WHAT CORPORATE TRAINERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ELEARNING TODAY

The state of corporate training in the American workplace is undergoing a dramatic evolution.

In the past, corporate training used to resemble a standard classroom environment, similar to what you would find on any school campus.

The typical arrangement nearly always centered around some type of live, in-person training model. Company employees would assemble in one place together, with teachers or instructors at the front of the room. Sometimes tutors or coaches would work individually with learners.

Curriculum material was standard, too: textbooks, binders of loose-leaf pages, handouts, lecture notes, and so on—again, traditional printed material that supplemented the in-class interaction between instructors and learners.

Those days are slipping away.

Today, the trend in corporate training has shifted to more decentralized technology-based solutions.

Just as the explosion in personal computing, mobile devices, and smartphones caused a revolution in the way people live, communicate, and share experiences, technology-based solutions are ushering in a whole new model for how corporations train their workforce.

And the ways that employees want to learn—at their own pace, on their own schedules, with their own devices, in shorter blocks—are reshaping how and when content is delivered.

Companies that want to thrive and maintain a strong competitive position need to educate themselves about these changes and the advantages this shift presents.

This white paper will explore the issues, trends, and benefits of eLearning, particularly when it comes to language learning, and how corporate trainers can make informed and cost-effective decisions.

TRENDS IN ELEARNING IN THE WORKFORCE

Simply put, eLearning refers to technology-driven methods for teaching, training, and learning through some electronic or digital device, with content often accessed through an online portal.

The growth of eLearning in the workplace is phenomenal. According to online education developer Learnosity, the demand for corporate eLearning has increased by 900 percent over the last 16 years.[1] Designing Digitally, a custom eLearning service provider, estimates that 77 percent of U.S. companies make some type of online training available for the professional development of their employees.[2]

That online training can take different forms. Among the most common:

- **Business-centric learning.** This strategy focuses on training that closely serves the immediate or priority needs of a business. A survey by the Brandon Hall Group, a research and analytics firm, found that "40% of businesses were developing their learning strategy in alignment with business needs."[3]

- **Video-based learning.** The tsunami-sized uploading of online videos is driven, in part, by their wide use for corporate training purposes. Companies use videos for a variety of training objectives, such as demonstrating compliance and safety procedures, sharpening sales skills, and new employee orientation.

- **Multiple learning formats.** As the name suggests, this strategy combines different learning methods to meet the needs of learners effectively and conveniently. Examples include screencasting, blended classrooms, and mobile learning.

- **Social media.** Using social media to facilitate corporate training has gotten a mixed reception. Some applaud the ease and familiarity of tools like blogs to teach. But others worry that an organization's proprietary information may be compromised through social media channels. A Brandon Hall survey found that fewer than 25 percent of businesses thought social media tools were effective.[4]

- **Competency-based training.** In this promising approach, employees are graded based on demonstrating concrete skills that can be measured and assessed, and not on learning abstract or hard-to-judge outcomes.

The flexibility and variety of eLearning methods can be a boon to businesses. Tech-driven applications lend themselves to efficient employee training in key skill sets, such as compliance, leadership, safety, time management, and so on.

The lynchpin to any type of training, however, is proficient communication skills. Employees who use and understand language confidently are sure to become assets in the workplace, as the next section illustrates.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The rise in and prevalence of eLearning can give companies a huge strategic advantage, especially when it comes to language learning.

As more companies play a larger role in the global economy and an interconnected marketplace, workers will need to be proficient in more than one language. Companies that make language learning part of their corporate planning in the months ahead will realize significant benefits. For example, language learning:

A Gallup study found "that companies with higher employee engagement score 10% higher on key customer service metrics.

- **Boosts morale.** Employees who speak and understand a common language will be more likely to support one another and feel connected to the company as a whole.

- **Increases loyalty.** Workers who see that their employers are putting resources into their learning, development, and training will reciprocate by giving back to the company significantly.

- **Leads to higher productivity.** Language proficiency can help workers concentrate on their jobs more effectively and efficiently. A research study from Gallup revealed that "companies with higher employee engagement have 41% fewer quality defects."[5]

- **Enhances employee self-image and confidence.** Workers who have a skillful use of language are more likely to feel better about themselves for having gained new marketable skills.

