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How can training be adapted to an increasingly fast-paced world?

In the fast-paced and constantly changing world of business, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to provide training that is in line with their objectives.

The speed with which one penetrates a market or launches a new product are very often determining factors for success or failure. Of course, one cannot focus only on speed without looking at substance. Quality, in fact, especially in corporate training, is the lifeblood of a company. Today, however, training is an increasingly sensitive issue for both companies and employees.

The way in which employees are trained is closely related to a company's ability to pursue its objectives. However, evidence suggests that companies are struggling to provide training that is in line with their objectives and that prepares them for the rapid changes in the business world. About 80% of training still takes place in a formal way, i.e. through employee training courses. The limitations of this mode of training are well known: the courses are time consuming and the generic content of the information makes them of little use to employees.

In this article we explore new trends in corporate training, taking into account the report published by Brandon Hall in 2021 entitled 'Personalised Learning at Scale: Building the Corporate Brain'. The report offers interesting data on the problems that many companies are facing in an environment that is increasingly fast-paced and in great transformation. The report also argues that the solution to these problems may be to move away from traditional training methods delivered through courses and conferences towards more informal learning, based on getting advice when the employee needs it.

The article is divided as follows:

- Why is it necessary to have efficient corporate training?
- The current situation
- The time to change corporate training is now
- The limits of efficient corporate training
- What can companies do to implement change?

Why is it necessary to have efficient corporate training?

In short, the answer to this question is that if people can access useful information while they work, they can learn and apply the knowledge they have acquired more quickly. Speed is a key component in a business and this knowledge has the power to bring a product or service to market faster. In today's market, the speed at which you penetrate a new market or launch a new product or service can make the difference between success and failure.

Although these words may seem obvious, the data provided by several studies show that the reality is very different.

The current situation

Most companies are facing unprecedented changes and challenges due to the increasing integration of new technologies. This raises awareness that it is necessary to re-qualify and update the workforce to meet market needs. However, the economy is moving faster and faster and the workforce cannot keep up with these changes. In fact, as research conducted by the Brandon Hall Group shows, only 36% of companies believe they are able to train their employees in the skills they need for the future.

But what is more surprising is that companies are at a loss when it comes to the strategic role that training has for the business. On the one hand, three quarters of the companies surveyed say that top management considers training to be very important. On the other hand, only 45% of companies believe that training is actually an integral part of the corporate culture. How is it

possible that if training is considered fundamental to a business, less than half of the companies say that training is an integral part of the corporate culture? The reason for this contradiction lies in the apparent irreconcilability of business and training. In the majority of companies, training strategies are not aligned with business objectives and, as a result, many employees feel that time devoted to training is completely separate from work. Even when training is in line with business objectives, the generic content of training courses makes them of little use because employees don't know how to apply what they have learned in their daily activities and consequently forget what they have learned in a short time.

The solution? According to Brandon Hall's report it could be a less formal type of training that provides employees with the information they need when and where they need it.

The time for change in corporate training has arrived

The data also indicate that companies are ready for change. 82% say they are working to make learning more 'personalised' and less formal. Interestingly, the demand to change the way training is delivered comes from all stakeholders. Seventy per cent of companies say that employees are asking for this change, while 64% say that it is the company itself that wants it.

The limits of effective corporate training

What companies want to do, but find difficult to implement, is to re-organise themselves in order to offer training that is more flexible and adaptable to the real needs of employees. If employees do not have access to the knowledge and information they need whenever and wherever they want, they do not feel a connection between what they do and what they learn. The absence of this connection is the main obstacle to achieving business objectives. If training appears detached from the activities that employees carry out on a daily basis, they cannot be actively involved in the pursuit of business goals.

The study conducted by Brandon Hall shows that the main obstacle to the alignment between training and employees' daily activities stems from the fact that managers, in most cases, are not aware of the training material provided to employees. This aspect is often ignored by top management despite the fact that managers have a huge impact on the daily activities of workers and the training of subordinates.

The second problem is the lack of technology to enable employees to learn on the job when they need to. Developing large-scale technologies to enable employees to access information as and when they want is neither easy nor cheap. For many companies this represents an insurmountable obstacle that would create many problems. 48% of companies say that such a system would be too difficult to manage and maintain and 47% that they do not have the knowledge to develop such a system. The use of an LMS such as DynDevice https://www.dyndevice.com/it/ certainly takes these problems off the plate.

The third problem indicated by the study is more structural: 54% of companies say that a single mode of training for each employee is sufficient. Therefore, making learning more personalised and flexible to employees' needs would not lead to much change. Here again, a comprehensive LMS offering microlearning, elearning, blended and above all personalised training, such as DynDevice LMS, is the solution.

What can companies do to implement change?

If companies want to empower employees to do their best for the business, they need to be able to help them learn better, more and faster.
Personalised training is an increasingly popular trend, made possible by the spread of e-learning. The fact that each person learns differently has long been known, and in a world where technology allows this, it would be a mistake not to take this into account.
Training managers should take into account the technological end-user experience, which is increasingly focused on personalisation of the 'consumer experience', and recent neuroscientific research in this regard to create more flexible, informal corporate training paths for a workforce of any size.

Companies know they need to change: only 50% believe their approach to training is leading them to obtain the skills and requirements they need to face the future.

A company that wants to improve training by making it more personalised to employee needs in order to align business objectives with employee performance needs to ask itself some questions before implementing changes.

The study conducted by Brandon Hall states that the questions to ask are:

- Is our learning strategy well aligned with employee performance and the organisation's goals?
- Are we applying the scientific principles of learning and **neuroscience** to our learning experience?
- What tools and technologies will help us facilitate personalised learning at scale?
- Are we correctly exploiting the role of managers in the learning experience?
- Is the way we train employees and how training pays off efficient enough to be in line with business objectives?

Answering these questions is necessary to understand the situation the company is in and to be able to build the best strategy to solve the problem. In fact, there is no one-size-fits-all approach as each company has different needs, organisation and objectives.

To offer more help to companies that want to make this change it is very useful to look at the Employee Development Framework developed by RedThread Research.
RedThread Research has developed this model for companies to help them understand what employees should be free to do in order to create structured and, above all, efficient company training.

This model is very useful because it describes the behaviour that companies should follow to help top management identify gaps in training.

Planning
Employees need to be aware of growth options within the company and know what they need to improve to get where they want to be.

Discovery
Finding opportunities and knowledge that allow them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to progress in their careers.

Accessibility
Having easy and free access to training content.

Experiencing
Being able to put new knowledge and skills into practice in the workplace and learning from mistakes.

Connections
Having the opportunity to learn from others to improve or acquire new skills.

Performing
Learning on the job and improving performance at the same time.

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