Bite-Sized Big Impact

How microlearning is reshaping education

An Association Transformation Whitepaper

ASSOCIATION TRANSFORMATION THE PODCAST

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CONTENTS

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ABOUT ASSOCIATION TRANSFORMATION

Launched in July 2020, the Association Transformation podcast was conceived as a direct response to the membership sector's need for information, dialogue, guidance, and support during an unprecedented period of disruption and uncertainty. Recognizing the inherently global nature of the membership sector, the podcast is a transatlantic conversation between co-hosts Elisa Pratt and Andrew Chamberlain and is intended to advance the impact and evolution of non-profit organizations. We always seek diversity of thought and new examples of innovation in action; and across five seasons we have hosted 90+ association specialists from the global sector across 100+ recordings, taking a deep dive into the current issues, emerging trends, leadership challenges, and business opportunities facing the international association community. Irrespective of subject matter, we always aim to share practical ideas, knowledge, and support for the long-term benefit of association chief executives, c-suite nonprofit professionals, and volunteer leaders. Our conversations cover a diverse compilation of subjects relevant to association leaders across the globe, ranging from mental health and wellbeing, the climate crisis, and DEI to membership recruitment and retention, financial strategy, and governance practice.

DISCLAIMER

"The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave, is not training them, and having them stay." Henry Ford

"The only thing that is more expensive than education is ignorance."

Benjamin Franklin

INTRODUCTION

The modern learner is busy, mobile, and looking to learn. Equally, they are short on time, working remotely, and are highly digitally literate. In a world where people check their smartphones nine times an hour, and competition for attention is exceptionally fierce, it is no wonder that shorter digital learning content is becoming more necessary and popular. Zoom fatigue in the wake of lockdown has also meant that average learning session times have decreased significantly from 20 to just over four minutes.[1] Modern workplace learners want to access eLearning on mobile devices, on the move and in stolen pockets of time – on trains, over breakfast, before meetings. Given the pivotal role of education in associations' value proposition, it stands to reason that membership bodies have to maximize the use of all available tools; and given the almost inestimable speed of technological change, as well as the enduring changes to working and learning practices that materialized post-pandemic, how associations create and curate content has to evolve. Amongst the many methodologies employed to deliver professional adult education, microlearning has emerged as a frontrunner in transforming the membership sector's learning landscape.

The modern learner learns on demand, anywhere, anytime

56% at the point of need
48% evenings and weekends
41% at their desk
28% on way to or from office
30% during breaks and at lunch

Source: elucidat, 2022

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION IN MEMBERSHIP

Education is the cornerstone of the global membership sector. The world is constantly changing, and professional domains are increasingly complex, competitive, and demanding; and against the background of rapid social and technological transformation, perhaps more than ever before, associations' members look keenly to their professional bodies to support their career trajectories through provision of professional education, training, and development.

Staying up-to-date with the latest trends and expanding one's knowledge is crucial for career growth and success.[2] Indeed, many fields require professionals to participate in continuing education (CE) as a prerequisite for maintaining their license, designation, or certification. A manifold of membership bodies deliver highly necessary and valued professional education, thus maintaining professional standards and promoting professional competence and confidence across a multitude of industries and professions; and beyond formal CE, a plethora of educational and training opportunities are offered by every membership organization and through a wide variety of formats, ranging from conferences, webinars, and podcasts to mentoring, journaling, and communities of practice.

The rise of private sector competition and in-house corporate training and the increase in private learning and development (L&D) providers is testament to employers' recognition of the importance of professional education.

1. Greany, 2023
2. York, 2023

Businesses understand that L&D can help to bolster employees' confidence which in turn translates into higher overall job satisfaction, employee performance, productivity, and overall morale.[3] Investing in L&D also shows employees that their company is invested in their success and committed to cultivating their success; and for employees, the opportunities to hone both hard and soft skills through formal training or education is an invaluable benefit of employment. Adding additional skills or certifications to their resumé not only boosts an employee's confidence, but also exhibits professional credibility, exposes them to new ideas and expertise, and demonstrates ambition and energy.[4]

It is undeniable that in response to the demand for continuing education, membership organizations are recognized as a highly credible and valued pillar of the L&D environment. Indeed, MGI's 2023 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report[5] cites access to CE as one of the top reasons for joining an association (39%, up from 36% reported in 2022), and this is closely followed by learning best practices in the profession (33%, up from 31%). This outlook is echoed in Naylor's 2023 Association Benchmarking Report,[6] the findings of which show that amongst respondents the perceived value of training and development as a mechanism for engaging members has increased to 70.3% (up 2.7% from 2022). Similarly, FORJ's State of Association Member Experience 2023 Report confirms that community and learning are key drivers of engagement, with education ranking first amongst mid-career professionals as their principal reason for joining and, crucially, for staying at their association.[7] Although these studies are US-centric, it is fair to suggest that the findings are replicated across the globe. For example, since 2003 the UK's Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) has systematically tracked the evolution of L&D as part of its wider triennial benchmarking exercises, which chart the intensification of efforts over the last 20 years to move away from voluntary CE policies towards mandated compliance, and from measuring CE by inputs towards evaluating CE through outputs and outcomes. The shifting landscape has manifested as an emphasis on consistent professional standards across membership categories as well as across international networks, and this in turn has resulted in (and been partially driven by) the greater professionalization of L&D provision amongst membership organizations.[8]

Education is big business, and as a central tenet of the membership sector, it is also very good for business. When we debate and explore revenue diversification, the budgetary profile of our education programs is always at or near the top of the list. As it should be. Non-subscription income now makes up the majority of association revenue in the US and UK[9] and, whilst data pertaining to other global sectors is not as readily available, given that the general trends which impact the membership sector tend to correlate across the world, it is reasonable to apply this conclusion more widely to other national sectors. According to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)[10] and PARN,[11] 30 years ago, subscription income made up 80-90% of revenue for professional bodies. By 2016 this had dropped to 44% in the UK, to 45% for US trade associations, and to just 30% for US professional associations. The proportion of subscription income may have increased slightly during the pandemic as membership bodies grappled with reductions in their operating income, but in the absence of any tangible data to disprove the theory, it is sagacious to presume that in the years since ASAE and PARN published their respective analyses, subscription income has continued to decline as a percentage of overall revenue. Within this context, understanding how to maximize the return on investment (ROI) of CE programs is a critical component of business development and financial planning.

