

How to get eLearning used

A no-nonsense guide





Welcome

eLearning is such a great proposition. Study when you want, where you want, for as long as you want.

Yet the beauty of eLearning is also its weakness. Unlike face to face training, there's no set time to turn up for class.

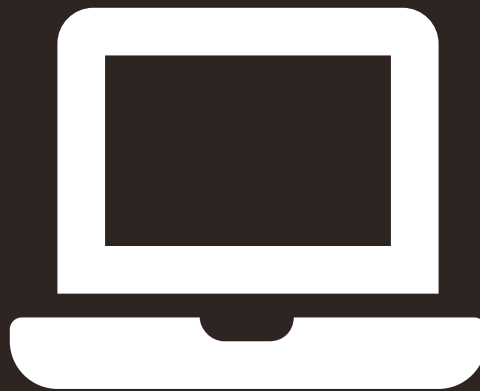
Students are responsible for setting their own time aside and working through the eLearning themselves: they need to really want to do it – or be required to do it. And these are adult students with competing priorities for their time. Very often, the promise of eLearning isn't realised in practice.

But there's a lot you can do to get your valuable eLearning used. We offer some practical advice and tips in this eBook.

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**Develop a marketing and
communication strategy**



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Introduction

Adult learners are busy and have their own priorities. Getting people to do any kind of training involves spelling out the benefits of specific training courses such as reaching career goals, personal development, and developing performance.

Getting people to use eLearning resources and/or a learning environment demands a broader set of strategic messages.



1. Create an identity

Develop a name and logo for your eLearning courses/solution/environment. Make a marketing communications plan: what, how and when will you communicate the services and solutions you offer? This not only helps you market your courses externally, it's also a focus and encourages a sense of identity for your team.

2. Spell out the personal benefits

Tell your learners what's in it for them.

Why does eLearning work so well for adults? For example:

- People will be able to learn in their own time.
- They won't need to rearrange their schedules to fit in training sessions. They can schedule it whenever they have the time.
- They can schedule short or long training sessions to suit their workload and the way they learn.
- They can revisit material they aren't confident in or skip material they are without affecting the rest of the class.
- They can experiment with the material in a safe environment.
- They can elect to do courses which will improve their career opportunities.
- They can build their own curriculum and track their progress.



Stressing why eLearning will make life easier and learning more effective, will help people see the benefits and give it the benefit of the doubt rather than dismissing it as a cost cutting exercise

Benefits in brief

- You don't have to travel
- It takes less of your time
- You don't have to take a day off work
- You don't have to sit on a waiting list
- You can use PC, laptop, mobile or smartphone
- You can train just when you need to
- You can work in private
- You can go at your own pace
- You can plan your own development
- You can practice as much as you need
- You can access a wider selection of subjects & skills
- You can choose your own path through the material



3. Enlist visible top level support

Any initiative that has visible, sustained top level support is much more likely to be successful. It needs to be more than a welcome video from the MD or CEO. The message from the top needs to include how eLearning fits into the organisation's working and learning culture and how staff are expected to use it to improve their performance and maintain compliance.

Choose sponsors who are known, respected and listened to and who will be effective advocates. Of course, actions speak louder than words, so it helps if the CEO is seen to be using eLearning too!

4. Keep talking - on every channel

Set up a **dialogue** with your student body.

Tell: keep them up to date with any new courses, the most popular course over a period, the most talked about, case studies from people who've directly benefited from the learning.

Ask: ask for the learners' feedback and questions. Given them an easy and responsive way to talk to you. Where appropriate, publish recent questions and feedback to demonstrate that you listen.





Reach: use any and every internal communication channel. Posters, newsletters, internal publications, intranet, internal forums, internal social media.

Develop networks across the organisation and every level to get your message across. If you need inspiration, have a chat with your marketing department – make sure they understand what your budget is from the get-go!

Repeat: include useful information in every communication or promotion:

- How to find and access eLearning.
- A course/skills list.
- Key benefits for your franchise: e.g.: mobile access, eBook takeaways, multiple language support.

5. Be relevant and timely

Does your organisation have specific milestones during the year that eLearning can support? Performance reviews, health and safety or compliance checks, graduate onboarding, or recruitment? Wherever you can, promote specific eLearning courses and the benefits of taking them just when the topic is most relevant and students are most motivated. What solutions you can provide for individuals, line managers and departments to improve or support key events?



