



Reaching Employees with Mobile Technology...No Matter Their Location

Thanks to mobile technology, employers can deliver training and development on the employee's terms. It does not end there because mobile increases collaboration at the same time.

Technological advances have transformed the workplace, and it seemed like the greatest impact had already been experienced. Then came mobile technology that took communication, collaboration, and networking wherever the person holding the smartphone or tablet computer happened to be. The transformation still did not end there. Employers are only now beginning to fully adapt to the mobile environment, recognizing that being able to connect with employees anywhere and anytime has opened up new paths for training and development. These paths include programs available on mobile technology and increased employee collaboration opportunities, thus leveraging the knowledge and expertise of co-workers in the training and development process.

Pulse of the Organization

Social media has been a boon to improving employee relations while giving employers a new source of information as they monitor the “buzz” between employees. It is an earpiece, so to speak. Online Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), internal blogs, integrated collaborative virtual environments for project management, and so on are excellent tools for keeping a finger on the pulse of the organization. What are employees thinking, and how are they sharing information and expertise to produce results?

As companies of all sizes enter markets, the ability to stay connected with employees is a means of keeping even far-flung organizations united and on the same track. It should be no surprise that employers are now realizing that leveraging mobile learning is the next step in utilizing technology to engage employees and tap into their creativity and innovative ideas. In fact, mobile technology can be considered a strategic tool for accessing the innovative perspectives and approaches to business problem solving found in multicultural organizations. When employees work in global locations there is always the risk that good ideas needed to stay competitive are falling by the wayside. Mobile technology gives instant access across locations and contexts through smartphones, laptops, and tablet computers.



Wherever We Operate

The first step is engaging the employees in a way that promotes excellence. People who embrace the corporate culture are more likely to contribute to corporate success. Engagement is a function of employee connectivity, training and development, collaboration, participation, and knowledge. Delivering the ability to enjoy these factors is much easier with mobile technology. It can be used to create a supportive virtual corporate environment which fosters participation, learning, collaboration, idea-sharing, and feedback.

Before it was possible to deliver webinars, web conferencing, mobile training programs, and so on, employees sat through on-site training and development programs that were sporadic at best. Most training took place within a department or division on an ad hoc basis as employees had limited access to people outside their area. The on-the-job training was dependent on other people having the time and patience to train employees, and the old development system naturally limited perspectives to the local environment. Talent development was restricted in obvious ways, thus leaving untapped capabilities and competencies in the workforce. The inability to collaborate with the broader employee base also made it more difficult to engage people, important to developing a strong competitive culture.

HP is a good example of a company that recognizes that the more its 350,000 people strong workforce is engaged and collaborative, the more innovative it will be. Innovation is the lifeblood of technology companies. As its website says, "We support talent development wherever we operating."

Outside the Learning Box

Leveraging mobile technology for employee training and development requires thinking outside the learning box. Using mobile technology to only provide access to web-based training greatly underutilizes it because the ability to deliver personalized and interactive training that incorporates social media is where the real power lies for promoting rapid development, engagement, and the desired culture. For example, business gamification enables new and current employees to deal with real-world business processes through programs that use the attributes of games. The power of gamification is taken up a notch when it enables competitive play in which a group of employees participate, thus promoting engagement, problem solving within the corporate cultural context and development. Mobile gaming means employees can access the program from any location, important to global organizations. The key is that gamification now incorporates social media.

One of the important business environment changes that companies need to accept and adapt to concerns social learning or learning through interaction with others. All companies



should adopt social learning, but for global companies it can determine the ability to remain competitive and take advantage of the diversity of thought and perspectives that globalization brings. Social learning utilizes programs that encourage employees to seek out experts in the corporation, collaborate with team members and peers, and learn from the co-workers no matter where they are located. This is a dynamic model that can readily leverage mobile technology to achieve the most revolutionary results.

Taking Training and Development to a Whole New Level

Nationwide Insurance is a leader in the use of a mobile platform for training, development and collaboration. The company develops tens of thousands of employees by encouraging them to utilize its internal social platform which can be accessed via mobile technology. The *SPOT* mobile platform offers the same functionality as the version developed to accommodate tablet computers. *SPOT* is a social media site that enables knowledge sharing among employees and the connection of subject matter experts. Interestingly, there are leadership meetings setup through this technology that encourages open and honest meetings between Gen Y'ers and senior leadership to share multigenerational perspectives. This kind of training and development is almost impossible to achieve in an effective manner without the use of social media that enables the intersection of traditional and modern workforce approaches.

The clear message is this: Mobile technology can take training and development to a whole new level if it is utilized in innovative ways. It can attract the new generation of talent and connect the new and existing talent on a global basis. Leveraging mobile technology is nothing short of a powerful means of building competitiveness.