3. Parsons, 2022
4. Ibid
5. MGI, 2023
6. Naylor, 2023
7. FORJ, 2023
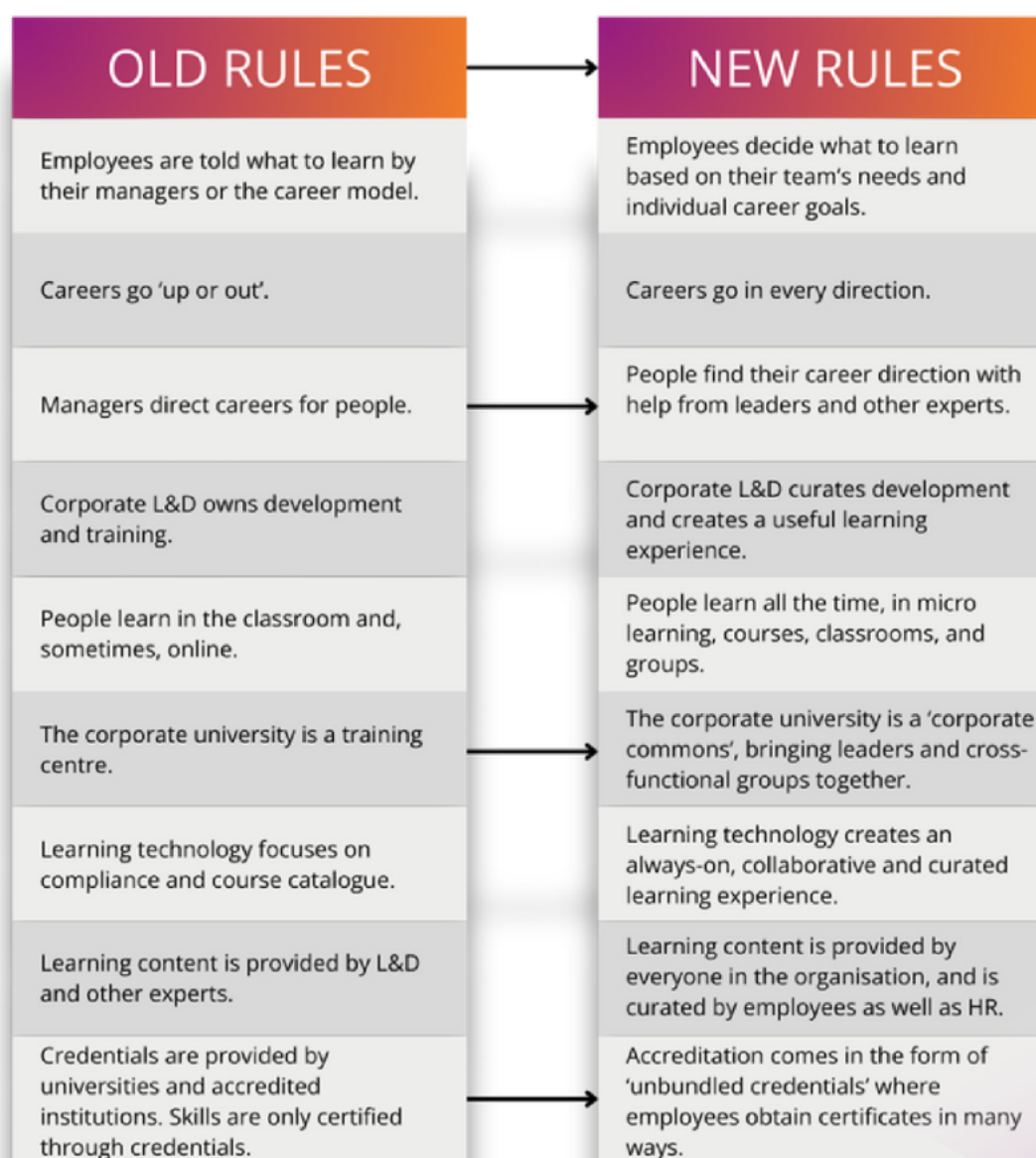8. Friedman & Tinner, 2016
9. Steggles, 2018,
10. ASAE, 2016

Of course, the value of education in membership is not simply financial. Indeed, the monetary return should be secondary to the value that L&D represents to an association's members, and to the impact it has on their careers, their professions, and their communities. Therefore, maximizing the ROI of CE programs also requires associations to understand the latest principles of adult learning, to respond to the very latest developments in L&D andragogy, and to invest in the technology that is necessary to deliver modern education programs.

OLD VERSUS NEW RULES

In the remote and hybrid era, associations must harness all of the available tools to ensure their CE programs meet member expectations, not just in terms of content but with regards to delivery models. In 1996 Bill Gates famously wrote the essay "Content is King", but if the means for accessing that content is not user-friendly or does not respond to learners' needs or expectations, then the content counts for very little. The world has changed. How we live and work has evolved, and so too has the manner in which we learn. The old rules no longer apply. With a multigenerational workforce, workers leaving their jobs at an unprecedented rate, a global talent shortage and a rapidly digitizing workplace, reskilling and upskilling have become critical for organizations that want to stay relevant and remain competitive. The ever-evolving workforce landscape necessitates that membership organizations re-evaluate their approach to L&D to fit the skills needs of a modern workforce and prepare for future disruptions.[12]

OLD RULES	NEW RULES
Employees are told what to learn by their managers or the career model.	Employees decide what to learn based on their team's needs and individual career goals.
Careers go 'up or out'.	Careers go in every direction.
Managers direct careers for people.	People find their career direction with help from leaders and other experts.
Corporate L&D owns development and training.	Corporate L&D curates development and creates a useful learning experience.
People learn in the classroom and, sometimes, online.	People learn all the time, in micro learning, courses, classrooms, and groups.
The corporate university is a training centre.	The corporate university is a 'corporate commons', bringing leaders and cross-functional groups together.
Learning technology focuses on compliance and course catalogue.	Learning technology creates an always-on, collaborative and curated learning experience.
Learning content is provided by L&D and other experts.	Learning content is provided by everyone in the organisation, and is curated by employees as well as HR.
Credentials are provided by universities and accredited institutions. Skills are only certified through credentials.	Accreditation comes in the form of 'unbundled credentials' where employees obtain certificates in many ways.

Source: Institute of Leadership, 2024

11. PARN, 2017
12. InStride, 2022

> "We have all, at some stage in our professional lives, been on the receiving end of L&D experiences that have felt more than a little didactic. To be sure, that is a loaded word, with a handful of subtly different meanings. But for our purposes here, the primary reference is Merriam-Webster's online definition – which says that something described as didactic is considered to be "overburdened with instruction to the point of being dull"... any vision (such as it is) of learning as a rigid, top-down, one-way street – as material that is sternly dispensed, in the hope that it will somehow be captured and retained – has been banished from the L&D sector, never to return."
>
> Matt Packer, Business Journalist, 2024[13]

Customization and personalization are now at the very heart of the L&D sector, as learners, employers, and CE providers accept that what works for one individual can be ineffectual for another. Some people respond best to experiential learning, whilst others prefer to study before doing; and the best providers allow users to compile their learning, mixing the form, location, and length of their education to maximize its value and impact. This is a far cry from the blunt, homogenous training and education where individuals were charged with digesting a vast compendium of material, spending prolonged periods in classrooms, or selecting from a limited pool of resources, and being tested on their comprehension of it all. A modern, successful education program is characterized but the consistent application of the following features:[15]

1. Flexibility: Effective L&D programs are nimble, shifting and adapting as different needs arise, and associations' education programs must offer a degree of flexibility, both in terms of their development and their delivery.

2. Regular review: Impactful programs have currency. They are routinely reviewed and updated to ensure learners have access to content that is relevant, focused, and provides them with knowledge and/or tangible skills that they can immediately apply in their professional environment.

3. Quality assurance: It is critical that learners have confidence in the quality and credibility of their learning and therefore a successful education program draws upon the expertise of subject matter experts to verify the quality, accuracy, and relevance of content.

The modern learner wants personalized, timely, quality content

+60% for me
+80% best

Users want content **tailored to their needs**... but it has to be the **best**.

And they give content just **7 seconds** to decide if it is for them or not.

Source: elucidat, 2022

4. Adequate resourcing: Members have access to sufficient educational tools to equip them with the knowledge and skills required for them to navigate and thrive in their career. This invariably combines a variety of techniques to deliver a balanced, blended learning experience.

5. Personalized approach: One-size-fits-all will almost always result in one-size-fits-none. People of different abilities, educational backgrounds, job roles, and learning styles have a variety of learning needs, and so CE programs should be designed with these varying needs in mind to ensure every member can access and benefit from an association's offering.

