



5 REASONS WHY
**MICROLEARNING SHOULD BE IN YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S TRAINING MIX**



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Employee training is a central concern for organizations across many industries. Midsized firms spent an average of \$3.7 million last year to provide up-to-date internal instructional resources, according to research from the Brandon Hall Group.¹ Those with 10,000 or more employees had even larger training budgets of around \$13 million. These figures indicate significant investment in professional development.

However, the study revealed that many businesses continue to count on traditional delivery methods, including classroom- and paper-based programs. While useful, such strategies may not meet all the needs of modern workers, most of whom consistently engage with content on the go via mobile devices or other technology.

Where can enterprises reroute professional development funds to take advantage of this common behavior and improve employee training? The answer is microlearning.

Defining microlearning

Organizations with microlearning programs leverage modern instructional tools to deliver shortened, streamlined sessions offering easy-to-digest information. In most cases, employees take in training via mobile applications, allowing them to bolster their operational knowledge without sacrificing their productivity or free time.

Why did this unique methodology materialize? Most experts attribute the rise of microlearning to decreasing attention spans.² The average adult can display razor-sharp focus for only eight seconds at a time, according to recent research from Microsoft.³ This state of affairs - the product of increasingly nimble consumer technology - has forced firms to reevaluate how they connect with employees and look for ways to facilitate true knowledge absorption in the era of the eight-second attention span.

Microlearning programs seem to fit the bill, giving users the ability to consume bite-sized content via a format with which they are comfortable: the mobile device. Almost 80 percent of Americans now own smartphones, according to Pew Research Center.⁴ And, more than two-thirds of these stateside device wielders download applications, the group found.⁵



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With this in mind, microlearning adopters embrace powerful mobile-ready instructional solutions. Major corporations like Gap and Uber have introduced mobile and desktop portals meant to conform with modern content consumption trends. Smaller firms have done the same, including French liqueur producer Pernod Ricard, which rolled out an application that allows employees to access dozens of brief courses.

Reasons why microlearning should be in the mix

Microlearning programs do ostensibly meet the needs of mobile-focused American workers. However, apart from boosting employee satisfaction, how can organizations benefit from these microlearning training strategies?

Increased growth potential

Microlearning allows enterprises to train large decentralized workforces, making it possible to maintain homogenous processes across multiple locations. This capability alone permits expansion, which can lead to increased revenues.⁶ Smaller companies with less ambitious targets can benefit as well. For example, microlearning is a key ingredient in the modern remote work policy, a must-have for more than one-third of U.S. workers, according to survey data from Gallup.⁷ Simply put, implementing mobile training tools can lead to operational shifts that ultimately make it easier to recruit and retain talent, young and old.

Better instructional scalability

This training format allows organizations to update instructional materials with little effort. With microlearning applications, human resources and talent development personnel can leave behind difficult-to-revise paper manuals and take advantage of modern resources that move as internal workflows change or scale.

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Improved employee engagement

Microlearning programs address a serious issue that affects most American enterprises: lack of employee engagement. Only 31 percent of U.S. workers say they are meaningfully engaged while on the job, according to research from Gallup.⁸ Why? For many it comes down to lack of investment from the top down, the survey service found.⁹ Microlearning allows employers to tackle this issue head-on, facilitating the development of easy-to-access training resources that can equip workers with the skills they need to succeed and advance in their careers. Employees return the favor, of course, clocking in locked in and ready to produce.

More effective training delivery

Most firms spend considerable time looking for ways to integrate training sessions into everyday operational activities. This is no easy task, as employees simply do not have enough hours in the day to train and effectively execute their duties. Microlearning is the solution in this situation, as users can easily access training materials via their mobile devices, absorb essential content and get

back to work, no classroom required. This leaves more time for mission-critical activities often neglected in traditional training schemes, further driving return on investment.

Just-in-time information access

Recalling an individual skill while in the field can mean the difference between a job incident and performing effectively. In many cases, time is of the essence. For example, firefighters can go over procedures or refresh their knowledge on specific equipment before going out on calls. This may save them should they come across unfamiliar water delivery fixtures they have no hands-on experience with but covered in training.

Using microlearning, rather than sorting through an array of slides inside an hour-long course, the firefighter can look up the proper procedure in a brief video or diagram. This instructional style facilitates quick information absorption. For the organization, this can mean fewer costly mistakes on the job.



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Implementing microlearning

How do businesses implement microlearning strategies and see the benefits above? Prospective adopters would be wise to first step back and evaluate how such a program might be used best within the operation. In most cases, organizations use microlearning solutions in conjunction with more traditional delivery models, as some information should be shared in the classroom or on the job. In fact, many firms use microlearning to build on insights gleaned during in-person sessions.

Organizations navigating the microlearning implementation process often begin by reviewing possible content types. Brief videos, both interactive and static, are the ideal choice, as they demand conciseness and therefore work perfectly within instructional methodology.¹⁰ Gamified components such as interactive quizzes are also effective, adding an element of fun to the normally mundane task of training at work.¹¹ From there on, adopters pinpoint third-party content providers and application makers, and prepare internal information technology staff for an influx of new content and system users.

Companies that undertake these efforts are often rewarded in the end, as productivity and safety improve and employees come to work more engaged. With these possibilities in play, those on the outside looking in are quickly looking for ways to embrace microlearning. In fact, when the enterprise consulting firm Future Think asked American executives to identify key professional development trends back in 2009, 100 percent said microlearning would soon shape the arena.¹²

It seems these prescient predictions are coming to fruition, as organizations across the globe welcome the microlearning revolution and unlock their full potential through the people who power them.

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