subject matter experts (55 percent), design and development support (55 percent) and sourcing of technologies and tools (54 percent). These three skills correlate with the best practices that effective organizations deemed critical for supporting change initiatives.

Emerging Technologies

Technology is instrumental at accelerating learning by making it accessible at the point of need. In our study on supporting strategic initiatives in sales organizations, learning leaders were asked which sales tools and technologies their companies currently use or plan to use for training purposes.

As Figure 2 shows, mobile learning is currently one of the least-used technologies to support sales training. However, mobile learning is the leading technology that sales organizations plan to use in the future, with 35 percent of learning leaders citing this option most often.

This trend is not isolated to this one study. Mobile learning also showed to be an emerging technology in our study on great training organizations, where it had the highest planned use rate among other technologies (25 percent). In fact, it was the only technology in which planned use exceeded actual use (20 percent).

Figure 1: Essential Skills Sourced from the Marketplace

![Figure 1: Essential Skills Sourced from the Marketplace](image-url)
Along with mobile learning, organizations are also showing strong interest in the planned usage of gamification and utilizing technology that supports mentor networks. Only 12 percent of organizations are currently using gamification, yet it is the second-leading technology in planned usage, clearly indicating that virtual training is on the rise. There is also strong growth with mentor networks, falling third in planned usage.

Sales training organizations can often be a leading indicator for trends in adoption of tools and technology. It is interesting to see the expected use of these three technologies by the group whose training most closely impacts a company’s revenue.

Summary

When preparing for change initiatives across the organization, companies should remain focused on keeping the communication lines open throughout the process, seeking help from experienced partners when necessary, and continuously customizing content to the needs of the learner.

Organizations that are effective in training for these changes are fueled by support from learning technologies. Remember, learning leaders from effective companies use tools and technologies more often than those from ineffective organizations. Embracing technology is the gateway to effectively managing the business of learning.

Ken Taylor is editor in chief of Training Industry Quarterly magazine and chief operating officer of Training Industry, Inc. Email Ken.

Figure 2: Tools & Technologies — Current Usage vs. Planned Usage

Table showing current usage and planned usage of various technologies:

- Conferencing software (e.g. Web/audio): 9.5% current, 82.3% planned
- Short-form content (e.g. job aids, quick reference guides): 9.3% current, 80.8% planned
- Surveys and polls: 8.8% current, 77.7% planned
- Quizzes: 7.8% current, 75.9% planned
- Short e-learning pieces: 21.7% current, 69.7% planned
- Dashboards: 17.2% current, 64.4% planned
- Video (e.g. YouTube-like): 20.3% current, 56.8% planned
- Chat/forums: 19.1% current, 43.3% planned
- Mentor networks: 26.2% current, 43.3% planned
- Social networking software (e.g. Facebook-like): 19.6% current, 42.7% planned
- Performance Support Systems: 18.7% current, 38.8% planned
- Podcasts: 24.6% current, 35.5% planned
- Blogs and Microblogs: 19.1% current, 32.6% planned
- Mobile learning: 32.1% current, 35.0% planned
- Wikis: 24.3% current, 14.0% planned
- Gamification: 28.7% current, 12.4% planned
The training industry regularly shares ideas, resources and inspirations through social media sites like Twitter. Here’s a snapshot of some current conversations from around the industry and around the world.

◆ Brian Solis @briansolis
Great content = engaging + discoverable. Great social content = engaging + discoverable + shareable http://ow.ly/cSEJS

◆ Miles Austin @milesaustin
Financial Leadership: 6 Reasons to Hire a Great CFO http://goo.gl/Vv8j4 via @danielnewmanUV

◆ BizLibrary @BizLibrary
Keep Peace and Keep Learning - A Millennial and Boomer’s Perspective via @chrisosbornSTL @Jessbatz

◆ Liana Rivera @liarvr
@GrantCardone: “Success or failure is just a choice followed by actions.” The10XRule

◆ TEDS, Inc. @TEDSInc
How to Hire Extraordinary Employees: 7 Rules via @Inc

◆ @grantricketts
Sustainability can drive organizational change... and there are ways how: http://bit.ly/NR6Wq0 #employee #engagement #CSR

