WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION:

## BUILDING EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A MODERN WORKFORCE

Advancing technologies, skills gaps, changing standards, disengaged employees – these issues and more challenge companies across a range of industries.

The best solution? Training and development.

The answer may be obvious, but building an effective training and development program presents many challenges in its own right. How can you keep employees engaged during trainings? What techniques prevent employees from forgetting everything the moment the training is over?

Of course, in the shadow of a global pandemic, many companies are facing even more dire problems, and have had to transition their entire workforce from an office to a work-from-home set-up virtually overnight. These are the lucky ones, with unemployment skyrocketing and many out of work. The far-reaching effects of the novel coronavirus have disrupted lives across the globe and the shockwaves are no doubt going to continue for the foreseeable future in every facet of life.
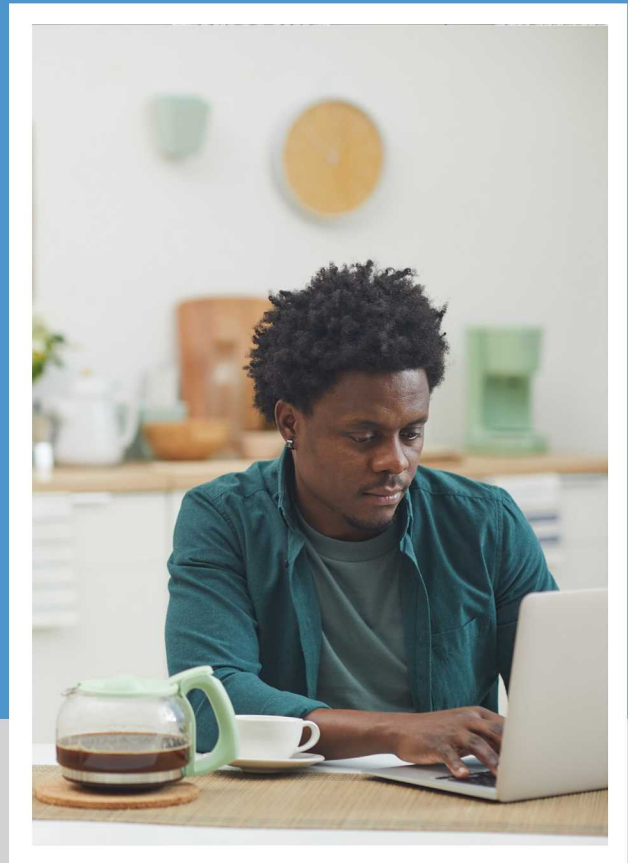
With all of these challenges, training and development may seem like a luxury. However, it is still as important as ever in building company culture, teaching essential skills and maintaining a sense of unity throughout an organization.

Read on to learn more about tips for building a solid development program, remote learning best practices and how the TurningPoint interactive learning platform can best be integrated to support effective interactive learning techniques and build a strong foundation for employee education.

WHAT IS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT?

Employee training and development is more than just a few mandatory sessions interspersed throughout the year. Instead, comprehensive programs open the door to personal improvement and career advancement. They are organized endeavors, and exist to meet the needs of both employees and companies alike.

It's not just companies that see the value of a well-trained workforce, but employees as well. In fact, in a recent report from Udemy[1], 42 percent of employees said that learning and development is the most important benefit when deciding where to work. Being able to show a potential recruit what your organization has to offer regarding personal and professional growth makes a job more attractive, and communicates right from the start how much you value your employees.

From the beginning, training gets employees started on the right foot as a productive member of the team. As their jobs evolve over the years, training continues to be essential to keeping a company on the cutting edge and providing the best services to its clients. Training tools, from simple PowerPoints to comprehensive learning systems, can assist companies in carrying out these programs and enriching the employee experience every step of the way.

1 Udemy. (2018) 2018 Millennials at Work Report. Retrieved April 7, 2020, from:
https://research.udemy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Udemy_2018_Measuring_Millennials_Report_20180618.pdf

INTRODUCING AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING TOOL

The TurningPoint platform is an in-class and online interactive learning solution that drives the full learning experience with measurable outcomes.

In short, instructors can ask interactive questions, prompt immediate feedback and assess learner understanding during real-time and asynchronous trainings, and then access and organize key analytics with detailed reporting functions. TurningPoint also provides the tools to build trainings that include not only interactive questions but also HTML text, videos, PowerPoint slides and more.

Of note, especially for those doing remote training, is that TurningPoint makes it possible to deliver all content to participants during a live training or presentation via TurningPoint's mobile app, without the need for additional screen share tools. This allows the entire presentation to be available in one place, and makes it simpler to use as an interactive learning tool when the presenter and participants are in different locations.

