

11 factors to the successful growth of an active e-learning culture

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The days when learning was thought to be a passive process of receiving new ideas and information are long gone. Today, effective learning is energetic, active and actionable, and promotes the application of new ideas and information. This type of learning is referred to as "active learning".



Image: Supplied

Active e-learning

An approach to online instruction that actively engages learners through conversations, problem solving, case studies, role plays and other methods. Active e-learning places greater responsibility on the learner to engage, integrate and apply.

Active e-learning:

- Promotes higher order thinking such as application, analysis, and synthesis.
- Engages learners on a much deeper level.
- Enables learners to apply and transfer their knowledge better.

Why then is e-learning still stagnant in so many of today's organisations?

“ The one key ingredient to growing a culture of active e-learning in organisations is a leadership team that recognises and promotes the purpose and value of active learning. These are learning champions who understand that continuous learning has a greater role to play as it can effectively overcome some of their organisation's biggest challenges, and even assist in achieving their stretch goals. ”

Of course, no leader can do it alone. Without human resources (HR) and administrative champions as support, a culture of active learning may not be possible. But with a vision, guidance and empowerment across functional teams, leaders are irreplaceably important for making change happen.

Here are 11 key factors that are fundamental for successfully growing a culture of active e-learning in any type of organisation:

1. E-learning advocacy

Make the benefits and outcomes of active learning widely known and understood, across all levels of employees. This will ignite a workforce that wants to develop themselves – and their organisation – and not think of learning as a task, but a passion.

2. Multiple training methods

Transitioning to e-learning can be challenging, let alone to active e-learning. Develop an organisational strategy that includes incentives, and healthy competition via gamification, to ensure widespread cultural change.

3. Innovative culture

Motivate your staff to embrace this new way of learning that is active and engaging. Organisations that embrace active e-learning are excited to cross thresholds.

4. Embrace technology

Avoid taking the joy out of learning with complex or overlapping technologies. Rather make use of one tailored, learner-centric platform, designed specifically for your organisation and for your learner's easy adoption. This dispels the stigma that e-learning is clunky, boring, complex, or costly.

5. General adoption

Don't limit your e-learning programmes to just one department. Smart e-learning solutions can be used across all departments and all levels of employees, laying a foundation for growth.

6. Align deployment with business objectives

Roll out e-learning programmes to teams and departments that can make the greatest impact first, and then follow through with other departments. That way you will get early results and reduce wasting learning opportunities and resources. Every day is an opportunity for your teams to learn and grow.

7. Flow into individual assessments

Integrate your e-learning programmes with employee assessments. Focus on the individual's growth needs and correlate learning with their performance appraisals.

8. Showcase successes

Showcase e-learning success to generate internal (and external) enthusiasm and enhance recruitment efforts, recognising that today's employees expect learning opportunities within their organisation.

9. Leadership champions

Leaders who maintain a rigorous focus on active learning and inspire others to become torchbearers play a

monumental role in the success of robust e-learning programmes. In contrast, without leaders' enlightenment and involvement, HR and L&D teams are often blocked in their efforts to proliferate ongoing learning and development.

10. Multifunctional planning

Involve a variety of teams, such as admin, HR, IT, and department heads. Organisations that have diverse buy-in and involvement with identifying objectives and content opportunities enjoy success in ways beyond what any traditional learning can do. A top-down approach that's limited to finance and procurement will never fly.

11. Budget strategy

Create a planned financial approach, from strategy to implementation to optimisation and growth, tying all phases directly to employee and department success metrics and the organisation's strategic plan.

Take care not to focus on a few growth factors while ignoring the others. A combination of factors will drive true impact. That said, the buy-in and involvement of an organisation's leaders is the one factor that cannot be ignored, and they can't — and shouldn't — do it alone.

Organisations are dynamic structures, forever responding to internal and external factors that need to evolve at breakneck speed. There's no denying that learning and development across all levels of a business are critical to its survival, let alone success, and the support of its leaders is the only way to ensure success.

ABOUT MICHAEL GULLAN

Michael Gullan is the founder and CEO of G&G Advocacy. Michael provides strategic consulting to G&G Advocacy's clients at a senior level. Michael is passionate about the science of adult learning in the corporate workplace and has made it his mission to provide innovative and effective e-learning solutions designed to nurture an educated and high-performance workforce in South Africa so we can build a stronger, sustainable economy which creates more jobs and opportunities for society.

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