6. Stakeholder assessment: Even the most well-designed programs need stakeholder buy-in to be successful. L&D cannot exist in a silo and so it is imperative that members, their employers, and their wider profession or industry are consulted on program development ensuring their support and increasing a program's likelihood of success.

13. Institute of Leadership, 2024
14. Ibid
15. InStride, 2022

THE MOST VALUABLE CURRENCY

When he defined the concept of attention economics in 1971, Nobel Laureate Herbert A. Simon wrote that "...a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention." 50+ years later, and in a data-rich world, the overwhelming wealth of information available to us has led to a scarcity of the commodity that information consumes: our attention. When defining their L&D proposition, associations quite rightly focus on providing high-quality products, delivering relevant and timely education, and realizing value for money, all of which combine to ensure an exceptional learning experience. Or does it? The learning proposition is only valuable if members recognize its value and engage with it. Research by the Open University found that more than ⅔ of UK employers struggle to find the right skilled workers, and the skills gap costs organizations £4.4bn per year in recruitment fees, temporary staffing, increased salaries, and hiring at a lower level and then training employees on the job. Organizations report a 33% increase in spending on recruitment fees, spending £1.6bn on this approach to attracting talent. Some businesses however are adopting more sustainable solutions, with more than half increasing training budgets (by an average of 10%), and this trend is repeated across global economies. The skills gap costs the US economy an eyewatering $13bn per month, with Deloitte citing an estimated $2.5tn total cost over the next decade; and the World Economic Forum calculates that nearly half of today's core skills in the global workforce will change in the next five years, with one report estimating that by 2030, the global skills shortage will be in the order of 85 million people at a cost of $8.5tn.[16]

Businesses and governments clearly need to respond and membership organizations are uniquely positioned to be the vehicle for doing so, but Simon aptly describes attention as being "...the bottleneck of human thought" that limits both what we can perceive and what we can do with the information when received. When we 'pay attention' to one thing, we inevitably ignore other things, affording a distinct and tangible value to our attention. As vast swathes of content continue to grow increasingly abundant and immediately available to members, their attention has become the single limiting factor in their consumption of an association's proposition; and within this context, members' attention should be understood as the single most valuable commodity driving the development of an association's L&D strategy. We can derive attention's value from how much time we focus on a particular thing and so being cognizant of how to capture and retain learners' attention is critical when developing and delivering professional education.

The modern learner is overwhelmed and distracted

In a typical working week they spend...

33% in meetings
25% on emails
5% being interrupted
Has **1%** set aside for learning

Source: elucidat, 2022

Our attention has always been limited, valuable, and scarce, but what distinguishes the present day is the prevalence of technology, which makes an overwhelming amount of information available, all of which is strategically aimed at capturing our attention. There are 4.48bn active social media users,[18] each averaging nearly 2½ hours a day on their devices, accessing one or more of 150+ networks.[19] Indeed, as[20] the scale of Instagram and TikTok becomes increasingly impersonal, a new generation of social media companies including BeReal, Locket Widget, Yubo, and Discord have spotted an opportunity to prioritize intimacy over infamy, and all are jostling in a cluttered and competitive market to capture and retain our attention. We have spent a lot of time over the last 30 years

16. *Open University, 2019*
17. *Cross, 2024*
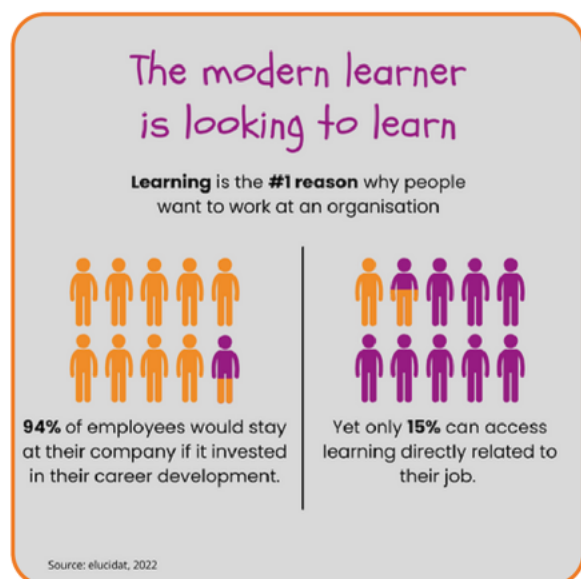18. *Constituting 56.8% of the world's population.*
19. *Users typically access on average 6.6 social media networks.*

talking about information economy, as though information (and latterly 'data') is the valuable commodity, but it is not. It is attention that is the valuable commodity, because attention is limited, and therefore it is scarce, and therefore it is valuable.[21]

Attention spans are increasingly inversely proportional to technological advancement, and what today's workforce needs is a constantly evolving and better, faster way to learn, train, and teach. This need is turning L&D inside out. In today's world, where organizations need to constantly enhance productivity and efficiency to curb competition, the onus demands to be moved, from blandly "training" employees, to making sure that the workforce is equipped with knowledge critical to make businesses excel and remain competitive in the marketplace. Traditional training methods - be it classroom or eLearning - have been providing lukewarm returns for years. Indeed, according to a study by the Aberdeen Group 49% of companies opine that their main employee challenge is ensuring what is[22] taught is actually retained and applied on the job. This is where microlearning adds significant value.

THE MODERN LEARNER

With millions of apps, websites, and videos available, we are frequently interrupted, and it is little wonder that the modern learner is extremely distracted; and given that they live in a world where anything can be delivered straight to their door, it is also unsurprising that today's learners want to be able to learn when they want, where they want. Flexible and remote work is the new normal for today's professionals and so modern learners need to access their learning from a variety of sources; and whilst today's learners are arguably more overwhelmed than ever, they are also more empowered to learn than ever before. As the half-life of many professional skills decreases, learners are looking to replace and stay on top of their skill sets in whatever way possible.[23]

The modern learner is looking to learn

Learning is the **#1 reason** why people want to work at an organisation

94% of employees would stay at their company if it invested in their career development.

Yet only **15%** can access learning directly related to their job.

Source: elucidat, 2022

Information today is instantaneous, irrespective of geography or time zones. There are numerous ways to connect and collaborate with others, countless online services to buy a plane ticket, watch a TV show, play a game, have a video call. The way we live and work has radically changed. BYOD, the Cloud, wearable technology, and Artificial Intelligence are no longer merely concepts but firm realities in which we all live. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development identifies millennial learners as "native speakers of the digital language",[24] and this new group of ever-connected learners are at the very center of digital transformation, finding new and efficient ways to work faster, whenever and wherever they want. That said, whilst Millennials may be digital natives, we all are learning the language and not one of us is immune to the rapid changes of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).[25] It is no exaggeration to suggest that the majority of members have less time to learn, to interact, and to practice; an in addition to a hugely reduced attention span, and aptitude for concentration, members increasingly want (and expect) learning to happen on a when-I-want, where-I- want, what-I-want, and just-in-time basis, i.e., accessible as bite-sized chunks available on their laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

20. See the Influencer Marketing Hub's Social Media Marketing Benchmarking Report 2022 (https://tinyurl.com/fuya3fjy) for fascinating insights into users' behaviors, network trends, and analyses of the various impacts of social media.
21. Chamberlain. 2022
22. Minkara & Moon, 2015
23. BenchPrep, 2023
24. Bring Your Own Device
25. See www.pwc.com/us/en/library/4ir-ready.html for more information on the 4IR.