BUILDING A TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Perhaps the most difficult part of any major project is getting started. Even for a company that values the importance of training and development, building a program from the ground up (or improving one that exists but is lacking) presents a challenge. Here are a few steps to consider as you take the plunge.

ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY

Avoid simply asking department heads to "look into training possibilities" or some other vague edict. Instead, make sure that responsibility for building and overseeing the staff development program is clearly assigned. This is all too often overlooked.

ESTABLISH LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This is the backbone of any training. Knowing exactly what your employees need to learn, and how you will measure the achievement of those goals, lays the foundation for designing the content of the training and building assessments to measure those goals. These assessments could take the form of interactive questions throughout a training, a quiz or exam after it is over, or even a practical demonstration of learned skills.

DETERMINE WHAT TRAINING NEEDS TO BE DONE

Lay out a schedule of mandatory trainings, and figure out a system to ensure that every employee participates. Then comes the tricky part: figuring out what other skill development sessions are needed throughout the company. Conducting a skills inventory can come in handy here. A company should start by identifying skills categories that are relevant to their industry and then building an organized inventory of which employees have those skills (and at what level). Next steps involve a deeper analysis of the inventory to help identify the areas where talent is plentiful as well as areas where it is thin.

COLLECT REGULAR FEEDBACK

Once a solid training and development plan is in place, it must not remain static. Instead, a successful program needs to move with the changing needs of the marketplace and your workforce. Regularly asking your workers for input into the effectiveness of current educational opportunities, as well as what they want to see that is not currently offered, will keep your offerings fresh and ensure that employees are both well-prepared and excited about their jobs.

TRAINING IN A REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Many training fundamentals are the same regardless of whether employees are present in an office or working from a remote location. However, there are some challenges that are particularly resonant in a remote environment.

CHOOSE YOUR TECHNOLOGY WISELY

It is important to carefully evaluate the technology that will enable you to run successful trainings. While technology is often an important piece of the puzzle for in-person training, it is an absolute must for remote learning. Nevertheless, there is no need to overwhelm employees with overly complicated systems.

Armed with your learning objectives, you can research remote learning tools knowing which features are essential and which are merely attractive bells and whistles. Other factors to take into account include how technologically savvy your employees are, what kind of equipment they have on hand, and how much tech support your organization can provide.

STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR LEARNERS

Even when they are not in the same room, instructors and learners can still maintain a dialogue. Of course, it can be difficult to keep everyone's attention when they are not in front of one another, and cat videos are but a click away.

The same is true for tracking comprehension, a task that remote training makes more difficult since instructors cannot rely on facial expressions or body language to indicate confusion. Trainers need to consider how they will overcome these difficulties every step of the way, and might want to consider using features within the conference software or comprehensive tools like TurningPoint in order to spur engagement and communication.

GIVE ASYNCHRONOUS TRAINING A TRY

Asynchronous trainings have become increasingly popular over the years, even before the drastic shift we are experiencing now. According to the LinkedIn Learning 2020 Workplace Learning Report[2], 57 percent of the learning and development professionals surveyed anticipated spending more money on their online learning programs. On the other hand, 38 percent anticipated spending less on instructor-led training.

Although they lack the immediate back-and-forth of a live training, online learning has the benefit of letting employees digest the material in their own time with the flexibility of completing the work when it is convenient for them.

Many factors go into determining what a given company needs to support an asynchronous training program. Number of employees, complexity of the training and reporting requirements are just a few crucial elements, in addition to the technological resources that are on hand. TurningPoint's web-based platform offers one way to build online trainings that include videos and interactive questions to ensure that employees enjoy a rich training experience.

2 LinkedIn Learning. (2020). 2020 Workplace Learning Report. Retrieved April 7, 2020, from
https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report

BENEFITS OF INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Once the framework for training and development is in place, it is up to the trainers to build classes and workshops that actually achieve the necessary learning objectives. From orientation and new skill development to leadership planning and mandatory safety trainings, company-wide programs have to cover a wide range of topics. That is why they must all have a solid foundation built on proven learning techniques.

Interactive learning is one such technique that trainers often use to get employees actively engaged in the learning process, often through the use of technology. Incorporating interactive learning can be as simple as adding interactive questions to presentations in order to focus engagement and enable formative assessments. Gamification (or using games as a means of both reinforcing concepts and making trainings more fun) and peer instruction (where learners answer a question first on their own and then after meeting in a small group for a discussion) are other popular strategies.

In contrast to more passive techniques, these interactive learning practices provide benefits including improvements to:

ENGAGEMENT

One big benefit of all types of interactive learning is the positive effect on engagement. Techniques like the ones outlined above tend to sharpen focus and reduce daydreaming. In fact, one study showed that 87 percent of learners found lessons more engaging with the addition of response technology.