◆ American Management @AMAnet
How Women Lead Differently, And Why It Matters: http://ow.ly/cRnfQ (RT @fastcolead) #HR #Leadership

◆ Dan Rockwell @Leadershipfreak
Don’t paint a picture of “there” until you’ve made the case for why we can’t stay “here.” #wcaqls http://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2012/08/10/just-the-gravy/

◆ Human Resources IQ @HRIQ
Character is what emerges from all the little things you were too busy to do yesterday, but did anyway. ~Mignon McLaughlin #HRIQ #Quotes

◆ Ken Blanchard @kenblanchard
Exploring the Hidden Secrets of Employee Engagement (pt.1) http://dlvr.it/1zYqDp

◆ Fast Company @FastCompany
6 unpleasant truths about social media! http://www.fastcompany.com/node/3000053 via @FastCompany #TheRules

◆ RWD @rwdtech

◆ Clarity Consultants @ClarityLnD
A simple approach to interactive #elearning: http://bit.ly/PHQbOe via @tomkuhlmann

Make a connection & join the discussion:

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Stories from the Last Quarter

TrainingIndustry.com Articles

New articles are posted each week on TrainingIndustry.com. Check out these TII Exclusives from the last quarter:

• “Everything You Think You Know about Learning Retention Rates is Wrong” by Robert Bogue

• “The Paradox of ‘Women’s Leadership Training’” by Dana Theus

• “Key Trends for 2012: Mid-Year Review” by Doug Harward

• “Unbundling Leadership Training” by Samuel B. Bacharach

Interested in submitting company news? Please send to editor@trainingindustry.com

ACQUISITIONS

The Corporate Executive Board Company (CEB), the leading member-based advisory company, announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire SHL, a global leader in cloud-based talent measurement and management solutions, for $660 million in cash.

Pearson, a provider of education, consumer publishing and business information services, acquired GlobalEnglish Corporation from its current ownership group for $90 million in cash, and said the transaction is subject to approval by GlobalEnglish’s shareholders.

Microsoft will acquire Yammer, the developer of cloud-based enterprise social networking services for businesses, for $1.2 billion in cash. Microsoft will continue to develop Yammer as a standalone service, and plans to maintain Yammer’s simplicity, innovation and cross-platform experiences.

CGI Group Inc., Canada’s top IT services firm, agreed to buy larger Anglo-Dutch rival Logica for $2.64 billion, a move that more than doubles its size, broadens its clientele and pushes it firmly into Europe.

CONTRACTS

Gates Foundation: $9 Million in Grants
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a $9 million package of grants to boost the number of students who attain a high-quality and affordable postsecondary credential. The grants create options that enable students to earn a credential with value in the labor market without incurring significant debt.

GP Strategies Awarded Blanket Purchase Agreement
GP Strategies Corporation announced that it has been awarded a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The BPA will allow GP Strategies to continue to provide support for the HHS University LMS.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Building Trust to Drive Business Results: New Research
Interaction Associates has released Building Trust in Business 2012, its annual research on trust and leadership that details the critical do’s and don’ts for driving strong business results by building trust in leaders at all levels.

The Passing of Dr. Stephen R. Covey
Franklin Covey Co. announced that Dr. Stephen R. Covey, co-founder and a former vice-chairman and director of FranklinCovey, passed away. Dr. Covey made a decision early in his life that his greatest contribution and life’s work would be as a teacher. He was a renowned author, speaker and consultant in the training and business industry.

Docebo Partners with Empresa Web
A new partnership has been agreed between Docebo and Empresa Web, a leading provider of Internet solutions for companies in Venezuela and Latin America. The two companies are joining forces to deliver cutting-edge training technologies in the Latin American region.

U.S. Air Force Renews Contract with Skillsoft
Skillsoft announced it has been awarded a new five-year contract to support the U.S. Air Force’s global IT training program to support critical IT and leadership training for Air Force personnel worldwide. This helps Air Force personnel keep pace with the latest industry standards for hardware, software, networking, productivity and other technologies.
We see "un-leaderlike" moments all the time in public life, in our own work lives, and yes, often in our personal relationships. Even the best leaders among us have been guilty of cutting corners for expediency, being emotionally insensitive, not speaking up when it was the right thing to do, or being self-centered at one time or another.