- **Engages even hard-to-reach employees.** Language learning can break down the barriers that isolate some workers and draw them closer to the company culture.

- **Cuts costs.** Technology-based language learning solutions will reduce overall costs by consolidating learning tools into one platform accessible to the entire workforce.

- **Drives customer satisfaction.** Workers who communicate with confidence build rapport more easily with customers, resolve their problems faster, and deliver better customer satisfaction. A Gallup study found "that companies with higher employee engagement score 10% higher on key customer service metrics."[6]

- **Empowers department leaders.** Department and corporate leaders will gain visibility into the learning paths of their workforce, which is especially pertinent for global companies.

- **Promotes communication and collaboration across global teams.** Competent language skills can pull teams together and make for more cohesive business units regardless of their location.

- **Reduces safety risks.** Hispanic and Latino workers have an almost 50 percent higher workplace fatality rate, due in large part to language barriers, according to Safety Skills, a safety training company.[7] Employees who have a competent

command of English language skills are more likely to understand and follow safety protocols and procedures.

- **Gains market share.** Companies that have a trained language workforce will be more likely to deal with, manage, and interact with people around the world and win their business.

Investing in language training today will pay for itself in more skillful workers, more satisfied customers, and a rosier bottom line. Now, let's take a look at some prominent learning and development trends that can impact corporate trainers.

L&D TREND: MICROLEARNING

In a world where attention spans have practically reached the vanishing point and individuals must deal with a relentless barrage of distractions, microlearning may be the ideal teaching method.

The premise of microlearning is simple: to teach content in short capsules of information that typically take under five minutes to learn and absorb. These capsules are designed to produce a specific learning experience in a brief time—providing what is often described as "just-in-time" training.

Microlearning lessons are available across platforms and devices, from desktops to smartphones. They empower learners to access the content when and where they want, appealing to today's busy workforces.

Microlearning can assist with both formal and informal training objectives, for example:

- **Soft skills.** Companies can use microlearning lessons to teach necessary behaviors that don't necessarily need a long formal training session.[8]

- **Compliance.** Microlearning videos can focus on a single, specific safety or compliance issue and drive home the point in a short, uninterrupted lesson.[9]

- **Honing professional skills.** A microlearning lesson can explore issues that come up frequently, such as conflict in the workplace, and demonstrate how to manage and defuse the situation in a five-minute presentation.[10]

The production features of microlearning lessons also make them cost-effective for many businesses:

- **Interactive content.** By using rich content that allows viewers to interact with the content, microlearning can engage viewers more deeply than traditional, static one-sided instruction lessons.[11]

- **Easily updated.** The short lengths of the microlearning sessions make it quick and simple to update or change them.[12]

- **Fast production time.** Microlearning lessons are faster and simpler to produce and upload, compared to longer, more elaborate teaching modules.[13]

- **Affordable.** The expenses of conceptualizing, producing, and updating microlearning lessons make them an economical learning vehicle.14

Microlearning can work in almost any industry or business sector, as these two examples demonstrate:

NextWorth, an electronics trade-in and recycling service provider, needed to train employees in retail outlets to check out products that were turned in. Using the microlearning method, they created short training videos that employees could access on the shop floor. The microlearning resulted in a double-digit boost in the accuracy of their inspections.15

Board certified family physicians attended a three-hour offsite class on stroke prevention and atrial fibrillation. After they returned to their individual practices, they were given microlearning lessons a month after their original training session. Viewing these short but engaging lessons improved the doctors' learning results dramatically.[16]

Microlearning can be a powerful teaching tool, especially when it comes to millennial workers. Why the focus on millennial workers? What does this group mean for businesses? Let's find out.

L&D TREND: ENGAGING MILLENNIALS

Millennial workers exert an enormous impact on society in general and in the workplace in particular.

In terms of sheer numbers, they are overtaking baby boomers to become the largest living generation in many countries.

Born between 1981 and 1997, millennials came of age during the era of personal computers and the rise of the Internet. It is fair to say that they are the first "wired" generation. Because of their unique place in history, members of this generation look at the world and the subject of work differently than pre-Internet workers.

Companies that hope to remain competitive over the next decade need to pay attention to the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations that millennial workers bring.

