

E-Learning. Is it Valuable?

By Matthew D Edwards
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From our youth and through our professional lives our current most popular method of education around the world is in a classroom setting. Sitting among peers, learning from expert instructors and being challenged to learn volumes of material in short periods of time is our experience. Particularly as professionals, there is value in our classroom experiences from the standpoint of networking, exposure to the variable perspectives of others, having concepts explained in detail by an expert-instructor with the merits of the material debated in real-time, as well as, the fact that we value personal, interactive relationships and understanding how this material applies to 'me'. The personal experience of training in a classroom is irreplaceable when it comes to specialized, expert training in matters that are otherwise not available to the general public. When we need expert-led, in-depth and specialized education, the classroom setting provides the correct incubation framework from which we are able to grow and learn. This method must inevitably be one of the manners in which we train our staff, teams and organizations in specialized, expert-level knowledge. However, when it comes to generally available, commercial use ideas in the marketplace, commodity knowledge merits consideration of a commodity investment. Let's explore this idea together.

Organizations who believe employees are their greatest asset typically have training budgets, large or small. Each employee is expected to continually learn and advance themselves in the best interest of the person and the organization. And giving people opportunity to learn fosters a thinking, problem-solving people which increases the probability of organizational advancement and success. An absence of training and education opportunities enables stalled progress or diminishing results. Such advancement of people in the interest of evolving an organization is not often free, but rather requires financial investment along the way in the form of instructors, classroom infrastructure, course material preparation and printing. In order to remain a solvent organization, balanced financial investment portfolios require more training opportunities than just the classroom setting. To use classrooms for expert-level in-depth training is a good and necessary investment. However, there are cost alternatives for commodity-knowledge and the answer is found in e-learning solutions.

E-learning solutions have come a long way in the past thirty years from clunky programs installed to our desktop computers to CD's containing computer-based training up through online instructor-facilitated and self-study solutions available through Learning Management Systems (LMS). The amount of general knowledge available to the average person today is staggering and the comparative cost of acquisition and ownership when compared to typical brick-and-mortar classroom settings is nominal. If we need high-end, experienced training for executives, senior management, senior political leadership, engineers, scientists and professors as an example, the type of knowledge they need will comparatively be very specialized and very expert. The complexity, size, capital infusion and return on investment potential of a solution often dictates the level of higher education, experience and expertise required. However, when we need to train masses of people on daily required expectations such as basic computer skills, repetitive procedures and professional behaviors, commodity based learning solutions, particularly e-learning, offers us a predictable, repeatable and re-usable method of delivering the same message multitudes of times at volume price-points.

Of course, we all know we get out of something what we put into it. So poorly produced and delivered material is obviously counter-productive and not worth the investment. Our desire to apply volume pricing where possible and expert pricing where necessary must not deprive our organizations or teams of well-thought out, well-delivered comprehensive education. As organizations responsible for intelligent fiscal investment in our products, services and staff, it is irresponsible of us to overlook a blended training portfolio composed of expert class-room training, as well as, e-learning libraries of commodity-based, volume price-point, predictable, repeatable educational messages for our organizations. Having many tools in our training portfolio is intelligent. Knowing when to use them will be the difference between being successful right now and hoping for it in the future.

Biographical Profile

Matthew D Edwards is an international independent business and technical consultant, teacher, writer, researcher and speaker. Mr. Edwards helps leaders and teams discover their highest effectivity by leading their organizations to focus on clear vision, mission and objectives leading to purposed deliverables and predictable, repeatable results.

If you would like to learn more about how Mr. Edwards may help your business increase effectiveness and profitability, his CV is located at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/matthewdedwards> or you may simply Google "matthewdedwards" to find out more about Mr. Edwards and how he will be helpful to you and your organization.