HOW WE UNDERSTAND "MICROLEARNING"

Microlearning is a methodology that utilizes a performance-centric educational method. It uses short (usually <8-10 minutes), content-rich media (videos, images, audio) with text to convey specific learning outcomes. Content focuses on a step-wise, holistic, and recursive approach towards development where learning happens on a granular level and can be consumed on the go, without taking up a lot of time. It is an approach that has been widely welcomed by learners across a broad range of sectors and industries, from bedside nurses and aviation engineers to retail workers and IT professionals, and it is increasingly recognized by employers as a means of delivering impactful L&D. For example, Google's "whisper course"[26] is a series of emails, each with a simple suggestion, or "whisper", for a manager to try in their one-to-ones or team meetings to build better team working; Walmart incorporates gamification[27] into its health and safety training, asking shift workers to spend 3 to 5 minutes playing a game based on answering questions about safety features. It also includes a competitive element, where team members can compete against their colleagues; and Unilever, which has a workforce spread across 190 countries, has developed "snackable" content[28] that employees can access on-demand and in short bursts. This includes TED talks, YouTube, TikTok, social campaigns, instructional videos, and more, and training is available anytime for employees to progress at their own pace.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

In contrast to other learning organizations, like colleges and universities, associations specialize in supporting specific industries and professions. Members are therefore the experts who actively contribute to the creation of new knowledge, best practices, and cutting-edge technologies, and an association is the space where those experts converge.[29] Given the seismic changes to modern working practices and to learning expectations, a major challenge lies in meeting learners' expectations for speed. The speed of content creation (or learning creation) requires members to keep up with the pace of new, focused, specialized knowledge in their profession; and it also requires associations to keep up with the rate of new technology adoption, which is moving faster than ever. A report[30] published in August 2023 predicted that generative AI adoption will climb to 77.8 million users by November 2024, more than double the adoption rate of tablets and smartphones. (Interestingly, a March 2024 report by the Service Desk Institute[31] found that 83% of respondents in India report daily or weekly use of generative AI, whilst the weekly use of generative AI in North America and across Europe is still below 50%.) In short, learners expect to be educated on the latest developments relating to their industry and profession; equally they should expect to experience their learning through the latest technology and via modern L&D practice.

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26. See www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/googles-secret-for-employee-training-people-actually-use-shrink-it.html for more information on the "Whispers Course".
27. See www.hrexchangenetwork.com/learning/articles/how-walmart-used-gamification-to-address-safety-practices-case-study for details of Walmart's L&D program.
28. Listen to the Learning at Large podcast at https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/democratizing-learning-at-unilever/id1457544437?i=1000502419327 to learn more about UniLever's "snackable" content.
29. Hicken, 2024
30. Lebow, 2023
31. SDI, 2024

STAYING AHEAD OF THE FORGETTING CURVE

Published by German philosopher Hermann Egginghaus in 1885, the Forgetting Curve is an enduring model that demonstrates how memories are lost over time and what we can do to reinforce the things that we learn, so that we can remember them more effectively. The Forgetting Curve shows how quickly we forget information over time if we make no attempt to retain it which, for L&D professionals presents an obvious challenge. Is there any point in associations investing in course creation and delivering training if learners are unlikely to retain the information they have gained?[32]

Egginghaus' research revealed several key aspects of memory that directly impact the learner's ability to retain information:[33]

1. Memories weaken over time. If we learn something new but then make no attempt to relearn that information, we remember less and less of it as hours, days, and weeks go by.

2. The biggest drop in retention happens soon after learning. This is reflected by the steep fall at the start of the Curve. Without reviewing or reinforcing our learning, our ability to retain the information plummets. For example, you may leave a webinar brimming with new facts and figures only to find that you can remember very little just hours later.

3. It is easier to remember things that have meaning. Things with little or no meaning conform most closely to the Forgetting Curve. For instance, if you are listening to a talk on a subject that you do not really understand or have little interest in, you will likely forget it faster than if it were on a subject that you found really engaging or exciting.

4. The way something is presented affects learning. The same set of information can be made more or less memorable, depending on how well it is communicated. Learners will likely find it easier to remember something that has been organized logically and presented clearly, but may well forget a haphazard, scribbled shopping list of information.

5. How you feel affects how well you remember. Ebbinghaus believed that physiological factors, such as stress and sleep, play a significant part in how well we retain information. Many people experience this as a vicious cycle – they feel stress, which makes it harder to remember, creating even more stress. There is also strong evidence to suggest that sleep can help our brains to sort and store information.
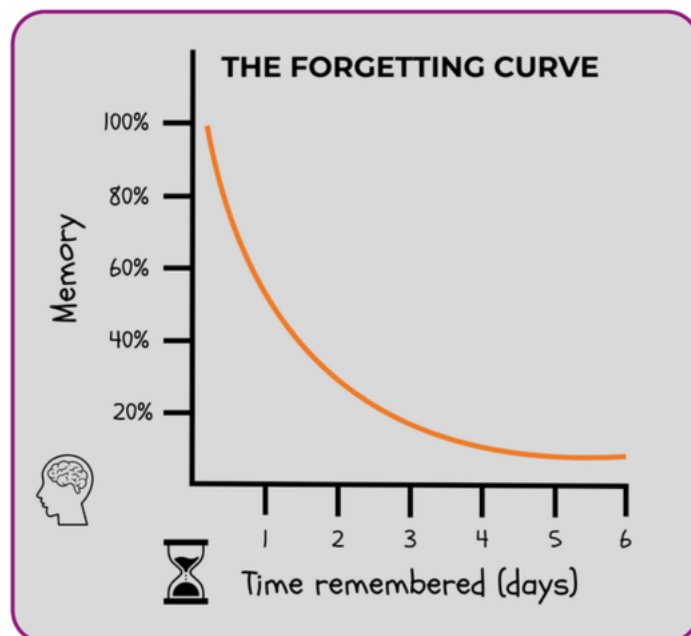
32. McGarry, 2022
33. Mind Tools, 2023

In 2015 researchers at the University of Amsterdam replicated Ebbinghaus' experiment and found that 120 years later his findings still ring true. The rate at which a person forgets depends on several factors, of course, including memory strength, how meaningful the material is, and physiological factors such as stress.[34] Nonetheless the Forgetting Curve still represents a significant challenge for membership organizations as they develop and deliver their CE programs and so having vehicles that address the Curve is vital to any programs' success. Perhaps somewhat fortuitously, the tectonic shift in how we utilize technology to live, work, and learn means that microlearning responds to the need for speed, addresses diminishing attention spans, and provides a mechanism for conquering the Forgetting Curve.

SPACED LEARNING

One of the best methods for conquering the Forgetting Curve is spaced learning. Learners are presented with material to learn in a timed session, with a short break provided once they have completed the session. It is a simple but effective methodology because space learning strengthens memory retention because the learner studies the information, and periodically returns to review it ins order to retain knowledge. The learner also practices retrieving the learned information using different formats, such as solving problems (using gamification), completing quizzes, and using flashcards. The spacing can occur within a single course module, or by scheduling modules and courses several hours, days, or weeks apart. By using bite-sized chunks of content and demonstrating the required information repeatedly in different, creative ways, through microlearning, learners are more likely to absorb the information.

