How to Increase Elearning Utilization
“If you build it, they will come,” right?

Unfortunately, this is rarely the case in elearning. Creating a successful elearning program at your organization goes beyond selecting courses and implementing a learning management system (LMS).

In my role as Senior Customer Success Manager at OpenSesame, I speak with hundreds of companies about their top strategies for increasing learner engagement and consumption of content. What I have learned is that any organization can increase its elearning utilization. This guide will help you create a conversation at your organization to optimize your elearning program and will give you concrete steps to do so.

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Align elearning with **company goals**

Identify core values of your company and use elearning as a means to support that mission.

70% of companies that tie training with goals see an **increase in profits.**

1Brandon Hall Group’s 2014 Learning and Development Benchmarking Study
Take action

1. Promote organization goals
   - Display goals in meetings, employee handbook and other relevant material
   - Relate how team deliverables relate to overall company goals

2. Consider employee goals
   - Understand employee goals for personal and professional growth while developing training
   - Train for current and future career within organization

3. Map core competency
   - To achieve organization goals, what basic skills should all employees be equipped with?
   - What skills should specific departments have? (ex: customer service, Microsoft Office)

4. Develop relevant training
   - Communicate the benefits of elearning for employees clearly
   - Integrate elearning completion into performance reviews
   - Identify course applications in accompanying materials
Incorporate into onboarding

To show the importance of learning in your organization’s culture, start elearning-based or blended training at orientation itself. This allows the employee to also learn how to access training courses as training almost always continues beyond onboarding.

Helpful courses for new hires include Sexual Harassment, Data Security, Diversity and Microsoft office.

Some benefits

- Incorporating elearning into onboarding allows you to keep a record of completed courses and helps make the onboarding process more self-paced and dynamic.
Get support from management

- Involve managers before development and understand their expectations upfront
- Tie training goals and completion into performance reviews
- With management, create training tracks for advancement within the organization

Establish ways to measure success

**Qualitative**
- reactions to courses
- manager reactions
- employee feelings of engagement

**Quantitative**
- sales performance
- employee retention
- course completion rate
- skills gained
Communicate early and often

- Select a “course of the month” to feature
- Provide directions for accessing training
- Give quick updates and successes in team meetings
- Determine a contact person for further questions

Establish a rhythm using a variety of channels.

- Internal communications
- Team meetings
- Email/newsletter
- Intranet
Make learning social

Host a book club
Host a monthly meeting to discuss a highlighted elearning course, similar to a book club. Prepare questions to start a discussion about the course and applications.

Hold an open house
Invite employees to an elearning open house to demonstrate how to access the learning program, demo courses, and answer questions.

Use internal channels
Use Slack (or other platform) to create an elearning channel. Regularly post updates and collect feedback (ex: what courses do they recommend?).

Anticipate learner needs
• Have workstations dedicated to training
• Have IT support available and communicate who to contact if courses don’t work
• Provide documentation on how to access courses and basic troubleshooting
Create **rewards and recognition**

Tailor rewards and recognition to your organization’s culture. Depending on your budget, this can be anything from an acknowledgement to a lunch to a printed certificate.

**Take action**

- Incorporate learning outcomes and successes into meetings
- Use incentives like simple useful items (ex: funny mug or laptop stickers)
- Hold mini contests (ex: highest hours of learning or greatest participation)
- Share learner success stories in newsletter and other platforms
Collect and apply feedback

- Be specific in the purpose for collecting feedback.
- Be sure to identify who the contact person is for receiving and reporting feedback.
Conclusion

Increasing elearning utilization can initially seem daunting, but using these strategies, there are a number of actionable measures you can take. You can market your elearning program, create greater incentive for learners and align learning with company goals. Through these actions, you can create a dialogue at your organization about what success means and achieve it.

Checklist for success

1. Align elearning with company goals
2. Incorporate into onboarding
3. Get support from management
4. Establish ways to measure success
5. Communicate early and often
6. Make elearning social
7. Anticipate learner needs
8. Create rewards and recognition
9. Collect and apply feedback
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