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E-learning requires a major behavioral change within a corporation. To achieve this behavioral change, a number of cultural challenges must be overcome within the company to achieve wider acceptance of e-learning or e-training as part of the regular training and instructional processes.

There is a reluctance to adopt new technologies, hesitation to move away from face-to-face learning, resistance by upper management to embrace new practices, and unrealistic expectations that employees can learn on their own time.

To overcome these obstacles, companies are establishing e-learning departments to support virtual initiatives for their internal enterprises, however, many of these departments are still small with limited budgets and are not empowered to support corporate change.

But, if change is to happen — as it must — the IT departments and corporate training departments must be considered the neurological centers for corporate information dissemination.

According to Paul Healy, VP of Intuition Life Sciences, we retain 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we discuss with others, 80% of what we experience, and 95% of what we teach others. Thus as e-learning and e-training within the pharmaceutical and life-sciences industries continue to evolve, companies are fine-tuning solution applications to incorporate the right blend of technology and face-to-face approaches to move business forward.

“A few years ago, pharmaceutical companies wanted to put everything into an e-format,” says Steven Just, Ph.D., president of Pedagogue Solutions. “Today, some of these companies are backing off after they realized that e-learning is fine, but they are not going to ditch other training applications.”

Brandon-Hall.com, a Sunnyvale, Calif.-based research and advisory firm that specializes in providing a continuous stream of knowledge as well as advisory strategies in all areas of e-learning technology, reports



John Racik

The e-learning and e-training departments need to move up the corporate ladder.

E-training and e-learning have to become a corporate initiative and not something that is just pushed down to sales training.

that the total e-learning market in the United States reached \$10.3 billion in 2002. Corporations and businesses will spend more than any other sector — an estimated \$4.6 billion — on e-learning. By 2006, the total e-learning market will grow to \$83.1 billion. Five years later it is predicted to climb to \$212.9 billion (\$42.6 billion of which will be spent on corporate and business applications).

The move toward blended solutions, cross marketing, and integrated technologies is blurring the previous distinctions between sectors and now the greater “learning market” in the United States is valued at more than \$900 billion.

Web meetings, blended e-learning tools, Web-broadcasting systems, and myriad other technology products, including 3D animation, allow organizations to conduct real-time business collaborations, mitigate hands-on training experiences, and develop cooperative work environments. According to Brandon-Hall.com, synchronized media components — application sharing and session archiving — is gaining more popularity and value among users as learners access archived live sessions even more than the live sessions themselves.

“The important thing with e-learning initiatives is to make sure that as the strategies are rolled out everything is actionable and builds on the previous model,” says John Racik, president and CEO of Blue Diesel. “The idea is to take the best practices of adult learning and behavior modification and use those insights to help trainees get the most out of a program.”

Taren Grom
Editor

A blended approach