



Training and Technology: LEVERAGING THE POWER OF DIGITAL

The innovative use of technology is making profound changes in every aspect of the pharmaceutical industry. For commercial training organizations in particular, technology can transform the way we work, measurably improving performance and delivering more information while reducing costs and minimizing time out of territory.

Technology advances in both device and application options offer creative solutions that engage learners and improve learner adoption levels without requiring a face-to-face setting. Just as important, technology advances allow for improved metrics that link results back to business drivers, enabling training leaders to gauge and evaluate performance improvement.

Training organizations understand this. According to a TGA Advisors "Virtual How" (member survey), training leaders rate learning technology "extremely important" (6.2 on a scale of 1 to 7) to future success.

At the same time, day-to-day demands keep increasing, while shrinking budgets and limited resources add to the challenge. Training leaders must become more creative, leveraging technology to meet the commercial organization's future demands. Embracing these new technology capabilities requires proper organizational alignment and a detailed learning technology strategy that supports current and future business goals.

Organizational Alignment

A key to the successful use of technology is alignment and consistent communication between commercial/sales training and connected functions, particularly training operations, information technology, and sales force automation teams.

Technology tends to cut across different functions within an organization, making governance and best practices a continual challenge. Many of our benchmarking clients are evaluating the effectiveness of the cross-functional use of technology to improve commercial operations.

Develop a Formal Strategy

Training organizations without a strategy

may find they lack the ability to manage and leverage technology to its fullest extent. One client told us, "We spend millions on technology, but we're not getting the full value of our investment because of poor planning and ineffective cross-functional execution."

While many companies acknowledge the importance of a formal learning technology strategy, TGA found that only 37% of surveyed organizations actually have one. Our research shows that stakeholders are generally unaware of learning technology options and capabilities that can help foster performance and reduce cost. This lack of a formal plan, consistently communicated and shared with stakeholders, greatly inhibits the training organization's effectiveness.

Leverage the Power of Digital

Technology can help drive and support trends that shape how learners consume information and knowledge. A common pitfall is conversion of instructor-led content to digital without redesigning and leveraging the benefits of new devices or application solutions. This leads to low engagement, loss of interest, and frustrated learners.

The most successful companies have a culture open to technology and change. Innovative companies use a blended mix of instructor-led, e-learning, simulation, video, and other formats. Many explore technology that drives new learning paradigms — social learning, exploratory learning, peer-to-peer, and adaptive learning, for example.

The hottest trend we see is the move to custom mobile learning applications; 96% of TGA client companies have rolled out iPads. Many are exploring customized apps that personalize the experience with just-in-time content and user-driven controls that allow learners to customize their experience.

Many pharmaceutical organizations are leveraging video-based solutions for just-in-time information, including marketing messages, pre-meeting data, and field-based selling needs. As one client said, "The use of informal YouTube-style video will change how people learn."

Gamification is another popular topic that training leaders continue to explore. Gaming

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mechanisms improve retention by making training more competitive and engaging. Several training organizations are exploring this and other modes, appealing to a generation that thrives on technology-based learning.

Keep it Going

Technology advances offer a variety of options when working on training pull-through and informal learning opportunities that occur after formal training has been completed. This underscores the value of technology to increase knowledge retention, ongoing reinforcement, and application of knowledge on-the-job.

Training organizations must adapt to new learning trends and leverage technology across different therapeutic areas to stay competitive. This includes designing unique solutions that offer the proper blend of features and functionality that encourage learning and allow learners to customize their experience. **PV**

TGA Advisors, a division of KnowledgePoint360, is a benchmarking and advisory services firm for pharmaceutical commercial operations.

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How well are you leveraging technology to maximize performance?



Maximize your learning technology investment with **Training Innovation & Learning Technology (TILT) Assessment**

- Compare and contrast your current learning technology capabilities, processes, utilization and adoption levels with those of other companies
- Gain fact-based, actionable insights and recommendations that highlight gaps and opportunities
- Align your business needs to a well-defined learning technology strategy and roadmap



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