ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 2 - number 15 Wednesday 7 march 2018

Why investing in informal learning?

How to effectively employ informal learning.

The fact that learning happens through multiple channels (and not just formal training) is consolidated. However, it is only in recent times that organizations deploy specific efforts to promote and encourage informal learning in the workplace.

Formal vs. informal learning

Learning happens through multiple channels, not just through formal channels. Formal learning is provided and implemented by training teams in a structured way and is distributed in some specific formats:

? Classroom training
? Online training (eLearning or microlearning)
? Blended training (classroom / eLearning mixed learning)

The peculiar feature of formal learning is its complete management by the training team (aspects of design, completion time, monitoring of student performance).

On the contrary, **informal learning is spontaneous**, guided by students and driven by their interest, their motivation and passion in acquiring knowledge. This approach allows students to choose learning content and consume it at their own pace.

Informal learning offers a rich and rewarding experience that allows motivated students to achieve goals such as:

? open up to new perspectives;
? acquire further knowledge;
? solve problems;
? share useful solutions to others

Is informal learning suitable for every training model?

Informal learning is the most significant learning method we have used since childhood. Even at work, we learn through observation, imitation and asking questions to colleagues.

The 70-20-10 model for learning

The value of informal learning is reiterated by the 70-20-10 training model. According to this model:

- 70% of learning is experiential (i.e., it occurs at the workplace);
- 20% occurs through social or collaborative learning (i.e. learning with or from others);
- 10% takes place through formal training programs.

Thus, organizations need to create a support system for informal learning in the workplace.

How can organizations promote informal learning?

The success of informal learning depends on the motivation of the students and their passion for learning. However, organizations can promote this approach by providing support systems such as:

? semi-structured forums for sharing knowledge or specific inputs;
? well designed contents;
? recognition system for team members practicing informal learning;
? addition of informal learning sessions to formal learning programs to discuss the relevance of the program, contents learned, methods of applying the learned contents.

All these strategies will create a better learning culture.

Read the complete article...