CONQUERING THE FORGETTING CURVE

Source: Institute of Leadership, 2024
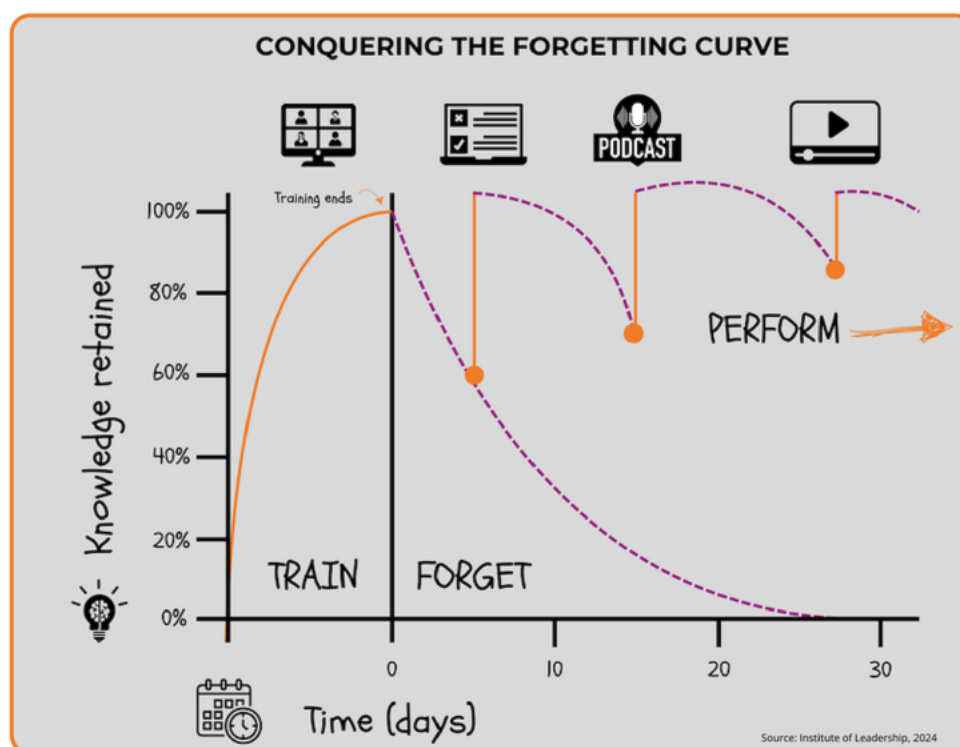
Making learning material readily accessible through a variety of formats is another proven method for making content stick and it ties in nicely with the principles of microlearning (and vice versa). By ensuring their learning management system (LMS) is mobile responsive, an association makes learning and retaining information easier for their members/learners. Frequent and easy access to bitesize learning via mobile technology will ensure learners have a much better chance of recollecting and refreshing their knowledge. Learner concentration will invariably faulter if they are presented with copious prose (as exhibited by the attention economy and by the irreversible changes of the 4IR). It is therefore essential to engage learners through the use of rich media via microlearning methods.

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34. McGarry, 2022

SAY MORE WITH LESS

All microlearning-based training and education shares one key characteristic: brevity. This can either be small learning units or short-term learning activities but microlearning delivers short bursts of content for learners to study at their convenience. Content can take many forms, from simple text to interactive multimedia, but it should always be short (<8-10 minutes); and always the goal is to motivate learners to quickly acquire and retain the skills the skills they need to be successful in their careers. As such, microlearning materials are regularly sent to learners, perhaps daily or weekly, for them to consume at a convenient time and on a device of their choice.[35]

1. Quizzes

Microlearning works best when it's interactive, and quizzes are a perfect interactive tool to offer within learning modules. For example, using a quiz following a video to check that the learner has understood the course content correctly.

2. Games

Gamification moves the learner away from our dependence on PowerPoint presentations, using a combination of animation and storytelling to train people. Some microlearning examples also include a competitive element, inviting users to complete challenges or pit themselves against coworkers or members of their learning cohort (see the Walmart example above).

3. Podcasts

One of the many benefits of microlearning is that learners can consume course materials on the move; and podcasts fit perfectly into this method of mobile learning. Training can be delivered while the learner is commuting, working out at the gym, or preparing for the day ahead. Use guest interviews for added engagement.

4. Graphics

An infographic's combination of text and images presents an idea clearly and counters the challenge of digesting hard data. Use colorful graphics and visual flow elements to move the learner through the points you want to highlight.

5. Videos

The rise in visual culture means that video training is enormously popular. Video microlearning works well as standalone content, perhaps explaining how to access a new system tool, but it also helps if you have longer course content that you need to split into several video modules.

Quizzes	Quizzes can be used to check the learner has understood the course content correctly.
Games	Gamification increases productivity by up to 50% and employee engagement by 60%.
Podcasts	Training can be consumed while the learner is commuting or preparing for the day ahead.
Graphics	65% of people are visual learners, meaning infographics are an excellent microlearning material.
Videos	Videos are best used to explain how to access a new system tool, and also for longer courses.

35. Zavvy, 2024

THE MAKEUP OF MICROLEARNING

When designing microlearning, it is key that the bite-size learning format is not used as a vehicle to deliver lots of content randomly. That would misuse the small amounts of time modern learners have and prevent the learning from sticking.[36] The best microlearning tools utilize the pockets of time effectively, not overloading the learner with information which is unlikely to lead to worthwhile changes in behavior. Therefore, when designing a microlearning program, in addition to brevity, the episodic curve should comprise the elements[37] that ensure the success of microlearning:

1. Be Online

Microlearning needs to be accessible and flexible so that learners can access it anywhere, anytime – on the bus, having a cup of coffee, walking the dog. 92% of users who forget their login information will simply leave a site and so it is crucial to remove any friction involved with accessing the content. Wherever possible, remove the need for login screens and provide one-tap access, surfacing key information right at the point of need; and further user adoption by embedding content into the apps and tools that learners are already using, which is shown to increase engagement by up to 300%.[38]

2. Whole but separate

Each microlearning session can be both completely independent and be part of a larger learning objective, empower the learner with a freedom of choice.

3. Be granular

Each microlearning session can cover one key skill or knowledge piece, getting straight to the point. This lets learners approach and customize their learning needs according to their own professional needs.

4. Invest in video

LinkedIn Learning, YouTube, Vimeo, and even TikTok are prime examples of the efficacy of video as the most effective medium for communication information in a short period of time. It is also very effective for performance-based learning and is the best medium for mobile learning.

5. Be succinct

Microlearning sessions have to cover only the most critical or essential information on a very specific topic. There is no need for unnecessary detail.

6. Be current

By their very nature, microlearning sessions are inherently easy to update. Learners are more likely to have access to the most current training information, unlike traditional eLearning or classroom-based content which can take more time and effort to maintain.