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**TECHNOLOGY IS HERE TO STAY, AND RESISTANCE IS FUTILE**

There's something magical about technology. There's something amazing too. It's often like science fiction coming to life, a futuristic vision that's right there at your fingertips.

Don't believe me? Remember pay phones? Did the idea of talking on a phone while driving down the road even occur to you 30 years ago? Maybe, but how about the Internet? Web conferencing? Real-time collaboration with colleagues across oceans? Email?

The point is what seems futuristic at some points is reality today. Here's a silly example: In the classic TV show “Get Smart,” the bumbling spy Maxwell Smart made great comic use of the “cone of silence,” a device to protect against electronic eavesdropping. Today, real-life intelligence agencies have portable systems that serve the same purpose, even working in rooms wired with electronic bugs. Who's laughing now?

So I'm telling you that to tell you this: I'm a huge fan of the first two “Star Trek” series, the original and “The Next Generation.” Once upon a time I could only say that in a room of fellow sci-fi fans, but thanks to people like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs boldly going where no one has gone before, geek is chic.

Honey, I'm home.

The best part about the Star Trek universe was the technology — phasers, scanners, universal translators — all way cool for someone with imagination (and some time to kill). This part may surprise you: Much of the technology you see in the Star Trek franchise is real, or soon may be.

So in that frame of mind, and with this issue celebrating learning technology, let's talk technology. I've come up with a list of five training technologies I'd like to see move from the Starship Enterprise to your office.

- **The holodeck:** This was the only “Next Generation” creation that was cooler than Captain Jean-Luc Picard, and the training implications are obvious. For those who don’t know, the holodeck essentially used 3D hologram technology to create fantasy worlds, everything from landscapes on far-off planets to Victorian England, whatever the script called for. Imagine taking simulation technology and increasing its power and presence a thousand-fold. What couldn’t you train in that environment?

- **Beam me to class, Scotty:** You've heard the almost-cliché argument over the effectiveness of virtual training versus classroom training. Teleporters like those Kirk and Company use to get around space would instantly solve that controversy. Need to train your sales reps in New Jersey, Dublin and Tokyo? They're all in the conference room now.

- **The Enterprise dashboard:** If you've watched the show, you've seen the ultra-cool consoles used to do everything from driving the ship to launching proton torpedoes. Learning management systems can do a lot these days, but more complete control would be nice. Imagine being able to move your learners around like electronic blips and pressing short codes to arm yourself with business data. We're not far from this one, by the way … but modern dashboards could definitely use a boost.

- **The replicator:** In the Star Trek world, a simple command brings forward edibles ranging from cat food to still-squirming Klingon delicacies to Picard's omnipresent cup of Earl Gray. But imagine this: You're faced with a new task at work, so you turn to the replicator and say, “teach me XXX.” An instant teacher appears, and your interactive education begins. There's food for thought, right?

- **Report please, Mr. Data:** For those who don't know, Data was the artificial life form (android) on “The Next Generation,” a robot essentially with a hankering to be human. What if you had one of these to be the places you should be throughout the day when you're stuck being other places? At whatever intervals, you can sync your knowledge and be fully informed. Oh, and your Data requires neither sleep nor sustenance.

Naturally, I've taken a spaceflight of fancy for this column, but you have to admit what sounds silly on TV would be cool in reality. So cool, in fact, I'd love to hear that right now, in some secret lab in some secret facility deep below some desert, a bunch of people are reading this column and saying, “I think we have a leak.”

TV fantasy or not, technology is here to stay, and resistance is futile. Whether training tools will grow in this direction is most likely unlikely, but it's a given they will advance to where today's state-of-the-art looks ancient. Training is certain to be early adopters of whatever comes along, and together we'll reach new worlds.

Ready for the future? Then make it so.

Tim Sosbe is editorial director of Training Industry Quarterly and general manager of TrainingIndustry.com webinars. Email Tim.
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