

BEYOND THE LMS:
MODERNIZE YOUR
CORPORATE LEARNING
PROGRAMS WITH
SOCIAL AND INFORMAL
LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

The shape of learning has changed in the 21st century, and many of the approaches widely adopted 20, 30, and 40 years ago are no longer relevant. Maybe it has to do with the rapid pace at which news and information travels today. Or maybe it's how the explosion of social media has radically changed how we communicate. Maybe it's the mindset of millennials, now entering the workforce en masse. Or maybe it's all of the above. One thing, however, is clear: while the old ways of training still have their place in today's learning and development environment, a modern learning approach is increasingly critical for sustained business success.



WHAT IS MODERN LEARNING

Modern learning is how we ought to approach learning and development in the 21st century. Essentially, it takes formal training - think structured curricula, instructor-led classes, and online, computer-based training - to the next level by asking a fundamental question: how do people actually learn, within organizations and throughout day-to-day life?

Well, it turns out that while formal learning approaches play a role in both contexts, such as health and safety training for plant-floor employees or driving school for the aspiring driver, the large part of practical, effective learning is actually acquired through informal, nontraditional methods and environments.

Consider some of the extensive research conducted recently by research and analyst firms Brandon Hall Group¹, Aberdeen Group², Towards Maturity, and the 70:20:10 Institute³. Their reports indicated that learning in the workplace today occurs through a range of approaches within what is often described as the 70:20:10 learning framework.

So what is the 70:20:10 learning framework all about? Loosely defined, it looks at different learning approaches and bins them based on their perceived value and effectiveness at delivering knowledge and skills that are actually retained by learners. The framework divides each of these different types of learning approaches as follows:

- 70% of learning is acquired through from real-life and on-the-job experiences, tasks and problem solving.
- 20% of learning is acquired through direct feedback and from observing and working with others.
- 10% of learning is acquired through traditional, formal training, such as classes or courses (face-to-face and online) and reading.

What is notable here is that what many consider to be the most effective go-to training approach (i.e. traditional, formal learning) is widely believed to have the smallest role when it comes to effectively conveying information to learners.

It is important to note that no two people learn the same way, so the 70:20:10 is not absolute and will fluctuate based on the learner, their position, and the organization itself.

Modern learning is about building a culture of continuous learning in the flow of work

Additional research conducted by HR, management and learning specialists at Bersin by Deloitte⁴ suggests that what is described as the “revolution” in corporate learning that is associated with the 70:20:10 model will continue as learning approaches progress. As noted in a report on learning and development predictions for 2016:

“The most effective learning involves education (formal training), experiences (developmental assignments and projects), environment (a culture and work environment that facilitates learning), and exposure (connections and relationships with great people). Organizations that think about those four functions will likely be ahead of the curve in learning in 2016.”

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING MODERN LEARNING APPROACHES

While the 70:20:10 approach is not always accepted as the most essential and effective approach for all organizations, there is evidence to suggest that it is widely deemed to have value for many companies. A report by Charles Jennings and Towards Maturity¹ shows data indicating organizations that have embraced the 70:20:10 framework report:

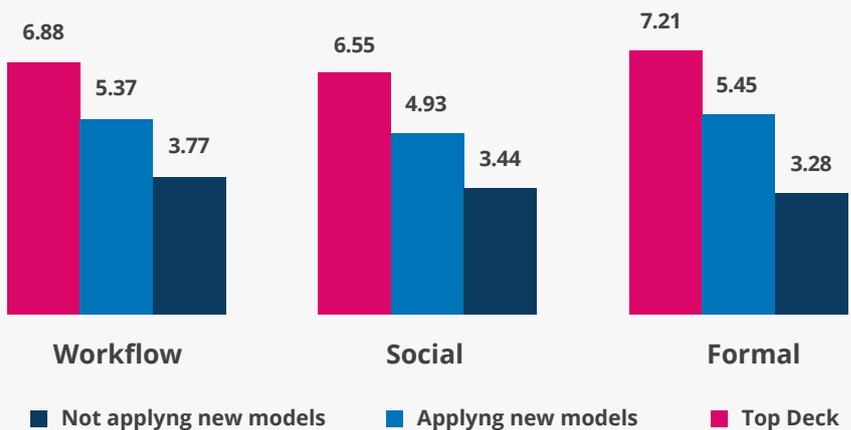
- 73% improvements in process
- 72% improvements in efficiency
- 63% improvements in productivity
- 56% report more agility and responsiveness across the organization
- 48% report benefits related to cultural change

Further, according to the data, those applying the 70:20:10 model were:

- Five times more likely to be able to attract talent
- Four times more likely to respond quickly to business changes
- Two times as likely to report improvements in staff motivation

Also, as seen in the charts below, it is clear that those who apply new models to embed learning into workflows have an improved focus on creating well-aligned, relevant and timely formal learning interventions as opposed to those who do not.

RANGE OF FOCUS ACROSS THE MODEL MEASURED BY THE 70:20:10 INDICES



Those actively applying new models to embed learning in the workflow have more focus on creating well-aligned, relevant and timely formal learning interventions than those who are not.