7. Use podcasts

The key benefit of the podcast format for microlearning is that listeners can pause to reflect or rewind to repeat content, effectively putting the listener in the driver's seat; and, because of the on-demand nature of the content, listeners can complete a podcast whenever is convenient for them, on any device enabled for streaming.[39]

36. Greany, 2023
37. Peak Pacific, 2017
38. Brew, 2023

8. Focus on handheld devices

Microlearning is intended for on-the-go consumption - on the train, whilst eating lunch, or waiting for a friend. Creating content that is best used with a smart phone, a tablet, or wearable tech is therefore ideal. When designing the session, think about how learners use their devices rather than how current content is structured. Build on familiar and intuitive behaviors so that learners can focus solely on the content rather than learning how to use a new L&D tool.
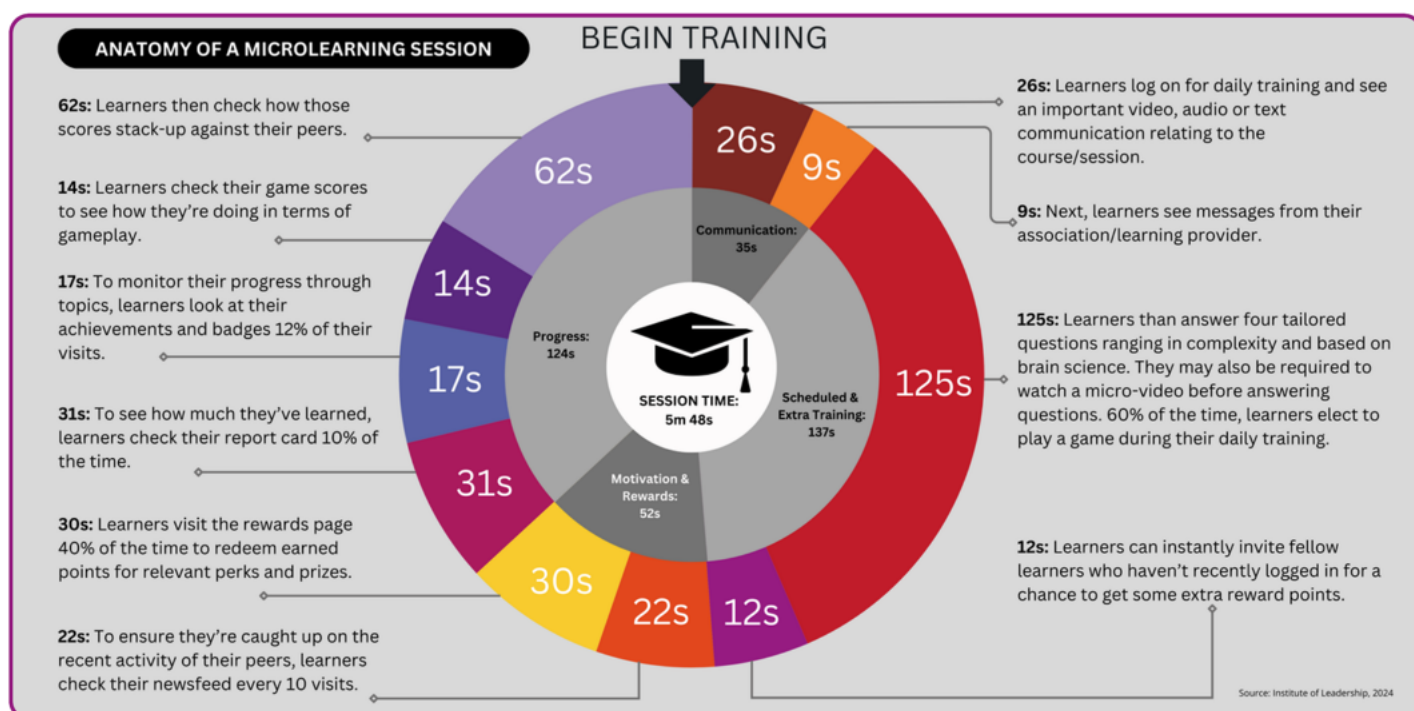
9. Be social

While quick and focused sessions are hugely effective, learners may want to bookmark and share the content with colleagues. Sharing and contextual usage of content will mean learners might have specific feedback and want more. Therefore use social features like comments, ratings, and polls to allow learners to discuss, add to, and/or provide feedback on content. This will provide insightful data for curating improved content and enhanced session structures and focus.

10. Assess progress

Microlearning goes well with micro-assessments and so use mini tests and short quizzes to verify learners' progress and to monitor the quality and impact of the microlearning.

ANATOMY OF A MICROLEARNING SESSION

BEGIN TRAINING

62s: Learners then check how those scores stack-up against their peers.

14s: Learners check their game scores to see how they're doing in terms of gameplay.

17s: To monitor their progress through topics, learners look at their achievements and badges 12% of their visits.

31s: To see how much they've learned, learners check their report card 10% of the time.

30s: Learners visit the rewards page 40% of the time to redeem earned points for relevant perks and prizes.

22s: To ensure they're caught up on the recent activity of their peers, learners check their newsfeed every 10 visits.

26s: Learners log on for daily training and see an important video, audio or text communication relating to the course/session.

9s: Next, learners see messages from their association/learning provider.

125s: Learners than answer four tailored questions ranging in complexity and based on brain science. They may also be required to watch a micro-video before answering questions. 60% of the time, learners elect to play a game during their daily training.

12s: Learners can instantly invite fellow learners who haven't recently logged in for a chance to get some extra reward points.

Communication: 35s
Progress: 124s
SESSION TIME: 5m 48s
Scheduled & Extra Training: 137s
Motivation & Rewards: 52s

Source: Institute of Leadership, 2024

LEARNING LIMITATIONS

Microlearning is the more engaging, less time-consuming, and cheaper-to-produce sibling of regular eLearning. It is however in no way the best solution for every training need, and as with every L&D model, it has its limitations. For example, it is not ideal for complex concepts which, by their very nature, require a discursive immersive deep dive into subject matter. It is still possible to use microlearning, but it will require more effort and likely prove dissatisfying for the learner. Also, if learners need to be trained in a skill or practice that requires longer, in-depth study then a different medium would be more appropriate.

An additional challenge is the need to manage content efficiently. Unlike more traditional formats where content is split into 20- or 30-minute (or even longer) chunks, microlearning content is only <8-10 minutes which means collating and presenting content differently. Simply taking content from one medium and plugging it verbatim into a microlearning model will not work and so reconfiguring existing content (as well as creating new content) is a prerequisite for a successful microlearning program.

Achieving the right level of detail and striking the balance between making content that is short and engaging whilst also detailed and informative can also be challenging.[40] It is therefore important to enlist the help of subject matter experts (SMEs) who will be able to ensure content is impactful and includes all the key information the learner needs on each microlearning topic.

THE BENEFITS OF MICROLEARNING

Gone are the days of lengthy PowerPoint presentations and clunky LMS courses. The global workforce (and therefore global membership communities) has entered the era of punchy, bite-sized training strategies;[41] and when employed correctly, microlearning yields impressive results. Microlearning platforms that utilize a variety of content formats and mimic the experience we have while having a quick scroll on social media are the ones that will best engage your audience. It is all about making learning fun and convenient for the end user, so they can quickly pick up where they left off and still be motivated to continue, and the benefits are manifold.[42]

1. Quick to complete

In a working week, employees are shown to have just 1% of their time set aside for learning and development.[43] With such a restrictive schedule, we cannot realistically expect them to sit down and spend hours absorbing new information. Microlearning, by nature, is quick and easy to complete. Within just a few minutes, learners can acquire new skills or refresh their knowledge, then get straight back to work. Whereas previously they might have spent that time scrolling on their phone, now they are able to optimize their time and learn on-the-job.

2. Easy to deliver

Microlearning saves time and effort for the training provider. With the right tools, creation of bite-sized training courses is quick and painless and saves hours of time that might otherwise have been spent setting up an in-person training session or writing long form compliance manuals. Courses can be created and delivered to learners within minutes, enabling providers to respond more quickly to changing goals and to prioritize development time more effectively.

