

Your New Career:

Carve a new role managing the many groups necessary for successful e-learning.

e-learning expands the limits of learning services. New careers requiring various capabilities are emerging as e-learning is becoming a major sector of the field. These new careers require marketing, organizational planning, and technical applications.

By now, we know with e-learning that instruction can occur without time, place, and space limitations to multiple individuals, groups, and organizations at almost any time and any location they desire. In organizations, e-learning is an agent that provides multimessaging in the work environment created by multi-users. E-learning is, thus, an integrator of work flow. But most e-learning entrepreneurs face the problem that, in their own words, "they don't know the e-learning business." E-learning technology, concepts, and terms are new and constantly evolving.

The virtual hub

Because e-learning is open to continuous interaction, it requires a marketing process that many training practitioners have not yet incorporated into their career skills set. The process considers the needs and requirements of the organization and the learners, in such terms as customer orientation and training purchases. Trainers have to "market" to executives the need and value of investing in often costly e-learning solutions (or demonstrate the cost-savings), as well as market to learners what may be to them a new way of learning.

Through research and work in their organizations, the training function can establish an e-learning center. These virtual hubs become the channel for delivering information to learners. It's crucial to select the appropriate training to

meet individual and organizational learning needs and to constantly evaluate learners' experiences and the process as a whole.

The process

The process of e-learning is a series of operations that involve humans, computers, the Internet, and instructional material, and that produces the outputs to learners and the organization. The e-learning process should be evaluated as the activities, which create value, add various inputs to attain the aimed learning.

The e-learning process consists of the following inputs:

- information
- technical equipment
- a preparatory team
- teaching specialist(s)
- demand for learning.

Those are subject to various operations at certain times.

The outputs are the product or service, information or experience, that appears at the end of the operations.

Another process, the e-learning teaching process, comes on the scene. The e-learning teaching process can be detailed as

- forming the e-learning plan, basic programs, and learner data
- defining, stimulating, and attracting of the target audience
- putting e-learning into operation
- recording potential customers (learners) to the database
- starting the communication
- providing the e-learning program
- evaluating results of the training
- examining the learners
- identifying new needs.

A new career

Because e-learning necessitates working with many disciplines, it forms a new ground for training, requiring the coop-

E-Learning Process Manager

eration of people with different capabilities and qualifications. The work starts with creating the demand. In order to break any resistance, identify the organization's opinion leaders and set them into action to spread the word that e-learning is beneficial and necessary in a world transforming to an information society.

It takes a group

E-learning challengers. Careers formed within the e-learning process are two-fold. One is directly as a deliverer of e-learning. Another involves planning, marketing, and organizing e-learning.

Groups are required to make e-learning more effective, to put forth its value to individuals for their personal development, and to influence opinion leaders. That group could be called the e-learning challengers. They should be people who are knowledgeable about e-learning and believe in its value. They will make others believe. The next step is preparing e-learning programs in accordance with the defined learning needs and desires.

The marketing aspect of e-learning is important from the provider and receiver perspectives. The environment should be one where access to information is easy and flexible, and where people are made more conscious about acquiring new knowledge and skills. The traditional role of trainers has been to transfer knowledge and measure the results. That gains more importance in e-learning. The trainer becomes more responsible for making learning recommendations and improving content and delivery. Trainers also find themselves delivering to the organization's suppliers and customers.

E-learning balancers. The information and technology should be provided in harmony. Simulations not only enliven presentations, but also have the potential to improve learning retention. In approaches in which the technical aspect is regarded foremost, sometimes the instructional or content aspect is overlooked. Such myopia should be avoided. Thus, e-learning balancers are required.

E-learning balancers are coordinators

Identify the organization's opinion leaders, and set them into action to **spread the word that e-learning is beneficial and necessary** in a world transforming to an information society.

who balance the needs of the learners and the goals of the organization. These people should be highly disciplined and from different disciplines. They should be fair and competent evaluators. The members of the group of e-learning balancers can change according to the need and project at hand.

Creative design team. These people handle the technical aspects. E-learning challengers and balancers and the cre-

ative design team can be considered to be the e-learning account team. They will act as planners and as practitioners.

E-learning marketing research team. These people form a separate research group. This group should have the capacity to reach learners and other interested parties anywhere in the world and at any time—sending questions, discussing issues, and evaluating results via email, a virtual hub, or other means.

Information should be obtained from existing learners and potential learners, using different questions designed for each group. Questions can be put to potential learners during registry to any e-learning or on the intranet or virtual hub—such as, what kind of training the person is looking for, whether he or she has received similar training before, and so forth. Thus, the expectations and demands of potential participants are obtained. After or even during training, surveys can assess training needs and measure satisfaction of existing learners, sent via email weekly or monthly as appropriate. The information is saved in a database and added to the research.

E-learning knowledge incomers. The people who receive e-learning services should be asked at intervals whether they benefited and what other requirements they have. That is performed by the group, e-learning knowledge incomers. Those people can be from inside or outside of the organization, using specialists or subject matter experts in various areas relevant to the e-learning. This group can work with the e-learning market research and creative design teams to construct appropriate programs.

Network administrators and controllers.

These are required for the virtual hub. They build and operate the software and basic technologies to effect communication efficiently and to act as intermediaries when problems arise.

Formalizers. These are required in order to formalize the courses and content in an e-learning environment. They're people who shape content and application and connect with other departments to optimize tools and materials. They should be excellent communicators and marketers. They may oversee technical activities such as Internet connection and Webpage creation.

Don't be daunted by e-learning. The basic issues are the same as with any training effort: marketing direction, planning the training content and delivery, and determining the technical means. And as with all training, it is the customers who ultimately rule the transaction. They describe what kind of information they own, what kind of information they're interested in, and what price they're willing to pay.

In e-learning, developing good relations with learners beginning from the construction stage is extremely important. At that initial point, e-learning challengers and knowledge incomers play a pivotal role. In the next stage, the shift is towards the e-learning account team. The planners, controllers, and formalizers maintain the virtual hub.

In your new career as manager of the e-learning process, you provide technical, personal, and marketing solutions; a human relations approach; and an open mind to innovation and creativity. You will study, learn, and promote your career, with new technical knowledge required to understand and deliver. **TD**

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