COLLABORATION

In more passive, lecture-focused learning environments, one or two people typically dominate discussions. Interactive learning techniques instead give everyone the opportunity to engage with their peers, express their opinions and be exposed to more diverse points of view.

CRITICAL THINKING

Most importantly, interactive learning pushes learners to stretch their abilities and gives them the tools to achieve deeper learning. By engaging learners, and making them central to the learning experience, they are better able to more deeply analyze and apply the subject matter while strengthening team-building and interpersonal skills at the same time.

TURNINGPOINT: AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING TOOL

In order to incorporate interactive learning into training and development programs, the right tools and techniques are essential. Here are a few ways that TurningPoint can not only make training and assessment more effective, but also help a company to build a culture of learning.

REAL-TIME POLLING

Training tools for employees in live sessions are often designed to keep leaners engaged and to quickly assess their level of understanding. Interactive technology like TurningPoint is an excellent way to accomplish those goals, either in person or in a remote training environment.

Live polling with TurningPoint is a relatively simple process. Presenters ask questions in real time by adding TurningPoint slides to a PowerPoint presentation; polling over top of videos, documents and other applications with a floating toolbar; or building question lists directly into a comprehensive web-based platform. Participants then respond to the interactive questions with their own cell phones, tablets and computers, or with hardware clickers.

Active learning is a powerful training strategy that real-time polling helps to make possible. Aforementioned techniques like gamification, enhanced lecture and peer instruction have been shown to improve learning results, and can make even tedious trainings more interesting.

Beyond the obvious goal of fighting short attention spans and staving off boredom, real-time interactive questions enhance trainings in a wide variety of ways. One of the most notable is that, when the learners' responses are displayed, instructors can make adjustments to the lesson based on the answers. In that way, they can move on quickly from material that everyone understands, while taking more time on the concepts that prove to be trickier for each individual group.

Additionally, an interactive learning solution is a valuable tool for helping employees overcome participation anxiety. For many people, raising their hand to answer a question is an intimidating prospect. Using an interactive learning solution helps that worry disappear and inspires lively discussions instead of awkward silence.

eLEARNING

Effective online or asynchronous training models often require the support of an eLearning platform to be successful. This can range from a simple technological solution to a robust, comprehensive learning management system (LMS). TurningPoint offers the ability to share interactive questions asynchronously while tracking results online, and can serve as an eLearning platform on its own or as one piece in a larger training and development infrastructure.

Your needs will vary depending on the size of your company and the extent of your training and development program, but there are a few elements that should be in place regardless.

The ability to create courses and build diverse types of content is a must. This depth provides the flexibility to support both one-off trainings and multi-part classes in a wide range of topics that meet the needs of your employees. An intuitive interface is key, since less time thinking about the mechanics of building the course means more time to craft quality content and assessments.

Along those lines, it is essential to have a means of assessing your learners after they go through a course, preferably built right into the eLearning platform itself. This can include interactive questions interspersed throughout and/or a comprehensive exam at the end.

Of course, tracking employee accomplishments is just as important as delivering the training in the first place. As a result, you need to make sure that whatever platform you select is able to run reports so that you can see at-a-glance what trainings have been successfully completed by each employee. This is particularly important if you have to demonstrate the completion of mandatory trainings in compliance with regulatory bodies.

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYTICS

This is where everything comes together. Any training program, remote or in-person, requires some form of accountability beyond just checking off a box. Besides knowing what trainings employees have completed, it is also important to assess their success in understanding the material, and to quickly see areas where more training might be necessary. In the area of compliance, it is even more crucial to have a record of which trainings each employee has completed, both for reporting purposes and to know when further assistance is needed before the employee completes an official test or certification exam.

TurningPoint offers comprehensive reports that quickly highlight relevant information, reveal strengths and weaknesses of individual employees and trainings, and provide fuel for data-driven decisions.

CONCLUSION

Training and development will always be a cornerstone of success for employees and organizations alike. Laying that foundation takes time, effort and dedication from employees at all levels, and requires solid leadership to build an effective program.

TurningPoint®

Technology like TurningPoint plays an important role in supporting development efforts, and choosing the right tools is crucial to maintaining a robust learning environment. TurningPoint not only provides tools to engage and assess learners in-class or online, but also the reporting necessary to track progress and assess learning outcomes. This supports data-driven planning and decision making that has the power to transform an organization and prepare everyone in it to face the challenges of the future, whatever those may be.

ENGAGE	SURVEY	ASSIGN	ASSESS	ANALYZE
Capture attention, improve engagement and support active learning	Conduct unlimited online surveys to gather valuable insights	Schedule interactive assignments to be completed at any time	Administer formative and summative assessments before, during and after trainings	Track learning progress, evaluate effectiveness and run detailed reports

SEE WHAT TURNINGPOINT CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR WORKFORCE!

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