3. Suited to the modern learner

The way that we prefer to consume information has fundamentally changed. When you consider that this year (2024), an estimated 56% of global internet traffic will originate from mobile devices, it is no surprise that microlearning and mobile-friendly training is on the rise. It is for this reason that mobile learning and microlearning are so closely connected, and often appear in tandem. While microlearning breaks information down into short bursts, mobile learning enables us to deliver that information through the devices that Millennials - and society at large - use religiously. Surfacing training in the formats that learners are most familiar with is the key to driving adoption and ensuring your content has impact.

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39. Association HQ, 2022
40. Greany, 2023
41. Brew, 2023
42. Ibid
43. elucidat, 2022

4. Boosts engagement

Training that is bite size is inherently more engaging (see Staying Ahead of the Forgetting Curve above). Apart from just being quick to complete, microlearning also increases engagement by replicating the addictive content we consume daily via our social media feeds. Interactive quizzes and short and snappy videos are far more likely to peak learners' attention and keep them engaged than a standard PowerPoint presentation.

5. Increases knowledge retention

Microlearning significantly increases retention of key training. In fact, research shows that microlearning improves focus and supports long-term knowledge retention by up to 80% (see Spaced Learning above). The simplicity of microlearning means that learners can easily revisit courses on-demand and refresh their knowledge right at the point of need, helping to improve their overall performance and if they are in a client-facing role, provide better customer service.

6. Enables self-paced learning

Traditional andragogy is often rigid in structure and overlooks the fact that everyone learns differently and at their own pace. One of the key benefits of microlearning is that it allows for self-paced learning, enabling learners to complete (and revisit) training as and when suits them. This added flexibility increases completion rates and ensures that training is an opportunity to learn, rather than an unwelcome interruption of their workflow.

7. Builds a culture of learning

Microlearning enables a continuous learning approach, allowing learners to access information anytime and anywhere. On-demand employee training is particularly well-suited for distributed teams, which otherwise may not have easy access to quality learning content; and the brief nature of microlearning courses and modules means that employees can dedicate time to learning more frequently, which helps organizations build a culture of learning, which is continually cited as a priority for c-suite across a multitude of industries.

8. Closing the skills gaps

Skills sets for jobs have changed by around 25% since 2015 and this number is expected to double by 2027. It is no surprise that 75% of employers cannot find the talent they need with the right blend of technical and soft skills. Microlearning enables employees to expand their skill sets without a significant upfront time commitment, which may increase motivation for upskilling and reskilling. Microlearning content is typically under 15 minutes in length, allowing learners to sneak in a learning session between meetings or while waiting at the doctor's office.

9. Makes personalized learning easier to deliver

78% of learners explicitly want course recommendations that are based on their individual career goals and skills gaps,[44] which can yield enormous benefits. Microlearning is highly customizable and can be tailored to meet individual employee needs. Bite-size lessons allow members to learn what is most relevant to their role or career goals, whilst skipping over material they are already familiar with. Personalized learning is more meaningful and engaging, helping learners stay motivated as they progress toward their learning and career goals.

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44. LinkedIn Learning, 2021
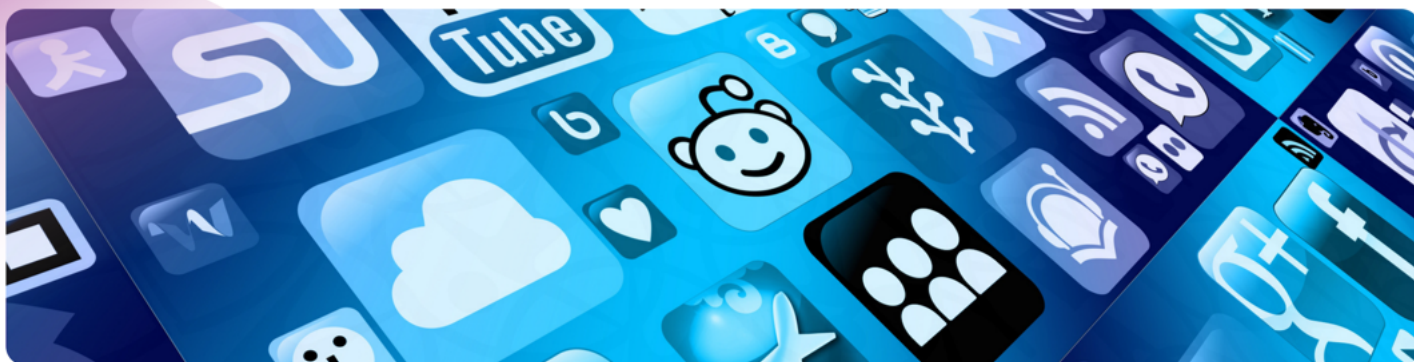
10. Provides flexible learning

In the new world of work, where teams may be in the office, fully remote, or in some kind of hybrid combination, work lives and personal lives frequently intersect and blur. Between personal needs, meetings, and work tasks, members may only find small pockets of time for online training. They need to be able to learn on their own schedule and at their own pace. Microlearning offers a flexible approach to personal development that allows learners to access on-demand learning material[45] wherever they are. By breaking down learning material into smaller, more manageable pieces, learners can easily fit learning into their busy schedules, making it a more efficient and effective way to learn.

11. Keeps pace with emerging trends

In today's fast-paced work environment, it is essential to stay current with emerging trends. The brief nature of microlearning makes training material faster to produce and faster to learn when compared to traditional formal training formats. For example, employee training programs helped people stay productive from home when the pandemic accelerated the shift to remote work. In fact, L&D professionals agree this was the moment learning shifted from a "nice to have" to a "must have."   We are seeing the need for rapid learning content development again in 2024 as providers and learners alike consider the applications for artificial intelligence tools. Similarly, microlearning content can be easily updated to reflect changes and distributed immediately, making it a powerful tool for keeping learners up-to-date and informed.

12. Reduces training costs

Compared to traditional training methods, microlearning is typically more cost-effective. Subscription-based pricing models cost a fraction of an industry conference ticket or instructor-led classroom training. Additionally, the microlearning format saves on costs associated with employee travel and time away from work. Associations that produce their own learning content may also find that shorter, digitally delivered lessons are faster and easier to produce than other formats, resulting in additional cost savings.

ADAPTIVE MICROLEARNING

Some microlearning platforms add an element that makes them more successful: adaptive learning, which takes the form of an algorithm that examines a learner's past performance to identify what they already know. The algorithm also looks at the individual learner's goals: which topics they need to know and how well they need to know them. Thus an adaptive learning platform delivers unique content[46] to each learner. This content targets the knowledge gaps the algorithm has identified, i.e., the topics where learners often miss questions or answer questions incorrectly. An adaptive microlearning platform will deliver more content on weak topics that an individual learner needs to master at a high level. It will not ask learners to engage with content on topics they already know well, reducing a learner's frustration and improving their overall learning experience by ensuring training is relevant to them.

45. Ibid
46. Neovation, 2021

MICROLEARNING IS MOBILE LEARNING

The digital landscape has undergone a radical transformation since the dawn of the internet. Gone are the days when accessing the web was an activity confined to desktop computers in homes, offices, or internet cafes. Mobile and wearable technology means the internet is ubiquitous, available in almost every aspect of our daily lives. We carry the internet in our pockets and can connect virtually anywhere – waiting for the bus, drinking a mocha cortado in a coffee shop, and sitting at 38,000 feet on a transatlantic flight. The rapid changes delivered through the 4IR has resulted in new user behaviors and preferences, splitting the digital experience into two main platforms: mobile and desktop. Each offers a unique user experience, serving different needs, and providing both advantages and limitations.