6. Congratulate (publicly)

When a student completes a course, acknowledge their effort. A printed certificate, a virtual badge and if it's culturally OK, a notification to their line manager. Again, if it's culturally OK and technically possible, why not create a leader board?

2

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**Create an excellent
learning environment**



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7. Use high quality content

ELearning is often implemented as a low cost alternative to more expensive face-to face training. While people don't mind cost efficiencies, they do mind being served up poor quality materials and they treat it accordingly.

Choose content that's well organised and well executed; that is interesting, delivers a good experience and that it adds value and insight; and that makes your staff feel valued.

8. Pay attention to the hygiene factors

Be prepared for kick back and have some answers ready.

For example:

My English isn't good enough

Choose courses that are written in simple English and that have an integrated translation capability.

I don't have access to a PC

Choose mobile ready courses that people can use on smartphones or tablets.

I don't have audio

Choose courses that offer both audio and non-audio versions without skimping on the user experience.

I tried it and it didn't work

Choose a supplier who offers great customer and technical service who will proactively hold the learner's hand.

I couldn't remember it at work

Choose materials that include takeaways with hints and tips and planning tools.

I couldn't work out how to use it

Choose courses that have an intuitive interface that's easy to navigate.

I couldn't see its relevance to me

Choose courses that can be easily and inexpensively customised to suit your audience.

I used a 'cheat sheet' to pass the test

Choose courses with cheat resistant testing. E.g.: using randomised question banks.

I found it hard to find stuff I'd already done

Choose courses that chunk information logically and allow easy access to the chunks.

I didn't have enough time

Especially for refresher training, choose courses that pre-test to determine content and then deliver it at pace.

9. Make some of it mandatory



Elearning must
be done

To get people used to the learning environment, make some of your courses mandatory. Health and safety, compliance, onboarding, or organisation specific training could all fit into this category.

By ensuring people have a reason to use your courses (and learning environment) you will help to build a habit of going to the learning system for development and learning.

10. Customise judiciously

If you have the budget to do so, consider developing fully custom courses or tailoring ready to use material.

For example: combine generic and custom courses:

- Use an off-the-shelf course to develop the general skills for setting goals, giving and receiving feedback effectively and creating a positive atmosphere for a review.
- Develop a custom course to cover the specific organisational process of performance calibration and talent management and development.

For example: tailor ready to use material with:

- Branding to make it resonate visually with learners.
- Changing scenarios and activities to reflect the business.
- Replacing generic imagery with specifically shot photos.
- Adding specific procedures and processes.
- Adding links to intranet



11. Require both completion and a performance level

If learners know that they are measured on completion alone, they will skip through the content as fast as possible.

If they are tested with a set of randomised questions that deter cheating, they are more likely to actually use the materials and feel a sense of satisfaction on passing.

12. Involve line managers

Tracking and reporting individual performance regularly can help learners keep up with their training. If you include the learner's manager in the loop, completion rates will most likely be higher.

For example: managers can conduct a post course review to link content to the workplace and the individual's specific performance needs.

These mini performance reviews help managers understand their colleagues better and helps the learner take the eLearning more seriously and thoughtfully.

As long as the process of tracking, reporting and review are clearly laid out in advance, most staff will respond positively to manager involvement.



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Checklist



Use this handy checklist to review the key points we've dealt with in this eBook and to help you increase your eLearning uptake.

Marketing

Do you have a strong name and identity?

Do you have senior leaders on board?

Have you refined a list of benefits to communicate to your eLearning community?

Do you have a communication plan that:

- tells learners about news and success stories?
- gives learners an easy way to feedback their ideas?
- uses all possible channels that your learners access: email, intranet, social media channels?

Are your plans linked to the key events in the business year?

Do you have a way to recognise and congratulate successful learners?

ELearning environment

Do your learners like your content?

Have you handled relevant hygiene factors:

- Non English speakers
- Mobile ready courses
- Non-audio alternatives
- Learner technical support
- Links to the workplace
- Appropriate customisation
- Appropriate performance testing
- Easy to use and review
- Adaptive to learner needs

Can you make some eLearning packages mandatory?

Can you tailor strategic packages to your organisation for better relevance: brand/imagery/scenarios?

Do you measure/ incentivise completion and performance?

Do you involve line managers?

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