3 Ways to Make Corporate Training Fun



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As an e-learning expert and former trainer, I hear this all the time from people: “Do you really think that corporate training can be … fun?”

I don’t blame them. I’ve had my fair share of dull presentations and lecture-style classroom training sessions. It can be hard to change employees’ perceptions when their previous training experiences were marred by “death by PowerPoint” and Zoom fatigue.

But as training occupies an even more pivotal role in organizations — with nearly three out of four learning and development (L&D) leaders noting that, over the past year, L&D has become a more strategic function, according to LinkedIn —

a slapdash and/or sleep-inducing approach won't cut it.

In reality, successful training involves a lot of creativity and planning. It has to be relevant and, in many cases, personalized to fit each employee's needs. Also, a lack of proper training can hurt the company's bottom line, often in the form of knowledge gaps and productivity losses that tend to snowball and negatively affect performance. But since this doesn't happen overnight and can be hard to estimate, companies tend to downplay this aspect and procrastinate on investing in training that is actually enjoyable.

However, I want to make a case that it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, businesses have more options and resources than ever before to make training fun. And with training an increasingly strategic imperative, why not take advantage of them?

Here are a few ideas for designing engaging training, so that employees will actually want more, not less of it.

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1. Use games to motivate learners

Gamification – or incorporating game elements within learning design – continues to be a major e-learning trend, and it's pretty straightforward. For example, you can reward employees with points and badges each time they complete a module, take a quiz or complete another action related to their training.

However, engaging e-learning games encompass much more than that. To create a truly motivating learning experience, instructors can also create game levels, so each time a learner accumulates enough points, they "level up." Many employees find this genuinely rewarding because it shows them that they're making progress, not just ticking training off

their to-do list.

The same goes for leaderboards that display learners' scores and team games. Some employees find it more motivating to complete their training if their individual game points count toward a team effort. For example, teams or entire departments can engage in a fun, low-key competition and challenge each other to learn more.

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2. Enable learners to collaborate

Social learning is another powerful way to make training more fun. Learners are more likely to engage in training if they see that their peers are also interested, participating and sharing their knowledge.

For learning that takes place live (in-person or online), there are some tried and tested ways to foster collaboration, such as role-playing and assigning people into breakout rooms on Zoom. Keep in mind, though, that these types of activities are not for everyone, as not everyone enjoys and thrives in a public speaking environment.

Another way to drive collaboration, often in an on-demand learning environment, is by creating virtual learning communities, where learners can "friend" each other and engage in meaningful discussions centered on their interests and goals. For example, employees interested in leadership can have their own group in which they exchange ideas and information related to the courses they're enrolled in.

In these discussion-based environments, a learner asks a question, and someone else answers. Subsequently, the most useful answers to the community often get rewarded with likes or a badge. Sound familiar? This is how many people across the world interact in online forums and social media, so why not

take a format that they already are familiar with and adapt it to training?

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3. Promote interactive learning

Gamification and social learning are great examples of collaborative training. In addition, in order for training to amp up the fun factor, you also need to have great content supported by interactive elements.

Let’s start with video learning, which is more than just a trend. Having short video lessons is an excellent way to build course content that is easily digestible and won’t overwhelm busy employees.

Effective video modules are also accompanied by interactive assignments, such as short quizzes that let employees test their knowledge, see results and take corrective actions.

And speaking of finding the next best action, nowadays, a training platform can do more than just react to what learners do. For instance, proactive platforms have the ability to recommend online courses, articles, e-books, discussion forums and more, based on learners’ interests, previous training performance and goals. This also shows that the future of training is based on interactivity, which is conducive to fun learning experiences.

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From humdrum to fun

Training has always been important to companies, but now it’s taken on an even more vital role in helping employees upskill, reskill and right-skill in the face of major global

challenges.

It’s time to dispense with the notion that staid, serious and boring training – because it may be the status quo – is how training *has to be*. Fun training isn’t diluted training. In fact, it’s often “stickier”; when relevant material is supported by engaging delivery methods, such as gamification, collaboration and interactivity, the result is often increased participation and retention.

In addition, adding a “human touch” to training, with appropriate humor and personal connections, can help managers, instructional designers and trainers better connect with employees and make training more relatable and enjoyable.

Good luck with your training initiatives – and most importantly, have fun with them!

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