

The Complete Guide to On-demand Employee Training



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Employee training has seen some dramatic shifts in the landscape over the past few decades, often due to the constantly advancing technology available. Some organizations are quick to embrace new technologies and methods, but depending on the size and management of the company, that's easier said than done for others.

For many companies, there is little evidence of these recent technological advancements in their employee training programs. This could be due to factors like a lack of funding, human resources, or leadership buy-in for the changes needed. Unfortunately, these same criteria are what help build a successful learning culture that can improve business results..

Advances in technology are shifting the way employees prefer to learn and are beginning to develop methods that support the science of learning.

The widespread availability of having content online, specifically video, has created an avenue that employers can leverage to create a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Our ability to connect to the internet anytime, anywhere, has created a shift in the expectations people have for learning tasks and skills. Training is no longer relegated to classrooms – the entire world is a classroom!



Is your organization ready to take advantage of all the benefits the world of on-demand training offers?

In this guide, we'll look at the top three challenges companies face with training their workforces today, and how to effectively implement on-demand training options into the organization's overall culture of learning and employee development.

Challenge #1: Training takes too long

One of the most common objections to ongoing training is that companies can't afford to have employees taken off the job on a regular basis to complete an hour-long eLearning course, or a half day classroom seminar.

This objection isn't only on the employer's side – it's also a concern of employees. The opportunities they're given for training are often only lengthy courses that fail to hold their attention or provide the desired results. When this happens, the ROI for training is nil. A box for "Did we get it done?" may be checked off, but all the benefits that come with training today's employees in the way they need to learn are missed.

When training is too long for learners to engage with and remember the subject matter, behavior changes don't happen, skills aren't developed, engagement efforts are ineffective, and business challenges aren't overcome. Sounds pretty bleak, right?

Well, there's a simple answer to turning that issue on its head and seeing all of those things as the fruit of your training program. **Taking advantage of microlearning opportunities has proven to result in behavior changes, new skills developed, higher employee engagement, and a plethora of business challenges no longer being a thorn in the company's side.**

Consumers Credit Union (CCU) started using microlearning within their training program because employees needed flexibility to train any time of day, depending on the flow of customers. Their use of micro-video helped them surpass the industry standard for overall satisfaction with training, and reduce onboarding costs by \$2,000 per new hire.

[Learn more about CCU and their training success with microlearning.](#)

This is just one example of how microlearning can be successfully used in training programs, but the benefits are numerous. Let's talk more about why shorter training opportunities are effective!

While it is true that an environment of constantly having answers at our fingertips has decreased our patience and attention spans in general, that's not the main reason why microlearning is an effective training format. It's a factor that needs to be considered for engagement, as we'll discuss more in the next section, but **the effectiveness of breaking down training content into just a few minutes at a time is rooted in neuroscience.**



Cognitive load is an information dam in the brain. There's only so much mental bandwidth available before the working memory needs a break and checks out. Focusing on training for too long reduces the amount of information that successfully gets coded to memory, and results in wasted time and effort.

Microlearning works within the parameters of cognitive load by breaking training down into smaller chunks. The definition of microlearning in terms of length is viewed differently from expert-to-expert, but the general rule of thumb is no longer than 10 minutes at a time.

We've found the optimal length for micro-videos to be four to seven minutes, However many of these videos are typically part of a larger course that could include as many videos as needed for the subject matter.

With this kind of video course, learners can view just the specific subject they're looking for and only use a few minutes of their time to learn a skill they need in the moment. A longer course makes it much more difficult to find information at the time of need.

Microlearning is a much-needed solution to fitting training into busy schedules, both because of its shorter length and because it avoids the great time-waster, cognitive overload. On top of those benefits, it matches the style people are growing accustomed to when it comes to learning on personal time. YouTube is a popular and powerful tool, and its exponential growth of "how-to" video views has proven that our culture is growing more and more dependent on short, video-based instruction.

If your company isn't providing microlearning opportunities to employees, then don't doubt they're finding it on their own. Maybe that sounds like a good thing because it means less cost to the company, but in reality, the costs of not being your employees' go-to for the training they're looking for add up very quickly, namely with turnover.

Read on to learn how microlearning affects employee satisfaction, culture, and business results.

