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3 Decision Models for eLearning

How to make crucial decisions involving online training by adopting some decision-making models.

Starting enterprise-wide online training is a decision-laden journey. What types of trainings do employees need? Is it better to manage training in-house or outsource? What type of **learning management system, LMS**, to choose? Which course creation tool is best suited? When you get into the nitty-gritty of planning, the questions multiply further: **synchronous or asynchronous training**, format, etc. Since there are several changes to manage, it would be a good idea to stop and think about your needs before taking the first steps. In this regard, it is useful to use some decision-making models and apply them to eLearning.

The rational decision model

In the rational decision-making model, a logical scheme is followed to arrive at the decision by following six steps:

1. **Define the problem** - what are the limitations of traditional training besides the known difficulties of moving in times of social distancing?
2. **Identify the criteria** for choosing the possible solution - it may be the one that responds most quickly to an urgent need. For example, training on a new application is urgent if it is to be adopted across the firm. If, on the other hand, you have more time, speed is not the main criterion.
3. **Decide which criteria are most important**: the course, for example, must be suitable for **people with disabilities**; accessibility must take precedence over any other economic solution.
4. **Generate a list of possible alternatives**: instead of using online training, is it possible to conduct the course in a classroom or **blended mode**?
5. **Evaluate alternatives**: what are the pros and cons of each alternative? For example, what are the advantages of managing training in-house versus outsourcing it?

This decision-making model is ideal for identifying priorities and weighing the pros and cons of each alternative. The main disadvantage is that it requires too much time and a form of centralization of the decision.

The decision-making model of Vroom-Yetton

It's not always possible to follow a rational model for decision-making, so we rely on quicker, leaner models that help in a more intuitive way to find a solution that may not be the best in the world, but is definitely suited to your needs. Vroom-Yetton's model works with a series of questions that are answered yes and no and act as a guide until you get to the final decision.

In the case of eLearning, it might be useful to ask, "Can the staff working in the company provide specific training courses?" or "Does the LMS help with tracking for mandatory training?"

This model could be preparatory to the rational model because it helps early on to discard some of the alternatives to which we have answered negatively. The benefit is that this process engages employees by asking questions about how they might respond to the change. The question is how to figure out what the right questions are.

The retrospective decision-making model

Per Soelberg's decision-making model states that some choices are made early in the decision-making process, even without realizing it. Problem analysis, priorities, alternatives suffer from a "bias": one's own opinions and preferences influence the final choice. In this case, also very similar to the choices that are made according to the intuitive model, it is important to stop and readjust to the situation by choosing the option that meets your needs. The model is more suited to individual choices than group

choices, but it still helps to define preferences and engage students in **self-study** pathways.

Whatever decision path you choose, what matters is that you start with the needs: those of the firm, which aspires to grow by having employees acquire new skills, and those of the employees themselves, who must be involved in the process to make it effective.

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