ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Reward programmes for corporate training

Training is often perceived as an unproductive and oppressive activity. How can reward programmes be used to motivate employees to complete courses?

There is no doubt about it: investing in training programmes is important for every type of company, as it helps people improve their performance and productivity levels.

Despite this, **corporate training** is often perceived as an unproductive and overwhelming activity, both by company managers and by the employees who have to attend the courses. And, although there are some self-motivated people who carve out time to attend courses for the love of learning and the benefits it brings, there are many others who, overwhelmed by daily work activities, or mindful of previous experiences with boring courses, do not put training at the top of their priority list.

The result? Frustrated training managers, wasted economic resources and **ineffective training programmes**.

So what can be done to motivate users to participate and actively engage in training? One possible solution is offered by reward programmes, i.e. those processes aimed at rewarding employees for their training.

In this article, we will discover how **reward programmes** work and the types of incentives you can use to motivate your employees to complete their assigned courses.

The basics of a training reward programme

In an ideal world, employees should carry out training courses with interest and involvement. However, in reality, they most likely need a gentle nudge to find the right motivation.

A **training incentive programme** helps to boost employees' motivation and increase their focus on training programmes. Rewarding employees for attending a course can in fact be the push they need to make training a priority.

Of course, for a rewards programme to work, it must be properly constructed. In the case of training, the knowledge gained should already be an incentive. It is therefore extremely important that the main expectation of participation in corporate training remains learning.

If the reward **overshadows the actual task**, in fact, you may distract attention from what you are really trying to achieve, i.e. upgrading the skills of your workforce. The risk is that, driven by the desire to obtain the offered reward, employees will carry out the training in a superficial manner, with the sole objective of completing the course in the shortest possible time.

With this in mind, it therefore becomes very important that rewards are presented in such a way as to make it clear to employees that they are not the only reward they will get from participating in courses.

Here, then, are some basic principles for **building an effective training rewards programme**.

1. Demonstrate the value of your training programmes
Sometimes, the connection between course content and the actual activity performed by employees is not clear. The result? Employees do not understand the benefits they can gain from training and the possible positive impact on their performance, they get frustrated, they become convinced that the course you have enrolled them in is useless and they lose interest.

If you want training incentives to be effective, make sure that the focus is always on the most important intrinsic reward: the benefits of learning. Therefore, help employees to see incentives as a bonus, and not as the main reason for completing courses.

Whether it is compliance training or an optional soft skills course, employees should know how the training will help them in their daily work.

Therefore, be sure to emphasise the **value of training** as the main message. For example, if you send an e-mail inviting them to attend a course, draw attention to the objectives of the training, why it has been assigned to them and how it will make their activities easier.

2. Be selective in your choice of awards and courses
Rewarding people for completing training will probably improve the **completion rates** of your courses. But this does not necessarily mean that people are actually assimilating what you want them to learn.

In addition, automatically providing a reward for completing any course might convey the idea that, if an incentive is provided, the training is not that important or valuable.

Therefore, focus your reward programme only on **courses that generate the greatest impact on your employees' performance**. Do you have a new product to be launched soon that your sales team needs to be familiar with? Make new product training a target for a compelling employee reward.

3. Make sure the incentive is of value to your employees
It is very likely that eco-friendly water bottles or branded torches are not a valuable reward for your employees. Therefore, make sure that your incentive programme includes rewards that will actually attract the attention of your employees and increase their motivation.

4. Make sure that the incentive is delivered quickly and easily
We live in a society that craves instant gratification. Therefore, make sure that the **reward disbursement** takes place within a reasonable timeframe for your employees and does not require complex and tortuous procedures.

5. Link the incentive to measurable results
To prevent your employees from carrying out training superficially, with the sole objective of completing the course in the shortest possible time in order to get their reward, make sure that your incentive programme is linked to a **measurable outcome**, e.g. obtaining a score above 80% on the course learning tests.

Types of training rewards

As we have seen, it is very important to make sure that training incentives consist of rewards that people actually want. Otherwise, your employees may lose interest and your incentive programme may be ineffective.

This means that you will have to carefully select the **type of reward** you want to give, ensuring that it conveys appreciation for the activity and, at the same time, provides a convincing reason to complete the training.
Since the types of rewards can be highly creative, here are some useful hints.

1. Gift cards and monetary rewards
A popular way to improve participation in company training is to give employees **gift cards or rewards in the pay packet** for completing courses.

2. Paid time off
Another effective way to win over your workforce is to give them **paid time off** in addition to their contractual entitlement. This type of reward has the double advantage of showing employees that you care about their training, but also that you understand the need for a work-life balance.

3. Flexible working arrangements
Working from home is appreciated by many employees. Another type of incentive could therefore be to offer your employees the possibility of **training from home**. This means that if an employee completes a training module at the beginning of a working day, they can come into the office later that day. Or, conversely, devote the first part of the day to on-site activities and carve out the afternoon hours to complete online training from home.

4. Points-based programme

Rewarding employees with a **points system** instead of money has become the go-to strategy in many training incentive programmes. After successful completion of a course, participants earn points that can be redeemed immediately or used in the future. You can offer incentives such as travel, merchandising and electronics, paid time off or any other product that you think will pique the interest of your target audience.

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