THE EFFECTIVENESS OF E-LEARNING IN CORPORATE LEARNING.

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Abstract

The article discusses the reasons of applying e-learning in education, focusing on corporate learning in a business sector. There are given benefits as well as some comparisons of it with the traditional type of learning.

Key words: e-learning, corporative learning, modern technology, skills, cost-effective, online environment.

Technology has changed the way of people`s life fundamentally. Almost all sectors have benefited from modern advances as well as education, which has become an indispensable part of humans` life as new era drives people to be more educated in order to live successfully and to be competent workers. Social, technological, and economic changes are transforming education around the world. The development of a skilled workforce becomes a genuinely international concern, since globalization circumscribes local economies like never before. Education and training become lifelong endeavors for the vast majority of workers as human capital becomes the chief source of economic value. [4]

Nowadays taking education of high quality is not a complicated task like in the past times when people had to spend much time, money and effort. There are many ways of learning these days according to learners` preferences in terms of their needs such as learning style, place, time, pace and may be ability. So far, to all of these requirements has met a type of learning that is called E-learning that has some reasons to be taken by people.

First reason of taking E-learning is an increase complexity and velocity of work environment. [3] Technology has changed the way we live, work, think, and learn. Today's workforce has to process more information in a shorter amount of time. New products and services are emerging with accelerating speed. As production cycles and life spans of products continue to shorten, information and training quickly become obsolete. Training managers feel the urgency to deliver knowledge and skills more rapidly and efficiently whenever and wherever needed. In the age of just-in-time production, just-in-time training becomes a critical element to organizational success.

Moreover, business world, that is the main source of economy of every country, needs skilled labor. However, lack of educated workforce drives need for learning.[5] With unemployment rates at historic lows and a widening skills gap among the workers, corporations compete fiercely for skilled workers. Business managers realize that companies that offer ongoing education and training enjoy a higher rate of employee retention and the benefits of a better-skilled workforce. As a result, companies have more benefits as well as good and prosperous life of employees.

Desperate competition in most industries leads to increasing cost pressures. With traditional training methods, companies generally spend more money on transporting and housing trainees than on actual training programs. Approximately two-thirds of training costs are spent to travel expenses, which represents a major drain on bottom-line profitability. In today's competitive environment, organizations can no longer afford to inflate training budgets with extensive travel and lodging. If opportunity cost is taken into account, the actual costs of training are even higher. Time spent away from the job traveling or sitting in a classroom reduces per-employee productivity and revenue noticeably. The need to transform how organizations learn points to a more modern, efficient, and flexible alternative: e-learning. The mission of corporate e- learning is to supply the workforce with an up-to-date and cost-effective program that yields motivated, skilled, and loyal knowledge workers.

The tool of E-learning, the Internet can offer the logical solution for a company's education and training objectives. We estimate that approximately 80% of the professional

workforce already uses computers on the job. Technical obstacles, such as access, standards, infrastructure, and bandwidth, will not be an issue two years from now. The growth of the World Wide Web, high-capacity corporate networks, and high-speed desktop computers will make learning available to people 24 hours a day, seven days a week around the globe. This will enable businesses to distribute training and critical information to multiple locations easily and conveniently. Employees can then access training when it is convenient for them, at home or in the office.

Web-based products allow instructors to update lessons and materials across the entire network instantly. This keeps content fresh and consistent and gives students immediate access to the most current data. Information can be retrieved just before it is required, rather than being learned once in a classroom and subsequently forgotten. Technology-based training has proven to have a 50–60% better consistency of learning than traditional classroom learning. [2]

Technology-based solutions allow more room for individual differences in learning styles. They also provide a high level of simulation that can be tailored to the learner's level of proficiency. With 24x7 access, people can learn at their own pace and review course material as often as needed. Since they can customize the learning material to their own needs, students have more control over their learning process and can better understand the material, leading to a 60% faster learning curve, compared to instructor-led training. The delivery of content in smaller units, called "chunks," contributes further to a more lasting learning effect. The average content retention rate for an instructor-led class is far less than intensive e-learning experience, which enhances the retention rate by 25 – 60%.[3]

E-learning has improved collaboration and interactivity among students. In times when small instructor-led classes tend to be the exception, electronic learning solutions can offer more collaboration and interaction with experts and peers as well as a higher success rate than the live alternative.[4] Teaching and communication techniques which create an interactive online environment include case studies, story-telling, demonstrations, role-playing, simulations, streamed videos, online references, personalized coaching and mentoring, discussion groups, project teams, chat rooms, e-mail, tips, tutorials. Distance education can be more stimulating and encourage more critical reasoning than a traditional large instructor-led class because it allows the kind of interaction that takes place most fully in small group settings.

Studies have shown that students who take online courses are typically drawn into the subject matter of the class more deeply than in a traditional course because of the discussions they get involved in. This engagement is further facilitated by the fact that instructors do not monopolize attention in an online environment. Another study found that online students had more peer contact with others in the class, enjoyed it more, spent more time on class work, understood the material better, and performed, on average, 20% better than students who were taught in the traditional classroom.

Online training is less intimidating than instructor-led courses. Students taking an online course enter a risk-free environment in which they can try new things and make mistakes without exposing themselves. This characteristic is particularly valuable when trying to learn soft skills, such as leadership and decision- making. [3] A good learning program shows the consequences of students' actions and where or why they went wrong. After a failure, students can go back and try again. This type of learning experience eliminates the embarrassment of failure in front of a group.[6]

However, e-learning is not ideal for all purposes, as it has some drawbacks and it is unlikely that it will replace classroom training completely in organizations or universities. The most cost-effective application of e-learning may be to complement conventional training in order to reach as many learners as possible. The benefits which have been mentioned above not only could make the education process easy, but they could attract many learners as well making them educated that can lead to drive economy.

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