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Research Report
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Positive Effects of eLearning and Blended ITIL Training Strategies

IT organizations recognize that they need to create a comprehensive education plan to gain the knowledge required for their ITIL initiatives and that just sending a few key team members to a class is not enough. ITIL adoption is a culture change that requires different levels of education from awareness to in-depth training and certification for the entire staff.

The challenge is to match the education rollout program to the adoption project plan.

Delivering the right training at the right time also requires understanding the limitations on class size, number of staff being “out of the office” at the same time, location of staff, managing who goes to what class and when, and managing training dollars, blended education programs are key to keeping everyone focused on the organization’s objectives for a successful adoption.

This whitepaper will discuss the hard and soft dollar benefits for organizations that want to optimize their training dollars by blending eLearning and instructor led curriculums.

What is a blended education program?

A blended education program is one that incorporates instructor led and eLearning options while accommodating different organizational needs to achieve the most effective knowledge transfer.

Why should organizations consider using a blended program?

There are several reasons to consider using an eLearning program for your training dollars:

1. eLearning is more cost-effective, costs go down with more students
2. eLearning provides consistent course material/delivery
3. eLearning allows students to learn at their own pace
4. eLearning is on-demand and saves time in scheduling and rolling out
5. eLearning minimizes expenses for both student and instructor
6. eLearning minimizes employee time away from work / home
7. eLearning meets the needs of an entire organization, at the same time, not time zone

eLearning can also produce higher results. According to several studies, the following advantages of eLearning over traditional classroom instruction include:

- a. a 60% faster learning curve
- b. up to 50% higher content retention
- c. 15-25% increase in retention and knowledge transfer
- d. 56% greater gains in learning
- e. consistency of learning was up to 60% better
- f. consistency of the presentation of material was 40% higher
- g. training compression was up to 70% faster

Is a blended program an option for ITIL education?

Fortunately, with ITIL, there are several education paths to take depending on the staff member's role and responsibility. With the basic educational levels, there are accredited instructor led and eLearning options available.

Steps to Developing a Company Wide Program

First, key members of your staff need to "know" what ITIL is about, what the benefits are, and what role they will have in the process.

Many will not need to go beyond the basic knowledge of what ITIL is about, learn the new lingo, and be ready to support the organization in this adoption. Depending on the size of the organization, there could be 5 to 5,000 or more that should participate at this level. The course time for an Awareness or Executive class is generally 2-4 hours.

The next level of education is the Foundation certification course, which is the prerequisite course for advanced practitioner certification courses. This course is 16-20 hours of classroom time, not including exam administration. Generally, the students attending the Foundation class would not need to go through the Awareness course, but that is up to the organization. Depending on the size of your IT organization – team members from the Service Desk (help desk), administration, line managers, directors, and executives, would take this certification course.

The good news - these two courses are available in both instructor led and eLearning options.

Calculating the ROI and Cost Savings of Training

Including eLearning to your training program will automatically generate a cost savings as a reduction in overall expense per student to deploy while it increases the rate of your return on investment (ROI).

Over the past several years, there have been hundreds of studies showing that eLearning produces an average of 35-45% time savings over instructor led training along with equivalent or better gains in learning, retention, and knowledge transfer.

With organizations looking at the cost of training their global workforce, travel expenses decrease an average of 50% with eLearning options.

The most visible impact of ROI with eLearning's compressed training time is in the area of wages spent on training and savings in opportunity costs such as loss of productivity due to employee shortage during time out of office for training. Reducing time out by up to 40% can significantly impact ROI.

Cost efficiency of eLearning for large organizations

Not only can eLearning reach more people in a shorter amount of time – but also the cost of delivering "off-the-shelf" training dramatically decreases as the number of students increase.

The average savings per student for an ITIL Awareness or ITIL Foundation eLearning course is over 60% less than instructor led courses. With the lower cost of eLearning, more employees can be trained, allowing training dollars to go further in the organization and shortening the time before the organization begins recognizing a return on their investment while meeting their ITIL adoption goals.

eLearning Success Stories

Organizations such as American Airlines, Intel, Pacific Gas, IBM, Bell South, Steelcase, Pizza Hut, and the US military cite a quantifiable increase in the quality of learning and retention and cost savings with eLearning. Other examples include:

- Omega Corporation reported 100% improvement in “sales calls” due to increased confidence; 33-93% improvement in customer commitments
- The US Air Force reported an increase in the ability to diagnose and repair aircraft correctly the first time by more than 80% along with a decrease in time to solve the toughest problems which improved morale and confidence
- Union Pacific Railroad increased bottom-line performance by over 35%; the report shows that elearners showed an increase of 40% retention and improved attitudes as well as shortening the implementation of the new company wide processes by 12 months – something they could not have done with traditional training.

Summary and Conclusions

In short, incorporating a blended approach trains employees faster and better, allowing the goals for the organization to be met with a faster ROI. In addition to the benefits, cost savings and ROI listed above, offering training to employees affects other areas, such as:

1. Customer satisfaction increases with employee training
2. Employee training results in less turnover, which dramatically lowers the turnover costs such as hiring expenses, productivity loss, morale problems
3. Employees who receive on-going training are significantly more productive.
 - a. The cycle time for manufacturing jobs significantly decreased
 - b. Sales increased
 - c. Absenteeism decreased
 - d. Product quality significantly increased with less waste due to error
 - e. Reduction in accidents and lost time injuries



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