



Information Overload

Issue 38, October 2005

Welcome:

Welcome to this month's edition of Information Overload. This month we take a look at the importance of training, the method of delivery and how technology has changed the way that we can gain the knowledge and skills that we need to do the jobs that we do.

I would like to thank you in advance for forwarding this edition onto friends, colleagues, and other interested readers. If you don't receive this newsletter directly and would like to do so, please send a blank email to training@iea.com.au with subscribe newsletter in the subject line. All back issues of this edition, and our registrant resources edition can be read and/or downloaded from our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au> should any of the topics be of interest and use. And if you have any suggestions or would like to see us cover any other topics, we would love to hear from you. Just send an e-mail to training@iea.com.au.

Lorraine Bradshaw
Marketing Coordinator

In this Issue we will be looking at:

- 5 Reasons to Invest In Training
- Online Learning
 - Benefits & Disadvantages
- Companies strong on e-learning
- Face-to-Face/Classroom Teaching
 - Benefits & Disadvantages
- Blended Learning, is this the way of the future?
- A Thought to ponder.

5 Reasons to Invest in Training

1. Training lifts your business out of the pack and makes you more competitive. According to Steve Jones, the CEO of Suncorp Metway "Training is the critical link between delivering a first-class service, revenue growth is faster than anyone else in the industry, and having the most productive and satisfied work force."

2. Training produces greater productivity. Reduce your investment in training, and a few things will happen – your error rates will rise, losses and operational costs will go up as you have to go back over the same ground to fix up the problems caused.

3. A commitment to training ensures a commitment to your organisation. Invest in training and your employees are more likely to go that extra mile, and their attitude is almost certainly directly related to how many "repeat" customers you have. Workers will be far more productive if they have the skills and the knowledge to do their jobs. Staff morale will be higher and they will be less likely to go elsewhere. Harry Debney, the CEO of Visy Industries says that "align the individuals objectives with the company objectives. Training

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improves self-esteem, and morale is inexplicably improved. And they are less likely to go elsewhere."

4. There will be reduced staff turnover. Whilst the nature of today's work force ensures that there will be some staff turnover, especially as organisations use fixed-term contracts. However, if your permanent employees can see that there is a strong cultural commitment to training, that the organisation cares about them to offer training and professional development, the chances are that those people will stay and will repay that debt many times over.

5. Expanding Skills and Knowledge Base

Training looks great on the CV, of course it does, but at an organisational level, a group of trained individuals will always out perform those people who haven't been trained. Can you just imagine how far a ship would travel if no-one knew how to sail it?

Taken from "Scaling heights: the role of training in business growth." Momentum Issue 5: June 2001

It would appear that on the job training, further education and continuing professional development is an important and fundamental part of today's working environment. It is essential to keep up to date with changes in our professional lives. The question is, how can organisations get the best value for money and ensure that employees receive the skills and the knowledge they require in order to do the job they have been hired to do.

Online Learning

It would appear that in today's technologically savvy world, that online learning would be able to deliver training information quickly and cheaply across an organisation, regardless of how many offices or locations that organisation may have

Benefits of Online Learning:

There are a range of benefits that are associated with online learning for both the individual and the organisation. These include:

- Reduction in time spent away from the office, including the elimination of time spent travelling to and from the training provider.
- Learning is self-paced. Your personal level of study is not dictated by the other members of the class, or the time constraints normally associated with face-to-face delivery.
- Course material is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If the course is delivered via the Internet, access can be made available from multiple locations – allowing you to study from both home and work.
- Theory based learning is easier to deliver and undertake online. This is because the theory will be put into practice at a later stage.
- Online delivery of training material allows people in remote areas, and other states and/or countries from the training organisation to participate.
- Training can be adapted to suit the individual based on training needs analysis, and direction of the organisation.

Disadvantages of Online Learning:

- Whilst the training is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, you still need to set aside time each day in order to undertake the work/training. If discipline and time management are not your strong points, then you may struggle to find time to do the work you need to do.

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- Limited access to computer technology (especially in remote parts of Australia) along with slow(er) dial up connections may make the use of video and audio components of the program difficult to utilise.
- There is limited interaction between participants of the training course and the person(s) who have developed the training material, and/or the person delivering the training material (video/audio). Therefore the opportunity to ask questions or to ask for clarification of material may not be possible. Similarly, the opportunity to learn from other participants is limited or simply not available.
- If English is your second language, the static delivery of some training material may make the course material hard to comprehend, especially as you have limited opportunities to speak directly with the trainer and/or other participants.
- Whilst some tests can be “marked” immediately, and results returned, this does not necessarily mean that the participant has actually learned anything. Does it just mean that the person undertaking the course has a good memory?
- Whilst it is easy to deliver and undertake theory-based material online, it is very hard to deliver and complete course material that has hands on components. For example – Occupational Health & Safety and First Aid Courses.

Companies Strong on E -Learning

54% of UK Organisations are using e-learning, according to a survey conducted in the UK, with 10% of all current training being conducted in an online environment. This figure is set to more than double as organisations develop job and organisational specific e-learning modules and embedding the processes and practices throughout their business and HR Practices.

Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – in – Human Resources 4 October 2005, p30

Face-to-Face/Classroom Learning

As we have seen, whilst online delivery of training material can produce some significant benefits, the disadvantages may outweigh them. Is the more traditional face-to-face style of teaching still the best way?

Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning

- Course material can be customised to suit the trainee and/or the training organisations requirements allowing individual goals to be reached.
- Hands on training courses can be demonstrated and repeated until such time as the person “gets it”
- You have the opportunity to interact with the trainer and other participants.
- A range of abilities and learning styles can be catered for by the trainer and/or training organisation.
- Most people learn by recognition, reward and positive feedback. This is hard to replicate in an online environment.
- The trainer can question you, this allows them to determine if their teaching methods are working or not.

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- Feedback is immediate and possible from all participants and the trainer (360 degree feedback)

Disadvantages of Face-to-Face Learning

- Courses are limited due to the availability of the trainer(s) and/or training organisation.
- You have to attend the lectures/courses. Therefore there are associated problems with taking time off work, travelling, parking, availability of public transport or missing the course. Or you may find yourself making excuses not to go, especially if self-motivation is not your strong point.
- Learning is not self-paced. Whilst you are limited by your own pace of learning, you will also be hampered by other participants way and speed of learning, as well as the delivery style of the trainer.

Blended Learning, is this the way of the future?

Blended learning is the combination of more than one form of delivery. As we have seen, there are distinct benefits for both online and face-to-face delivery of training courses. As we have also noted, there are definite disadvantages in one method of training over another, especially as we all learn things in different ways. Therefore it would make sense and provide a complete training solution to use both forms of delivery. Theoretical information can be passed on through the use of online information, supplemented with audio and video components to demonstrate a concept rather than just simply tell the trainee about the subject matter. This can be supplemented with face-to-face components whereby all participants can be quizzed (for example 360 degree feedback), and tests can be conducted to see how well the information has been passed on.

To take the subject of Occupational Health and Safety or First Aid, knowing how to stop a person from bleeding is never quite the same as actually having to stop the person from bleeding.

A Thought to Ponder:

“My will shall shape my future. Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man’s doing but my own. I am the force. I can clear any obstacle before me or I can be lost in the maze. My choice; my responsibility; win or lose, only I hold the key to my future.”

Elaine Maxwell
American Writer

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