Why You Should Invest in Online Employee Training

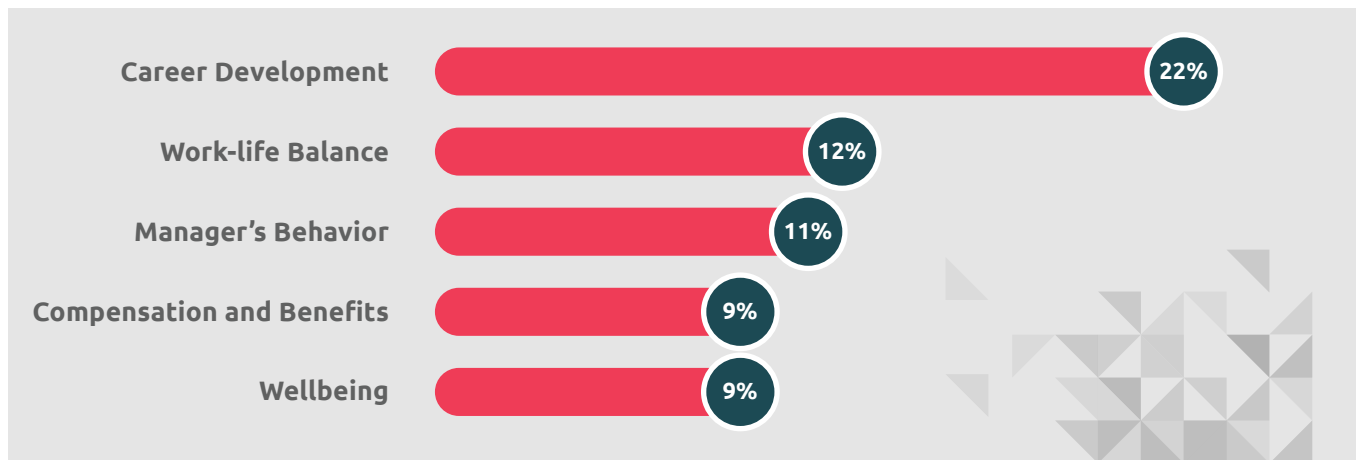
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WHY INVEST IN ONLINE EMPLOYEE TRAINING



Challenge #2: Employees aren't engaged in training

The Work Institute found that top reasons given by employees for leaving their jobs were:

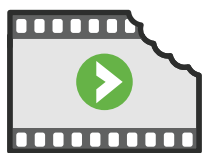


For some companies, creating a better culture and overcoming business challenges are completely separate initiatives from employee training, but we've discovered there's an undeniable link between better training and better business results. How so?

It's all in how their employees engage with training. Whether it's employee turnover, compliance issues, sales growth, new managers, or a host of other challenges, providing on-demand training that fits what modern learners need is a key to unlocking many doors.



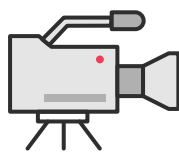
Making training available on-demand is the first step to allowing employees to better engage with what they need, when and where they need it. Here are several other guidelines for training content that is truly engaging for today's learners:



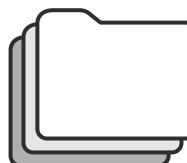
USE OF VIDEO-BASED, MICROLEARNING FORMAT



FRESH, UP-TO-DATE CONTENT



HIGH PRODUCTION VALUE



BREADTH OF CONTENT



GAMIFICATION TECHNIQUES

As we've previously mentioned, providing training content in smaller chunks is crucial for learning retention. It's also an effective way to weave a learning culture into the fabric of your company.

Training is an event. Learning is a process.

Because of the learning technology now available to the masses, the modern workforce is shifting away from relying on formal training programs for career development. Instead, self-directed learning, such as online video courses and peer-to-peer coaching are becoming more prevalent ways to facilitate ongoing learning.

Improving engagement in training also relies heavily on the format of that training. Video content has risen in popularity on an exponential scale over the past several years. This effect comes from both the availability of quality equipment at a cheaper cost, along with the higher engagement that comes with combining picture and audio. It's a closer mirror to in-person interaction and allows learners to better relate to the scenarios presented on-screen.

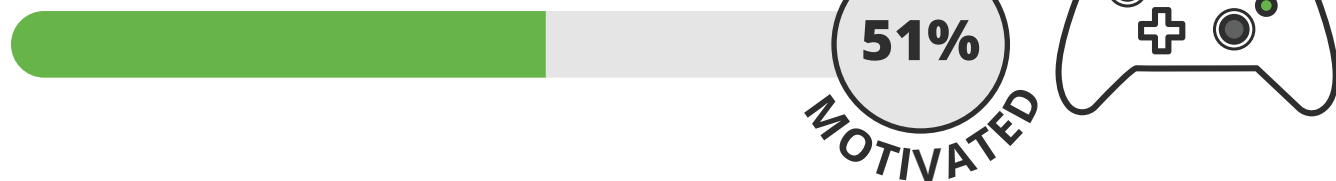
Marketing studies have shown consumers are four times more likely to watch a video than read text. [Check out the success story from our client, PGC.](#)

Video-based training has been around for a while, but another element of engagement lies in the production quality and relevancy – are your employees stuck watching cheesy training videos from the 90s? Not keeping video training up to date sends a message to your employees that the company doesn't put much value in their training experience.

On the flip side, providing high quality, current video training communicates that the company cares about how well employees are engaged in training, and allows an ongoing learning culture to develop.

Engagement in learning varies from person to person, and some people simply won't be as thrilled to participate as others. To promote elective participation and a more engaged atmosphere, a little friendly competition goes a long way.

Recent studies have shown that learners were **51% more motivated** to participate in learning when it was presented as a game.



Incorporating game tactics into training can include several different strategies, but a good place to start is by using leaderboards and awarding badges or prizes to employees who complete training, whether it's mandatory, elective, or both. Using quiz-like follow-up questions is a great way to reinforce learning, and promote engagement by awarding points for correct answers.

Even if your company's training focus is solely on compliance, improving engagement with training matters for multiple outcomes.

Whether your desired training outcomes are a safer workplace, higher productivity, more effective management, or more satisfied and skilled employees, you'll need to foster engagement in learning to see any effect on those outcomes.

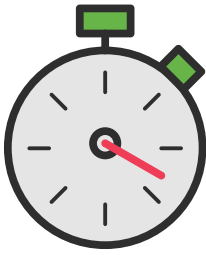
On-demand training that utilizes high quality, video-based microlearning with gamification techniques will drastically increase your employees' engagement in continuous learning. Once you have them hooked on training, you'll be able to set goals that cause any business challenge to disappear.

Challenge #3: The majority of training is forgotten by the next day

Another essential component to create true learning from a training event is by helping your learners transfer information from short-term to long-term memory.

You might ask, shouldn't it be their responsibility to pay attention so they remember it better?

Yes, they will have to pay attention (per the previous section on engagement), but forgetting training isn't their fault. Forgetting is a completely natural cognitive function! The rate at which the human brain forgets is pretty astounding, though.



24 Hours: 70% of training has been forgotten



3 Days: 90% of training has been forgotten



There are many solutions to increasing learning retention. We've already discussed microlearning and how shorter chunks of content allow more information to be absorbed, but what's also important is what happens after the training takes place.

WHAT HAPPENS **AFTER TRAINING** IS **MORE IMPORTANT** THAN WHAT HAPPENS **DURING TRAINING**

Forgetting is not a failure of memory – it's a mechanism to determine what information is important and what can be discarded. The key to causing your employees to remember what they've just learned is to reinforce training through forced retrieval.

Giving employees opportunities to recall information causes the brain to tag it as "important" and transfer it to long-term memory. If there's no forced retrieval, either through follow-up or on-the-job use, your training won't make it into long-term memory banks, and employees will need to be re-trained.

To counteract the brain's natural forgetfulness, you'll need to provide reminders, or "boosts," to your learners after training.

Boosts can take many different forms – quizzes, polls, multiple choice, short answer, or reflection questions all work well for follow-up. Upon completion of select video lessons and courses, learners can enroll in this feature, which includes 4 boosts over a 2-week time period. Reinforcement can also be in the form of group discussions and social learning activities, like posts on an internal company forum that facilitate discussion around recent training topics.

The time in between boosts matters, too – spacing them out, rather than cramming everything into a short time period, helps improve long-term memory.

Making reinforcement questions difficult is also necessary for better retention. The goal is not to make it easy for learners to remember the correct answer - it's to force them to think through what they were trained on. Getting the answer wrong but seeing the correct one helps the brain recognize that information as highly important and send it over to long-term memory.

Promoting reflection on learning experiences is a big component to seeing behavior changes and improvements to critical thinking. Learners should be given time to reflect and not expected to respond directly after training.

See the [framework for reflection questions posed to students by a professor at the University of Calgary](#).

Reinforcing training through regular boosts and thoughtful questions is a necessity to reducing the amount of information your employees unintentionally forget.

Let's talk about making training mobile

It's a well-known fact that we, as a society, are highly dependent on our cell phones. We are constantly on the go, and any information that we can't access from the phones in our back pockets is hardly informative at all.

Many industries and businesses have employees working in the field for hours at a time, if not all the time. Sitting at a desk all day is no longer the standard for much of today's workforce.



To provide your team with truly on-demand training, they need to be able to access it anywhere, anytime. Mobile learning, or mLearning, is a solution to providing on-demand training to your employees without the constraints of prior technology.

In a study performed with U.S. Department of Defense training, learners participated in a mandatory course using mobile delivery, and **70% reported preferring the mobile version to the desktop/laptop version of the course.**

Before the course began, learners' preference on mobile device vs. desktop/laptop training was evenly distributed. After the mobile course was completed, **85% of learners stated they would prefer other mandatory courses to be delivered via mobile devices. The aspects learners found most beneficial with mobile training were convenience (34%) and time management (22%).**

Merrill Lynch also saw an overwhelmingly positive response after running a pilot program with mobile training delivery. Their goal with the program was to increase completion rates. After the pilot test, they reported a 12% higher completion rate, and shorter time to completion with no loss of comprehension. Due to the program's success, after Bank of America acquired Merrill Lynch, they expanded mobile training availability from 22,000 to 55,000 employees and started incorporating non-compliance courses.

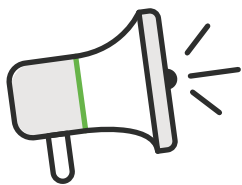
Surveys of participants showed that 99% believed the mobile learning format supported the learning objectives, and 100% of participants said they would complete more training in a mobile format.

While mobile learning may not be as crucial for some industries or businesses as it is for others, doing surveys and running a pilot program are excellent ways to find out if your training methods can benefit from mobile delivery.

What's important to note is that mobile learning is not simply a desktop course viewed on a mobile device. To see an increase in utilization and other positive results, training needs to be designed specifically for mobile use.

Why blending is best

There seems to be a big disconnect between how much emphasis organizations place on traditional training, and how well it's actually benefiting employees' careers.



According to Monster.com, 72% of employees don't think management cares about their career growth.



A number that high suggests companies could significantly reduce costly issues of engagement and turnover when they implement modern career development opportunities.

At BizLibrary, we advocate a blended learning program that incorporates the best of traditional and modern methods. Our Client Success Consultants see the best program results from clients who have embraced a blended style of training, so that's why we believe an on-demand solution is simply one piece (albeit, an important piece!) of the learning puzzle.

The design of a training program will vary from business to business, so when deciding how to structure your blended program, put yourself in your employees' shoes and think through learning goals. Choose a mode of delivery based on the knowledge and skills employees need to learn. There may be certain topics that require hour-long classes, but could also benefit from having microlearning videos available to find information on-demand, as well as social aspects like a company forum to discuss the training.

Besides your formal classroom and on-demand video options, think about also building up your company's overall coaching and mentoring skills. Based on our survey conducted with the Brandon Hall Group, employees see the most benefit from on-the-job training, so teaching managers to be effective coaches will have a huge impact on creating a culture that embraces continuous learning.

A study by ATD recently reported that top performing companies are almost 5x more likely to have extensive learning cultures than lower performers.

However you end up structuring your training program, whether it relies heavily on one method, or is an even blend of multiple approaches, make sure you're asking employees for feedback on a regular basis.

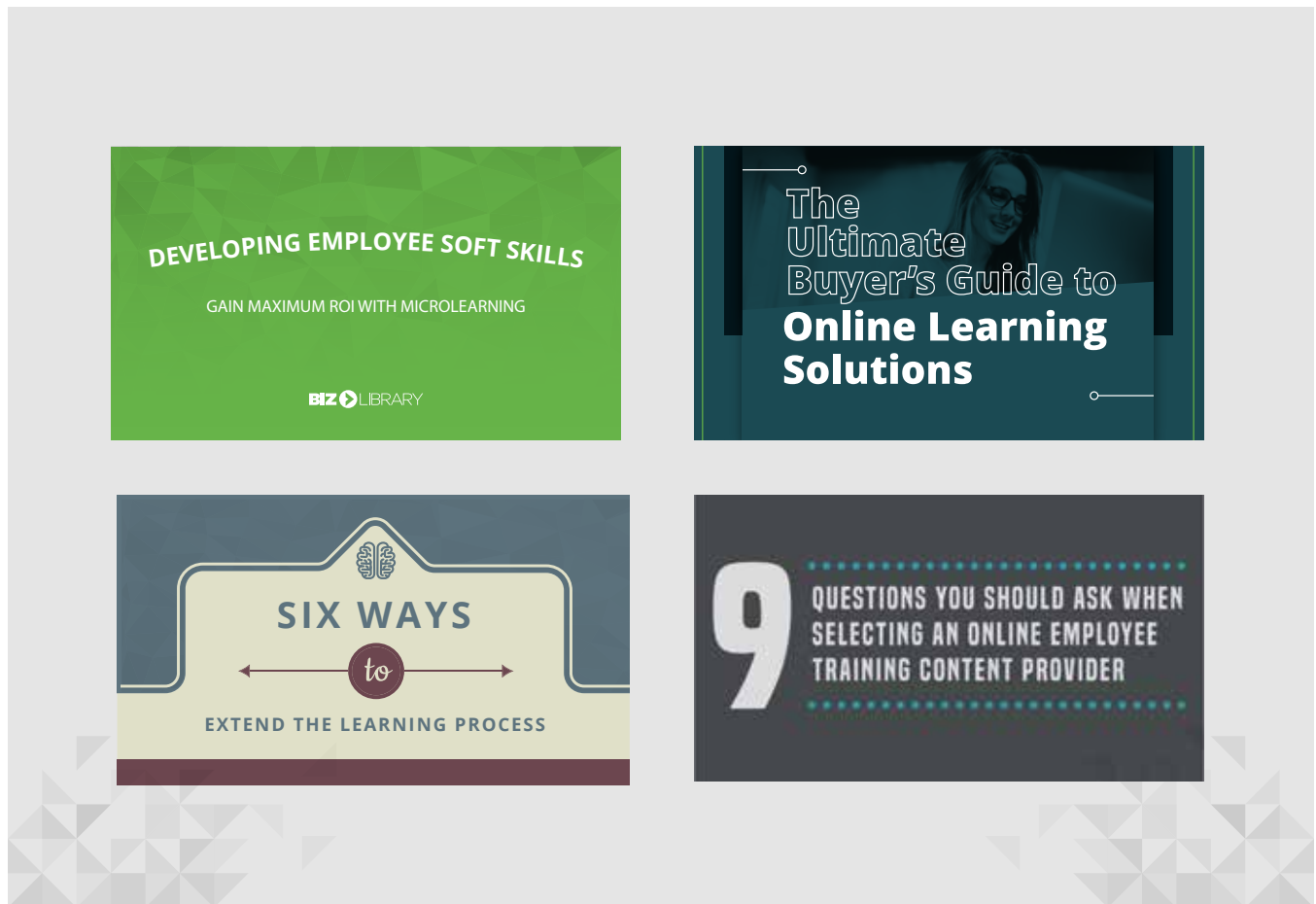
Your learners' preferences and needs will change, just as they've changed over previous years. The most effective training programs continually evaluate what's best for their employees because ultimately, it's about their development, not what works best for the company. The more satisfied employees are with their career development options and experience, the more the company will reap the rewards of investing in them.

Get the **PEOPLE'S** opinion
It's about the **PEOPLE**



Recommended Resources

After reading all these recommendations for using on-demand training with your program, you probably have a lot of ideas about next steps. If you're looking for more information on specific topics, check out some of these related resources.



If you're ready to turn ideas into actions, we're here to help!

About BizLibrary

BizLibrary is a leading provider of online learning for growing organizations. Our award-winning microlearning video library engages employees of all levels, and our learning technology platforms are a progressive catalyst for achievement. Partnered with our expert Client Success and Technical Support teams, clients are empowered to solve business challenges and impact change within their organizations.

To get started incorporating on-demand content into your employee training program, talk with an expert today.

Talk with an Expert

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