BUILDING CONTENT THAT IMPROVES PERFORMANCE

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSITIONING TO FULL-SCALE PRODUCTION

In our previous Knowledge Brief, we shared the "competencies" element of the learning and compliance infrastructure.

In this brief, we discuss best practices for developing an "online" content strategy that can raise both competency levels and business performance.

Many learning and development (L&D) teams in commercializing companies develop online content to cost-effectively reach remote employees. However, one recent study found that only 25% of line managers believed the L&D department was critical to achieving their business goals.[1] We believe the L&D team can improve this perception, and provide a measurable impact on business performance, through these actions:

- **Gain Employee Buy-In:** which skill-building topics can be conveyed to managers and employees in an online format? How much time are they able to devote to online training?

- **Align to Business Improvement Goals:** how can we link the online content to our continuous improvement programs?

- **Make it Continuous:** can we tag our content and make it easily available to learners after it's completed, so it serves as "performance support?" In addition, can we segment content into basic, intermediate and mastery levels?

Benefits of a Well-Developed Online Content Strategy

There are several business benefits to building an online content program:

- UL has estimated that a training manager can save 50 hours when a 60-minute training activity is converted from a classroom event to a third-party eLearning course;

- Employees can take the training at their own individual pace, as opposed to completing all learning within a structured classroom environment;

- eLearning can be highly engaging and visually interesting, which improves retention;

- Assessment data can be collected to measure aggregate scores, to help determine if a single learning objective is being conveyed correctly;

- Content is always available, so learners can review any portion of the course as needed to support learners as they perform job activities.

Six Elements of a Successful Online Content Strategy

Based on our development of 500 standard courses and hundreds of custom courses for clients, we have identified these six elements of an online content strategy that helps companies achieve business goals:

ENGAGED EXPERTS: the proper content requires mastery-level experts that are able to communicate their knowledge to the right target audience (beginners, intermediate, and other masters). L&D teams may have to partner with these experts to ensure the content aligns with the right learning levels.

INTERACTIONS: online courses should contain scenarios and simulations that require the learner to interact with the course. These interactions reinforce key learning objectives, cueing the learner's mind on how best to process the information presented; in addition, content should be presented using interactive devices that "layer" the information, as this approach has been shown to build and reinforce knowledge, and change behavior, in adult learners.

ASSESSMENTS: interactive question and answer sets (Q&A's) should be presented throughout the course to promote a deeper retention and comprehension of the material. Learners must demonstrate proficiency in order to advance through the course and to receive "qualification" for completing the course.

LINKS TO RESOURCES AND REFERENCES: online courses should enable deeper dives into the material. This can be done via links to supplementary electronic reference material, so that learners can use a course as a "performance support" tool at a later date.

MOBILE-READY FORMAT: as companies encourage "bring your own device" policies, courses should accommodate mobile devices, especially if supervisors present courses on the production floor. Courses should be highly visual and optimized for the mobile device experience (touch screen, sliders, etc.)

COURSE MAINTENANCE PROCESS: courses should always reflect the latest regulations and laws; many of our clients have created a "course/regulatory" map that serves as an inventory of the regulations or processes discussed in the material; further, companies should develop a governance process to ensure courses stay current; this may include a scheduled annual review or a quarterly cross-functional regulatory meeting.

Making SOP Assessments More Engaging
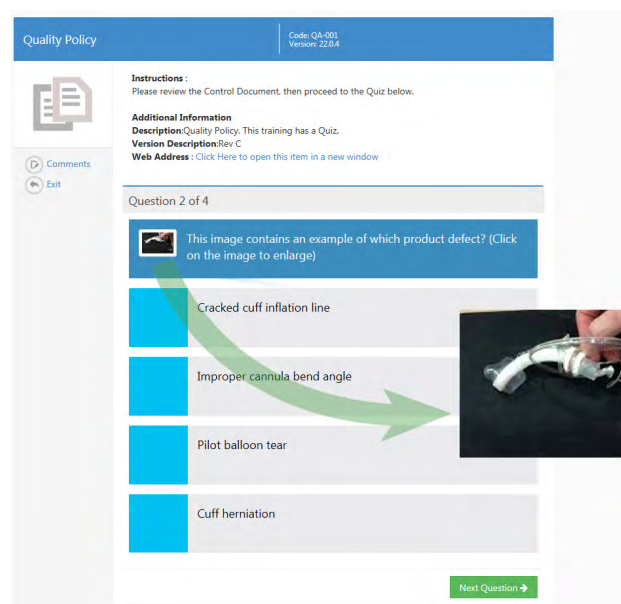
An online content strategy may include more visual SOP assessments. Companies should consider tools, like UL's QuizCreator within ComplianceWire®, in which assessments can include images that may have been used in the SOPs themselves.

In the example on the left, the learner is challenged to identify a product defect, and match the type of defect to the image depicted. In this way, a "visual inspection" SOP assessment simulates a real-world issue that may occur in the job environment.

1. Reimagining L&D Capabilities to Drive Continuous Learning, Bersin by Deloitte, 2015

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