WHAT PROBLEMS MODERN LEARNING TACKLES?

We can see that in many cases this modern learning or 70:20:10 approach is successful, but what are the problems it is tackling, and what is it fundamentally addressing in order to improve learning effectiveness?

There's Too Much Hidden Knowledge in the Organization

Knowledge within a company is frequently hidden or hard to access when it is actually needed. It can be buried in various places: within business units, departments, physical folders, or the minds of a handful of subject matter experts (SME). And yet employees need this often-critical knowledge in order to complete essential tasks and improve their capacity to execute regular job functions.

So where do these employees go for the information they need to complete critical tasks? It is not the kind of information they can acquire or retain through formal courses, so they frequently ask around the organization and get the information directly from internal individuals they view as SMEs.

Information is Locked Up in Busy Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

There's no question of the value of SMEs within any organization. They are the holders of critical, specific information. However, they are typically preoccupied with their individual job functions and core tasks. They're not always available readily to help and transfer knowledge to new staff, and in most cases they are the only ones that can perform their specific job function. As a result, relying on SMEs alone to relate knowledge to new employers and learners is not a reliable approach, especially insofar as it cannot scale up as the organization grows.

Modern learning approaches can uncover means of relaying information otherwise locked up in the minds of SMEs to new learners in a scalable manner, thereby positioning the organization for a better ability to scale upwards, even as essential regular tasks are completed.

Individual and Team Performance is Incongruent -- But it Doesn't Have to Be

We often wonder why there are variances of performance across the organization -- why some teams perform better than others, and what secrets top-performing teams and individuals use in order to excel. Modern learning approaches are more effective at recognizing and isolating top-performing individuals and teams; capturing the knowledge, experience and methods that have lead to their successes; and relaying this information to new learners and other existing employees to better improve productivity and efficiency organization-wide.

Knowledge Isn't Easily Captured

Whereas traditional approaches are insufficient when it comes to capturing the valuable information and insights, intelligence and experience on-the-job employees are exposed to every day, modern learning approaches are geared towards systemizing this process. They harvest available knowledge within the organization and relay it directly to new learners in order to make the most of this essential, experience-based knowledge and spread it throughout the organization.

Formal Learning Accounts for a Fraction of Actual Learning

If formal learning only accounts for a fraction of actual learning, then organizations need to consider the time and resources invested in formal learning approaches. Formal courses and training, by nature, take individual employees away from their dedicated job functions. While they might be imparting basic and required knowledge to learners, the time committed to formal approaches needs to be weighed against the value the individuals and organizations are getting from the formal courses with a cost-benefit analysis.

This kind of assessment is especially valuable if it is true that people learn most efficiently with hands-on training alongside their peers and managers. Also, knowledge transfer is best achieved not during the actual onboarding process or as course material is made available to new employees, but at the point of actual need.

There is a wealth of learning opportunity and potential within an organization that traditional learning approaches cannot reveal, but modern learning approaches can uncover. Further, technology alone does not dictate the way in which people actually learn. Innovative, modern, learner-centric technology needs to facilitate and support the 'natural' way people acquire knowledge.



ONBOARDING AND TALENT RETENTION, SALES ENABLEMENT

Onboarding and retaining talents

While the onboarding, training and learning processes are obviously essential, employee engagement is also critical for success. Everyone in the organization needs training on new areas, but also opportunities to bring new ideas and skill sets to their environment. A culture of learning provides new opportunities to learn, contribute knowledge, reach out to experts, and get recognized and rewarded, thereby fostering engagement. Recent research by Gallup showed that engaged employees are nearly 90% less likely to leave their companies than their disengaged counterparts.

Sales Partner Enablement

Sales enablement is all about getting the right information into the hands of the right sellers at the right time and place, and in the right format. New product releases and updates, growing customer needs, shifting market requirements, and changing competitive landscape makes keeping the sales team up to date on value proposition and product information extremely challenging. Pushing content to sellers does not work and has never worked. Sellers are the busiest and most social learners in any organization, and just won't take long courses, not to mention retention. Go beyond the traditional blend (online, in person, virtual classroom) that by nature work in a "push" modality - pushing content to learners. Enable a pull modality where seller can instantly access learning and knowledge assets and reach out to subject matter experts on their time to learn the sales process or product.



ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF INFORMAL TRAINING

Implementing a new learning technology into practice cannot be accomplished on a whim. Learning and development departments often put a lot of planning into the transition, especially since they frequently need to demonstrate a return on investment (ROI) whenever the shift is made. Figuring out how to uncover often-elusive answers in the ROI calculation is challenging in general and in the best of cases. It can be even more challenging to demonstrate ROI when it comes to informal learning programs.

In a co-sponsored study between Docebo and Brandon Hall Group, Docebo laid out a method to assess the ROI of experiential, informal and formal learning.¹

With the approach, it is helpful to first establish an understanding of the estimated distribution of formal, experiential and social learning within an organization by looking at the following elements:

- Formal learning: Classroom, courses and other curricula.
- Experiential learning: Learning that primarily happens through direct experience, on the job.
- Social learning: Learning that primarily happens by working with others.