Consider:

According to Brookings, millennials will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2025.[17] And as PricewaterhouseCoopers said in a recent report, 71 percent of millennials will look for international assignments during their career.[18]

As millennials matured along with the Internet, familiarity and comfort with online behaviors such as eLearning is second nature to them. In fact, they often prefer this over traditional learning situations.

Companies that hope to remain competitive over the next decade need to pay attention to the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations that millennial workers bring.

Since millennials seek global positions, companies that offer language learning through some type of eLearning arrangement will come out on top. The report from PricewaterhouseCoopers found that "personal learning and development…remains their first choice benefit from employers."[19]

In setting up language programs for their millennial workers, employers should keep these considerations in mind:

- **Higher retention.** According to the Rosetta Stone 2016 Business Impact Survey, 59 percent of millennials surveyed said "that they were more likely to stay with their employer as a result of their company investing in them by providing lifelong language skills."[20]

- **Career growth.** More than half of millennials (64 percent) attribute improved prospects in their career to language training, compared to a global average of only 57 percent.[21]

- **Builds their confidence.** Millennials report that their ability to read, write, and speak foreign languages is a key component to higher self-esteem and greater overall confidence.[22]

- **Expanded worldview.** A significant 69 percent of millennials say that becoming proficient in a foreign language gives them a more expansive view of the world— making them more valuable to companies in a global economy.[23]

Add it up and it's clear: companies that embrace the expectations of the millennial generation and provide the type of training that it seeks through eLearning, especially language training, will be poised for stronger growth in the years to come.

In some ways, success in eLearning comes down to delivering the right type of content in new and captivating ways, as the next section explains.

L&D TREND: GAMIFICATION AND ENGAGING CONTENT

Although it sounds trivial or frivolous, gamification is actually a growing movement that companies in all kinds of sectors are including in their eLearning efforts.

Simply put, gamification applies game techniques to something that a company has already created—such as a website or an online community—to drive the engagement and, hopefully, the loyalty of the user.

According to Bunchball, a cloud-based service provider in the gamification industry, "gamification is not about creating something new. It is about amplifying the effect of an existing, core experience by applying the motivational techniques that make games so engaging."[24]

As such, the appeal of gamification shows no signs of abating. Ambient Insight, a

research firm, reports that game-based learning products produced $2.6 billion in worldwide revenues in 2016 and is expected to hit $7.3 billion by 2021.[25]

Companies who adopt gamification initiatives will possess a potent eLearning tool that employees—especially the surging millennial workforce—will find irresistible. But the companies themselves will also rack up significant benefits:

- **Improved productivity.** Employees who are engaged with company content through gaming techniques will be motivated to focus and produce more work.

- **Custom content.** Companies can customize and gamify content that is relevant to an employee's role and goals, thereby controlling and directing their training.

Gamification is a prominent trend in the eLearning movement.

- **Spurs retention of material.** A study by the University of Colorado found that participants in gamified eLearning experiences scored 11 percent higher in terms of comprehending factual knowledge and 9 percent higher in retaining it.[26]

- **Deeper engagement.** According to Dopamine, a consulting agency on gamified campaigns, employees' ability to retain skills increased by 40 percent through gamified techniques.[27]

As the research indicates, gamification can vastly improve eLearning results—and, by extension, the development, training, and loyalty of employees.

An example of language learning with gamified features is the Rosetta Stone® Catalyst™ enterprise solution. According to an online review by PC Magazine:

> *"…using Rosetta Stone Catalyst is addictive. It feels more like an online game than an e-learning platform. Questions and answers are presented via photographs and accompanying audio. All interactions are delivered speedily. Each section takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you're bored using the predetermined learning path, then you can always click out of the coursework and play games such as BuzzBingo, Picari, and Super Bubble Mania, which are fun and instructional."[28]*

Gamification is a prominent trend in the eLearning movement. Another development makes anywhere/anytime training available to every company, as the next section will explain.

L&D TREND: MOBILE LEARNING

Of all the changes brought about by eLearning in the workplace, perhaps the most exciting is mobile learning.

Essentially, mobile learning facilitates training or education on any portable digital

device, such as a smartphone, laptop, or tablet. The proliferation of wireless devices and the notion of "living our lives online" is well documented.

