



Engaging Your Workforce in Learning

will make an IMPACT!
on behavior and performance with
measurable results that affect your bottom line

As a new, young, vibrant generation enters the workforce, we want to capitalize on their enthusiasm right from the start. Onboarding the millennials from day one with engaging learning experiences will help them start off on the right foot and move them forward in their career with your organization.

Competency Based Education in the corporate world looks much different than CBE in the academic world. The one trait they share in common though is the concept of “mastery”. People want to master what they learn. There are a host of reasons for this common motivation. First and foremost, mastery means job security. It can also lead to higher levels of pay. And not least of all, it commands respect. If you want to engage someone to learn something, provide them with learning experiences where they feel they are not just learning new concepts but are being provided with the opportunity to master what they learn. That promotes engagement!

As instructional designers, when we create training our goal is to make it ‘engaging’! To make it engaging we typically use “drag and drop” or simple case study simulations. Although these provide some level of engagement, they certainly do not stimulate the learner to change their behavior and achieve mastery, based on these types of activities. We at SMART Solutions define learner engagement in terms of how motivated the learner is to engage with the content and the learners’ ability to comprehend, retain and master the content. To do that, we employ concepts of neuroscience to capitalize on how the brain naturally learns. A couple of key elements that we use to employ these concepts are:

1. Ensure the learner gets ‘essential’ information, when they need it and how they need it.
 - a. Do they need it within the context of workplace duties?
 - b. Will they benefit by learning it in a social learning environment?
 - c. Do they need formal learning to benefit from an introduction to foundational concepts or do supplemental resources provide enough information to get the job done.

To ensure our newly on-boarded employees are getting that essential information, do we space the learning out over a period of time and strategically place learning opportunities within the context of their daily activities? Do we create teams with diverse perspectives to enable the millennials to learn socially from their peers? Do we have a formal onboarding program targeted at transferring knowledge from the retiring generation to the newcomers?

2. Ensure the learner masters in the information in an interactive and effective manner.
 - a. Neuroscience has specific techniques that allow the brain to write new information in a way that encourages high levels of retention and mastery. Memory reactivation is one key element to make that happen. Presenting information at programmed intervals to trigger recall and memory lends itself well to mastery.
 - b. Understand “why” the learner should engage with content and what emotional triggers are present in the learning experience to ensure that it peaks the learners’ interest.
 - c. The learner engages in “activities” that are appropriate to the Bloom’s Taxonomy’s level of mastery.
 - d. The content has been developed with a focus on the neuroscience of brain function to provide adequate exposure to content and appropriate activities to master knowledge skills and appropriate attitudes.

As we build our learning programs, do we utilize techniques that trigger memory reactivation? Do we make sure the learner is has a vested interest in the learning that will enable the newcomer to use the information in a meaningful way?

And most important, as instructional designers do we write objectives that say something like, ‘the learner will be able to...’ and then give them content that only provides Bloom’s Level I (Knowledge) outcomes. Or do we make sure the content has appropriate activities that will enable the learner to really DO what we want them to do at the end of the learning experience?

We would love to discuss your learning program and how it can benefit from these brain based learning techniques that support learning engagement and mastery rather than simply “engaging” presentation of content.