

e-Learning and coaching - perfect partners?

e-Learning is a great way of improving subject-rich skills and knowledge, especially when large numbers of people are involved. But too often excellent e-learning content is left to wither somewhere on the network or intranet instead of really hitting the spot.

- High quality interactive learning content
- Managers coach e-learner's toolkit
- Coaching development

Used properly, coaching is able to motivate, encourage and support the learner so they can get the most out of the learning resources they have available. Coaching can therefore be used as the 'glue' that makes e-learning stick.

The 2005 Training and Development survey from CIPD shows e-learning and coaching by managers as the two fastest growing activities. But when they are combined, they become even more compelling - to almost all the respondents. (94% believe e-learning is most effective when combined with other types of training.)

Brightwave has developed the 'Coach-Mentor's Online Toolkit' in conjunction with the Oxford Total Learning Group. It forms the heart of a breakthrough model for combining e-learning and coaching to maximise the return on e-learning investment. The building blocks of the model are:

1. High quality interactive learning content

Subject-specific and often highly bespoke, this is the means by which potentially thousands of employees can grasp new knowledge and skills. With the addition of online assessments or quizzes, learning progress can be objectively measured.

2. Managers coach e-learner's toolkit

A crucial component designed to ensure managers get the most out of staff time spent learning, this combines practical coaching skills with links and tips related to the specific e-learning content that their learners will work through. It answers questions like:

- How do I help learners manage their learning time?
- How do I reinforce the benefits of the learning?
- How do I interpret the assessment results?
- How should I help the learner prioritise?
- How can I help bring the learning to life by making it relevant and applicable?

3. Coaching development

To support managers, a cascade approach is designed to plant coaching champions at senior levels. By developing a handful of skilled (and possibly qualified) coaches, managers supporting e-learners can be supported and coached themselves.

Bupa is one of the first organisations to pioneer this approach. Many more are also in a position to do so. With 54% of organisations surveyed by the CIPD already using e-learning, and a further 39% planning to in the next year, a methodology that optimises the considerable investment made in e-learning will be essential.

But of course, coaching is more than a one-off tactical way of improving employees' ability to learn. By cascading coaching and mentoring practice from senior management down, it is possible to instil a coaching culture among an organisation's management that embeds a learning and development climate into the way people work - instead of it being a separate, add-on function.

e-Learning too can and should become embedded - and maintained, refreshed and personalised - to provide ongoing performance support.

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.