Using these same wireless devices to train and teach members of a company's workforce gives new freedom and options to both employees and corporate trainers. As the average person checks their smartphone over 200 times a day, companies that integrate mobile learning programs will find a ready and willing audience of learners.

The impact on American businesses is eye-opening.

Gartner, the technology research firm, expects the number of workforce members who use mobile devices to double or triple by 2018.[29] According to a report by InFocus, 47 percent of organizations use mobile devices in their training programs.[30]

A report from Brookings confirms this, finding: "As mobile phones, tablets, and other connected devices become more prevalent and affordable, wireless technology can dramatically improve learning and bring digital content to [learners]."[31]

Companies that capitalize on this dynamic trend will find strong benefits, including:

- **Anytime/anywhere learning.** Instead of having to adhere to a set class time and schedule, employees can access training on their mobile devices whenever and wherever they want to, giving them unlimited flexibility.[32]

- **Improved completion rates.** The engaging content of mobile learning lessons will motivate learners to complete their sessions, while the short form content improves retention.[33]

- **Promotes online learning communities.** Millennials in particular are eager to collaborate with their colleagues. Mobile devices make it very easy to create communities online, strengthening mutual support and employee cohesion.[34]

- **Easier to learn.** Since employees are already comfortable with their mobile devices, using them for mobile learning will be easy and familiar.[35]

- **Greater focus.** Employees already turn to their devices hundreds of times a day, so learning on a mobile device presents no distraction or disruption to their daily routines, but actually complements it.[36]

Companies that want to sharpen the language skills of their workers through mobile learning will find the Rosetta Stone mobile app a convenient and effective tool. Language lessons will easily become part of your workers' daily routine, accelerating their progress and language retention.

Assisting you with mobile learning is just one way that Rosetta Stone can support your eLearning programs, as the next section shows.

CONNECTING TO TODAY'S LEARNERS WITH ROSETTA STONE

As the research has shown, eLearning resonates with employees, making them more skillful and productive assets.

For businesses that compete in a global economy, investing in the language skills of their workforce through comprehensive eLearning training is both practical and forward-thinking. To that end, Rosetta Stone can be an indispensable ally.

Whether it's providing on-the-go instruction through mobile learning or rich audio and video content that delivers a game-like experience, Rosetta Stone solutions complement the learning styles preferred by today's workforce.

The evidence shows that employees respond enthusiastically to eLearning initiatives in the workplace.

The Rosetta Stone strategy is based on a blended teaching approach that harnesses a platform-driven technology supported by human interaction services like live tutoring. The result is a language learning process that is more efficient, enjoyable, and effective.

Companies will find an array of cost-effective benefits that Rosetta Stone offers, including:

Personalized programs. Corporate trainers can collaborate with Rosetta Stone to develop the exact content and lessons that meet their unique objectives.

Visual and auditory feedback. Rosetta Stone Speech Recognition technology gives learners immediate feedback on their pronunciation, building up their language confidence.

Live tutoring. In addition to encouragement embedded in the language lessons themselves, learners can also receive enhanced help and instruction through the experienced Rosetta Stone team of live tutors.

Steady progress. Rosetta Stone content is designed to support the success of individual learners and help them reach their goals in a timely and effective manner.

Engaging content. Rosetta Stone lessons draw in learners with content that is stimulating and relevant.

Accountability. Rosetta Stone provides you with detailed reporting and measurements to help you evaluate the progress of your workforce at every step of their language learning.

Easy scalability. The flexibility of online language learning and the many technology-driven options available from Rosetta Stone make it easy and quick for any business to scale up any program at any location, driving employee progress across your company.

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ELEARNING INITIATIVES

The evidence shows that employees respond enthusiastically to eLearning initiatives in the workplace. This keen desire on their part to learn new skills through tech-driven

methods can make a significant, positive impact on any organization. Companies that take advantage of these initiatives now will find it easier to attract and retain the best workers, find talented millennial employees, derive more loyalty, and be rewarded with an energized, creative proficient workforce for years to come.

Rosetta Stone can help.

To get more information specially prepared for corporate training decision makers on eLearning language programs for your company, go to: https://businesshub.rosettastone.com/.

Or, to talk about setting up a language learning program for your corporate training department now, contact Rosetta Stone today for a risk-free consultation.

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