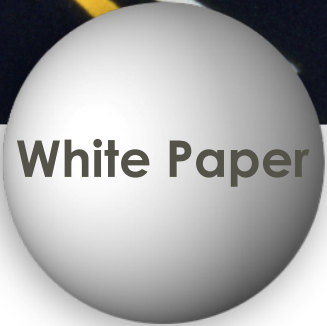




ADAYANA®



White Paper

Mobile Learning

Taking Training on
the Road

Solution Design Group

A Changing Face

We have all seen it – executives checking their smartphones to get e-mail, adults of all ages listening to podcasts on their iPods and MP3 players, and people watching videos on devices they bring onto planes. Simply put, the world is becoming increasingly mobile. To remain competitive in a mobile world, organizations are rethinking how they develop and deliver sales training – in most cases, it must be developed quicker, be more engaging and be delivered more often without removing the sales team from the field. To address these needs, many companies are turning to mobile learning and technology. Interactive e-Learning, podcasting, vodcasting, social networking, blogging, gaming, and delivering programs via smartphones and PDAs are all part of the same powerful movement. Sam Smith of Razzberry Sync states, “Mobility is one of the most important and dramatic trends in modern history,” noting the rapid shift from site-based technology to self-directed, personalized technology in the last five years. In fact, according to the American Society of Training and Development, mobile audio and video applications represent the steepest technology-based adoption curve the training industry has ever seen.

The benefits of utilizing mobile learning and interactive e-Learning for training a sales team are fairly robust.

1. It is time-shifted. Training can be delivered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. It can be delivered when the employee has the time to do it (when they are driving to a client appointment, flying to a meeting, running on the treadmill, in a hotel room, etc.).
2. It can occur in an informal learning setting. Most organizations provide formal training only once or twice a year. Simply put, training that occurs once or twice a year is not enough to prepare employees to succeed in a more demanding work place. With more than 80 percent of adult learning happening out of a classroom, employers need to revise the use of formal learning to include more informal learning settings. The use of podcasts, vodcasts, and blogs address this need.
3. Messages are synchronous. Each instructor or facilitator is different and have his or her own style and own approach to a training a session. Because podcasts, games, and e-Learning courses are designed to be software driven, every learner receives the same high quality content every time.
4. Mobile learning saves a company money. With mobile and web-based training, there is no need to coordinate conflicting schedules, pay travel expenses for learners to attend a workshop, or lease classroom space.

5. Mobile training can be delivered “just-in-time” to address time sensitive issues.

However, while the benefits of mobile, off-site learning are obvious, motivating employees to devote time away from the office requires a significant change in the way a company approaches training and development. The traditional academic model, where participants move through a curriculum with a fixed start and end point, does not work with a mobile generation. To be effective, training must be:

- Exciting and capture a participant’s attention immediately and keep them engaged throughout each learning experience.
- Relevant to each participant’s daily work life (they must be able to use it the next day).
- Continuous and not event driven. Effective training programs include a variety of delivery options over a longer course of time. The most effective form of training is blended. Blended learning includes face-to-face learning opportunities as well as a series of technology-based learning initiatives.

Adayana recommends utilizing any or all of the following interactive e-Learning and mobile learning technologies when training a geographically-dispersed sales force.

Podcasting/Vodcasting

A large number of companies are starting to realize that if their reps are on the road, their training and communications need to be mobile too. For this reason, podcasts and vodcasts (video podcasts) are being utilized more often. Podcasting and vodcasting are a means for publishing audio and video content on the web as a series of episodes around a common theme. Typically, these files are posted to the Internet and accompanied by a file called a “feed,” which allows participants to subscribe to the series and receive new episodes automatically. Effective uses of this technology include:

- Reinforcing key messages from corporate leadership
- Keeping employees informed of new product and company knowledge
- Sharing of “in-field” success stories
- Sales managers highlighting sales “wins and losses”
- Providing motivational messages to the field sales team
- Short training videos highlighting effective sales skills
- Highlighting interviews with customers that outline their needs and desires

To be effective, podcasts and vodcasts must not utilize a traditional lecture-based format. Rather, they should have high production value, include introductory music and effective editing, and be conducted in a variety of unique formats that keep a participant's attention. These formats include: "radio shows," interviews, audio/video tutorials, and promotional podcasts.

Blogging and Social Networking

The blog is emerging as a powerful tool to facilitate real-time conversations between geographically dispersed organizations. Blogs can be utilized as a forum for free-flowing conversations between sales teams. They are a mechanism for sharing experiences from the front line across the organization and can include success stories, sales tips, and collaborative rebuttals to recent competitor responses.

Smartphones and PDAs

With recent advances in technology, smartphones and PDAs can be utilized to deliver both interactive e-Learning courses as well other electronic sales tools. Although these e-Learning courses have a small electronic footprint, they can still deliver rich content, sound, vibrant images, animations, and interactivity. Typical uses may include: product training, compliance training, and sales skills training. In addition to traditional e-Learning courses, these mobile devices can also be utilized to deliver new sales production tools. These may include: electronic prospect priority indexes, value calculators, and resource tools.

Summary

Technology is changing at rapid speeds, and with these developments comes the latest trends of distributing and delivering training messages. While utilizing technologies such as podcasts, online games, blogs, and smartphones, companies are training more effectively and taking less time and less money to do so. It is a fact that organizations are becoming more geographically distributed while their sales teams are becoming increasingly tech savvy, therefore many companies are taking advantage of these new technologies and distributing information consistently to ensure attention and retention. Training is taking on a new dimension with its changing face and the evidence is clear regarding reasons to utilize interactive e-Learning and mobile learning technologies to enhance business development.

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