ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 5 - number 182 Wednesday 24 november 2021

The benefits of gamification in safety training

Over time, safety training has changed a lot thanks to the use of playful elements that enhance its effectiveness. Find out how.

Occupational **health and safety training** plays a crucial role in reducing workplace injuries and accidents.

However, because of its mandatory nature and because the topics are often underestimated or considered boring, it is absolutely necessary to find more effective training methods that increase the **involvement of workers** and, consequently, are able to **promote behavioral changes** in daily work.

Increase worker involvement in safety training

The first key to increasing the involvement of workers who participate in a safety course is to make the **training active**, making them feel like they're the protagonists of their own learning journey. With this in mind, we recommend that you:

- Adapt and **customize the content to the course** participants, such as asking what their expectations are and what topics they would like to cover;
- Ask workers to recount their **personal experiences** in order to increase the emotional involvement of all participants;
- Make time available for workers to **discuss the topics with other participants and instructors** (if the training takes place online, a useful tool to make available could be a forum);
- Leverage the potential of **virtual and augmented reality training** to provide learners with an immersive and safe environment in which to practice their skills.

Another way to improve the engagement of workers involved in a safety course is to use serious games and gamification elements.

What is gamification

Gamification is about applying typical game mechanisms (points and rewards, levels, leaderboards, etc.) to non-game experiences in order to make them more engaging and fun.

The success and effectiveness of gamification comes from the fact that it leverages some fundamental aspects of human behavior to motivate individuals to achieve a specific goal. Offering a reward or prize (regardless of whether it is tangible or intangible), in fact, affects the individual's motivation and positively reinforces the behavior.

In the case of training, gamification thus provides a structure in which workers are motivated to achieve **training goals** in a challenging environment that measures the success of individuals and provides gratification when those goals are met.

For these reasons, it has the power to ensure greater course participant engagement and foster a change in work behaviors and habits that are crucial in safety training, as they are at the root of many workplace accidents and injuries.

What are serious games

Serious games are games designed for educational purposes (i.e. not for entertainment) that are based on **experiential learning**. Training through serious games favors the acquisition and memorization of information and facilitates behavioral changes that, as we have seen, are the basis of the effectiveness of a safety course.

Serious games on safety at work

Over time, safety training has changed a lot and we've seen a steady increase in playful solutions and augmented reality and virtual reality simulations aimed at improving its teaching effectiveness. And, in many cases, initiatives have gone beyond corporate training to extend to raising awareness among younger people.

For example, "Sicuri si diventa" is an italian serious game conceived and produced by the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Bologna to raise awareness among high school students about safety and health at work.

Another example of a serious game designed for young people is "Zero morti sul lavoro" (Zero deaths at work), created by Uil to train new generations more aware of the value of safety, prevention and health.

Benefits of gamification in safety training

Applying the principles of gamification and using serious games to **train workers on workplace safety** offers important benefits in terms of teaching effectiveness. Let's find out which ones:

- **Increases worker engagement** by promoting friendly competition and reward for completing and passing tasks;
- **Spreads a culture of safety** that is strongly linked to risk awareness;
- Allows you to create a **safe environment where workers can test their knowledge of safety procedures** (e.g., company evacuation plans, firefighting activities, etc.) in realistic scenarios;
- Makes **workers more alert to their own behaviors** and aware of the risks;
- Allows workers to **practice repeatedly** until they have mastered notions and procedures; and
- Makes training more enjoyable and ensures that it becomes part of the **workplace conversation**;
- Facilitates memorization and **retention of information learned**, much more than a traditional training course;
- Reinforces progress through the **instant feedback** loop, making workers more intrinsically motivated to successfully complete the training.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator