

Design matters even more than you think

The world we live in is increasingly fragmented, fast changing and offers a wider variety of choice than ever before. It is clear from our own personal experiences at school, at work and at play that learning occurs in many ways, both formally and informally. And how we choose to absorb and reflect on information can come from an ever increasing web of sources.

- New buying process
- Getting the most out of your budget

Our motivation to learn is normally driven by a value, a need, or when there is some sort of urgency involved. Or when we're curious, stimulated, fascinated or engaged. So how can we as learning professionals harness and encourage this motivation?

One way is for learning design to better embrace all media forms and people networks, from print to podcasts. All the while providing greater value for money than ever in the context of tighter budgets.

For this to happen we need to break away from the tired (and wrong) idea that value for money equates to paying as little as possible for as much as possible - "much" being measured in study hours or number of screens.

Put another way, designs need to move away from being conversions, i.e. re-presenting content that already exists as PowerPoint slides, Word, PDF documents, intranet pages, websites etc. Too often this results in e-learning that is bland and ineffectual.

New buying process

For people who commission e-learning the thought-process should move away from:

"Can you please convert this content from a PowerPoint presentation into e-learning?"

To:



"I have a certain amount of budget (it really doesn't matter whether it's £5,000 or £50,000 or even £500,000) but how should this best be spent to get a maximum return? Brightwave, what can you do with this content that will make the most difference to my target audience?"

Or even:

"Come on you designers and graphic artists. Wow me. Design and create for me something that will enhance, complement and add value to the content I already have."

Getting the most out of your budget

But why not leave the core content as it is? Maybe edit and smarten it up a bit, maybe record a downloadable audio version of it - but use only, say, 20% of the budget to do this.

Invest the next 60% on high impact overviews to highlight and provoke thinking on the key issues and messages. These could be, for example, a series of two-minute 'e-movies' - rich media treatments such as audio visual mini dramas or documentaries, animations, video clips, dramatised podcasts etc.

This leaves 20% of the budget for a straightforward, but substantial, (not tokenistic), assessment.

And while you are changing the way learning is designed, move away from structuring learning events into a course menu. Why not group them as links in an email from which the user can direct their own learning - only signing-on formally to the Learning Management System, to complete the assessment?

Changing your approach to e-learning and learning design to accommodate the variety of ways adults learn and making fresh design the main focus will help you achieve your goals more effectively.

Check back at bright ideas soon for the next article about some practical examples of this approach.

Call us on 01273 827676 or email us at enquiries@brightwave.co.uk to find out more about our corporate learning solutions and how we can help your business.