ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 82 Wednesday 25 september 2019

How storytelling meets eLearning training needs

A call from a potential client trying to convert a classroom course into an eLearning course. Is this really the only need?

Here is a conversation (fictitious, but plausible) that appeared in eLearningLearning focused on the use of a scenario-based approach to eLearning courses. How to convince your training department or client to use storytelling in eLearning?

"Tell me about what you're looking for" I ask.

"We would like to convert a training course we have available in the classroom into eLearning. It is a course on discrimination in pregnancy. Our company has added a lot of details in this regard to the employee manual, so it is important that everyone is aware of it. of the new policy. We have already created the slides, so it just needs to be converted into an online format. "

I suspect that this requires more than the simple conversion of existing slides and I am not convinced that the mere fact of making people aware of the current corporate policy will really achieve the learning objectives. *"Hmm ... how is the classroom training so far done?"*

"Okay, I guess. We only have two trainers able to hold the course, but they don't actually have time to train everyone in the company. We are investing a lot in travel expenses so that all employees come to our main office. If we could to do it online, we could reduce travel costs and our teachers could invest their time in other business projects "

"Excellent motivation to make the course accessible online, but tell me about the course itself: is it mainly a frontal lesson or does it include activities such as role-playing or other?"

"It's a frontal lesson. We avoid role-playing games to avoid insulting or discriminating against someone. We don't want people to engage in improper behavior during role-playing games. It's inconvenient to create these situations (even if fictitious) in a room full of people "

"I see. How are you measuring the effectiveness of the course?"

"Through a satisfaction questionnaire"

"And how are the evaluation results going?"

"Good, but not in an exceptional way. Some complain about judging the course as boring, but it is a training on compliance, and it is necessary for everyone to do it. What would you propose? "

"Actually, there are several things we can do. Have you ever thought of using a scenario-based approach in the eLearning course?"

"What do you mean?"

"If instead of using only the slides you have available and the audio explaining the company policy, would we create a story starring a pregnant colleague? We could put the trainees in situations where they have to make decisions about how to behave. Instead of listening to the lecture on company policy, students can be put in the position of having to look for the specific information they need depending on what situation they encounter in the scenario. This gives them the motivation to find the information, instead of being subjected to it passively. "

"Sounds interesting. How exactly would it work?

"Let's see ... are the critical issues you encountered in this area related to the discrimination of some employees?"

"We received a couple of accusations for the presence of discriminating managers. Some cases were related to hiring, others were linked to the different placement of employees who have roles that require physical effort or work with chemicals."

"What if we set up a scenario with a manager and a member of his team waiting for a child? We can set it up with points in the story where the students must help the manager decide what action to take. We would give them some choices based on past incidents or common misunderstandings about company policy. Maybe a problem could arise from a manager's decision to reduce the hours of a co-worker by trying to be useful and relieving her from physical fatigue, but she could manage the hours very well only by having a chair available instead of having to stand all day. "

"It sounds more interesting than the training we do today. What happens if the students make the wrong choice?"
"Ideally, I prefer to show people the consequences of their actions rather than just tell them. Do you think they will remember more than one multiple choice question with a feedback that says "Sorry, wrong answer. You have violated section 5.3 of company policy" or "Peg of HR knocks on your office door. He wants to discuss why you don't have prepared the Rhonda station by putting a chair "? "

"The second one, surely. I have the feeling of being called to the principal's office at school, even just imagining it. "

"And that emotional reaction is part of what makes this approach work. People fall into history so that they are more involved during the course, as well as making the information learned more memorable. "

"Ok, I start to understand your idea."

"Very good. Let's go back to the evaluation. First you told me that you need employees to be aware of the policy. Is this really the goal or do you want to reduce the number of complaints and non-compliance?"

"Well, obviously we want to reduce complaints. This is the ultimate goal "

"Do you have statistics on complaints received in the past? It would be nice to have a concrete measurement to work with."

"I don't have those numbers, but I'm sure I can get them from human resources."

"Would be great. If you get these numbers, we can set a goal to reduce complaints and really show what difference this type of training has brought. "

"Ok, I can do it. What is the next step? "

"Let's talk about some more details ..."