


The Sleeping Beauty of corporate education

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Every company needs educated employees. It is management's responsibility to motivate employees to participate in educational programs. Training courses and workshops can be considered as a corporate Sleeping Beauty. Fortunately, things are changing. Western European companies have realized the necessity of educational programs for a good working environment.

A company needs first to determine whether to consider hard skills courses or soft skills training. Young people from the Millennium generation often have very good hard skills gained at high schools and universities, but lack soft skills as they had little practice during their studies. Hard skills are easier to master and, therefore, many companies have started to emphasize soft skills training.

The structure and content of the training or workshops usually differs from company to company, but there is one shared key factor amongst all the diversity. People are looking for methods that are interactive, entertaining, and educational at the same time. It is very important to realize that the age of conference rooms with 200 attendees is over. Training should be strongly focused on one specific topic supported by role-plays and interactive tasks. These courses add a more realistic perspective for the participants regarding a particular topic. All educational programs tend to be skill-based with easy comprehension and memorability. Generally, people do not like long lectures filled with a great deal of information. In the internet age, it is absolutely unacceptable to overwhelm people with long, dull presentations. People want action, useful knowledge and applicability.

Open, internal or online education?

Educational companies usually provide soft skills training in two ways: open courses and internal courses. Open courses have the advantage of providing an exchange of best practices, different views on a specific

topic, and networking. These aspects are important when new ideas need to be brought into teams. It is most beneficial to a company when employees attend internal training and workshops; they will learn new ways of working during open courses from other people from various fields. These training courses will have theoretical as well as practical applications, so participants have an opportunity to experience fast-track training which will get them "back in the game".

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The structure of internal training can help fix internal problems and meet companies' needs. One of the most crucial parts of the training process is an open discussion at the beginning to analyze the company's situation. Based on the analysis results, the instructor can prepare modules in the educational program for all departments. According to our experience, the best

starting point for educational programs is in the most motivated department, as these employees can transfer their positive experience and mood to others. In this way, a smooth introduction to the whole process is achieved.

Metaphorically speaking, a module-based training process should be like working out in the gym – a gradual enhancement thanks to several stages of exercising. To be more specific, employees take part in the first basic training, where they gain knowledge on how to improve a particular skill. At the end of the first training, they are assigned a task with a timeframe of eight weeks. Usually, the task is associated with a specific topic and consists of observing how the acquired knowledge can be applied in a real life. After eight weeks, the participants meet up again with the instructor. The instructor then observes the participant for one working day to monitor if they are properly implementing the newly-gained skills. This "test ride" is then followed up by a short discussion about possible improvements. The last session is focused on maintaining best practices after half a year.

In addition to standard personal training, online education is becoming more and more popular. This trend came from the United States, where it has become common in recent years. Thanks to videos, presentations, and written discussions, participants can enjoy a course directly from the comfort of their homes or offices. Of course, the whole platform has to be matched to the requirements of individual clients, and presented in an

attractive way in order to capture the attention of clients. Online education is yet to really take off, as people are often not motivated enough to take courses in their free time, but a combination of both online and face-to-face courses can provide a balanced solution for employees. They experience the theoretical part via an online platform and the practical part with a dedicated trainer. The future of online courses is very promising, not only for company education, but also at universities as a substitute for distance learning.

No matter which approach is chosen, they all have their benefits

The word motivation was used several times in this article. Many companies have problems persuading employees to take courses. An experienced instructor who is able to understand clients' needs can provide helpful advice in this regard. If a company trains experts in all areas of their business and they are available to educate the next generation, they will stay a step ahead of the game. But if companies do not have sufficient resources to release people from their work, external education companies can prepare all the necessary requirements and offer solutions with the newest trends and the best service. Once you wake up a Sleeping Beauty (education and continual improvement), you can live with your motivated and educated employees ever after!