After this baseline is established, it is important to understand how well each learning form is assessed. Some of the following questions can assist with this process:

Questions for assessing formal learning

- What is your average training completion rate?
(% of students that have completed the courses)
- How many training hours does each employee receive per year?
- What is your ratio between traditional classroom training and technology-based training?
(eLearning, mobile learning etc.)

Questions for assessing social learning

- Can you measure the ratio between how much a learning asset is viewed by a learner and all the content available to that learner?
- Can you measure the time a learner spends viewing the learning asset?
- On average, how do your learners score your learning assets?
(e.g. measured by number of thumbs up/down, answers marked by "Best Answers" etc.)

Questions for assessing experiential learning

- A subject matter expert's spontaneous learning asset contribution vs. answers provided vs. contributions from other SMEs
- Of all questions asked of an SME, how many responses did that SME provide?
- On average, how well do your learners rate your SMEs?

Tallying the formal learning total

Going one-by-one, if you have answered all three questions, you are doing a great job in assessing the effectiveness of formal, social, and experiential learning. If you could answer two out of three questions, then you are moderately assessing your learners. If you have answered one out of three, then you are somewhat assessing your learners, and if you answered zero out of three, then you're probably not assessing your learners much at all.

Example of ROI Calculation

With all of this in mind, here is an example of how a hypothetical organization might approach generating an ROI calculation:

Company ABC decides to invest in its customer success team's training, and sets a goal to achieve a 3-month increase in the average customer lifetime value. If they meet this goal, Company ABC can expect to see a \$300,000 increase in recurring revenue. This new Social Learning initiative costs about \$20,000. We will use a correction factor of 0.75. Therefore, the ROI is: $ROI = (\text{Monetary Benefit}/\text{Cost}) * 100 * 0.75 = 1125$



USING TECHNOLOGY FOR MODERN LEARNING

Modern learning, based on the 70:20:10 learning model, is bidirectional: it involves both push and pull learning - knowledge and skills being delivered to learners and sought by learners. Traditional learning approaches have the 'push' covered to some extent, but when we add informal learning to the equation, the 'pull' aspect is better facilitated in the learning process.

Effectively incorporating modern blended learning approaches with technology means finding the right solution that brings some of the following elements together within one platform:

- 1 Online learning:** Solutions should feature the ability to organize courses and catalogs, distribute learning content across the extended enterprise, and track and measure results (which are increasingly desired among companies trying to show value through informal learning approaches.)
- 2 ILT, Classroom training management:** Trainers should also be able to electronically manage classroom schedules and locations, monitor performance and attendance, and assign learners and instructors to courses.
- 3 Social learning:** Users also need a place where they can engage experts, ask questions, and get answers when they need them. An ideal platform enables learners and experts to join forces to create best practices and curate knowledge capital. It is also a place where performers can be recognized by coworkers.
- 4 Experiential learning:** Effective solutions need to offer ways for learners and experts to contribute with user-generated knowledge that can be validated through peer-review and shared across teams, all while fostering a culture that rewards top performers.
- 5 Mobility:** An effective cloud-based platform that supports all of the above and enables any delivery modality, from PCs to tablets and smartphones, is no longer a nice to have. It's now an expected aspect of any best-in-class eLearning solution. Don't settle for anything less.

ABOUT DOCEBO

Docebo is a cloud-based LMS designed to help organizations get their people learning faster and building knowledge that leads to greater business success. Only Docebo provides an enterprise-wide learning management system with an implementation methodology that is both swift and agile.

Sold in more than 80 countries and offered in over 32 languages, Docebo (Latin for “I will teach”) has more than 1,100 clients worldwide and offers an enterprise elearning solution for mid-size to large organizations. In addition to being heralded by PCMag.com as “the best online learning platform for business on the market,” Docebo has received numerous industry accolades for its technology and approach to improving learning outcomes for its customers.

With learning modules for collaborative and experiential learning, the Docebo LMS is the best platform for integrating a truly blended learning approach to your training strategy. Start your 14-day free trial to test-drive Docebo and unlock your learners’ potential by using a modern learning LMS.

SOURCES

¹ Brandon Hall Group: Measuring the ROI of Informal Learning. David Wentworth, Claude Werder, Nissa Benjamin, December 2015

² Aberdeen Group: The New 70:20:10: the Changing Face of Learning. Ms. Michael M. Moon, September 2015

³ Towards Maturity: 70+20+10=100 The Evidence Behind the Numbers. Charles Jennings (The 70:20:10 Institute), Laura Overton & Dr Genny Dixon, February 2016

⁴ “Predictions for 2016: A Bold New World of Talent, Learning, Leadership and HR Technology Ahead.”, Bersin by Deloitte

THE LMS YOUR PARTNERS WILL LOVE TO USE

Don't leave your partners without the right tools to represent your brand. Docebo supports social and mobile learning to ensure your partners are armed with the right training content, whenever they need it, with a full suite of integrations and automation tools to reduce your time investment while fostering stronger relationships. Meanwhile, Docebo's advanced reporting tools can help you prove and improve the return on channel investment.

See the Docebo learning management system in action!

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