Desktops began to appear in the workplace in the early to mid-1980s and have been commonplace office equipment since the mid-1990s, preceding the iPhone by more than a decade. Learners and CE providers alike are therefore well-versed in the desktop experience, recognizing that it provides a robust interface that allows for deeper learner engagement. When it comes to raw computing power, storage capacity, and overall reliability, desktops generally outperform mobile devices. Their larger size allows for more potent hardware, and cooling systems help to maintain consistent performance during resource-intensive tasks. The obvious drawback is that a desktop needs a desk! They require dedicated space for the tower, monitor, keyboard, and other peripherals; and perhaps most pertinent is that they simply do not respond to the technological needs of today's digital nomads. For example, an October 2022 survey of device usage found that 78% of Americans watch videos on their smartphones weekly; across Europe, 31% of mobile users their device for reading, and 20% for gaming; and in both Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile usage significantly overshadows desktop computers – smartphone penetration in Asia is projected to exceed 90% by 2030, and the rise of 'mobile-first' communities across Africa is part of a swiftly evolving communications landscape that is transpiring across the Global South as a whole.[47]

Our relationship with technology continues to evolve in both scale and complexity, and the age demographic of a user provides critical insights into device preferences and usage patterns:

1. **Gen Z (Born after 1997 – professionals aged 18-27):** Gen Z users allocate approximately four hours per day solely to app usage, a figure that does not even account for time spent gaming on their devices. Universally, 98% of this group are smartphone owners, and 75% unequivocally choose their smartphone over other options, underscoring the central role that mobile technology plays in the daily lives of this generation of digital natives.

2. **Millennials (Born 1981-96 – professionals aged 28-43):** For Millennials, smartphones serve as the primary gateway to the digital world, significantly outpacing desktops and laptops in terms of ownership and usage. 97% of this group own smartphones, with 63% spending on average 2.38 hours per day on social media and private messaging apps. This generation often multi-tasks across devices, frequently browsing the internet while consuming other content.

47. Seitz, 2004

3. Gen X (Born 1965-80 – professionals aged 44-59): Approximately 89% of Gen X regularly use smartphones, and 63% use tablets on a regular basis. This group values the convenience and functionality of mobile devices with 90% active on social media (with Facebook and YouTube ranking as their top platforms).

4. Baby Boomers (Born 1946-64 – professionals aged 60-78): Baby Boomers outpace Millennials in the frequency of using social networking sites and the bulk of this generation have adopted smartphones, with 68% owning a device. 11% primarily rely on their phones for internet access.

Technology is constantly transforming the learning landscape, with mobility emerging as a crucial element. According to a 2022 Statista survey, more than 60% of people globally use smartphones for viewing videos; and in terms of gaming, the mobile gaming sector outperformed the gaming industry as a whole in 2023, accounting for 49% of revenue ($92.6bn) and is projected to account for 55% of total gaming revenue by 2026. Both video and gamification are media that directly underpin the success of microlearning, but mobile-based short-form platforms are quickly emerging as a solid foundation for a successful microlearning program. Indeed, mobile gaming faces challenges that stem directly from the need to compete for gamers' attention and it is short-form video apps, such as TikTok that are providing the competition. Within the context of the attention economy (see above), the rapid growth in the consumption of short-form content speaks for itself; but it is also the ease-of-use of short-form platforms that make them hugely popular, and which readily lend themselves to a positive microlearning experience: Recording and uploading content is easy, as is video editing, and the ability to live stream (with or without voiceover) or to "stitch" content to another user's material makes these platforms effective vehicles for mobile, microlearning. For example, research published in the Journal of the International Federation for Information Processing in June 2023 found that TikTok provides an innovative[48] way for educators to engage and educate adult learners.

Desktops maintain their stronghold in office environments, with 68% of office-based employees still relying on desktop or laptop computers for work-related tasks. The processing power, larger screens, and ergonomic peripherals of desktops make them indispensable tools for productivity; but when it comes to consuming digital content, mobile devices reign supreme. This year, mobile will be responsible for 58% of all time spent on digital media, including social media, video streaming, and news consumption. The shift towards smaller, portable screens for content consumption underscores the changing habits of consumers, including learners.[49] Mobile learning (m-learning) is accessible and flexible, with many apps incorporating interactive elements like quizzes, simulations, and gamified experiences. M-learning also lends itself to collaborative learning through the use of interaction apps, as well as the easy integration of multimedia, incorporating text, audio, video, and interactive graphics, thus catering for different learning preferences; and it enables just-in-time learning by providing learners with specific information exactly when needed, such as during a task or project.[50]

48. Conde-Caballero, 2023
49. Francis, 2023
50. Simplilearn, 2024

As with microlearning more generally, mobile learning represents a significant shift in how CE content is accessed and consumed. It leverages the widespread availability and portability of mobile devices to provide a ubiquitous learning environment. As technology continues to evolve, mobile learning will become an increasingly critical component of microlearning and will provide associations with a powerful tool for delivering a dynamic and versatile approach to learning for members.

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

High inflation, cooling markets, increased competition, and cutbacks in training budgets have been a constant reality which membership bodies have grappled with for several years and these, and other equally grim challenges are unlikely to diminish any time soon. However, several strategies for enduring these difficult circumstances have emerged within the L&D space and are being adopted by associations across the global sector. One of the most significant trends has been a surge in online learning investment as training teams lean on eLearning and virtual instructor-led training (VILT) to control costs and conserve their ROI.[51] At the start of 2023 many organizations anticipated a surge in classroom training as people returned to their offices but, as we now know, the great return to full-time office working failed to materialize. Remote and hybrid working models are the new, permanent norm for many organizations and while we did see an overall upward trend in in-person events in 2023, that trend was dwarfed by growth in online learning.

The surge in online learning modalities' popularity comes down to two factors: cost and changing workplace culture. In terms of cost, classroom-based training has significantly higher costs per learner and greater logistical requirements. Further, given that the average L&D spend per person at large businesses in 2023 was less than half of what it was in 2015, it is little wonder that learners (and their employers) opt for online options. Workplace norms are the other major influence in the continuing expansion of online learning, with data suggesting people value working from home as much as a substantial pay rise, and that the productivity of hybrid and remote work is equivalent to in-office work when accounting for the costs of office space and commuting.[52] From a training perspective, this makes delivering high quality learning experiences with greater flexibility and accessibility a central deliverable of associations' education programs.

> **"Association executives know that the stability, viability and sources of revenue for their organizations are under the microscope at board tables across the globe. Diversifying sustainable revenue streams is critical for associations seeking financial stability and sustained growth, and the ability to see through challenges, manage the talent crunch, flux in the marketplace, an increasing competitive landscape and digital transformation."**
>
> Deanna Varga, Mayvin Global, Associations Evolve 2024 & Beyond

Revenue diversification is a perennial headache for many associations but rather than creating new membership services (and risk diluting the value proposition and/or increasing the administrative burden), an opportunity that associations are increasingly looking to leverage is the diversification of their existing revenue streams. A good example of this is their education programs, whereby the revenue stream stays the same (education), but the program is diversified through added levels of training and provision of new online and offline experiences, such as microlearning; and whilst these are not the best solution for every training need, they are surprisingly effective options for CE provision and present a significant opportunity for income diversification.

51. Administrate, 2023
52. Ibid

CALL TO ACTION

Microlearning is so popular because it is both engaging and effective; but all learning is, ultimately, microlearning because regardless of how learners receive information, they always learn best in small, bite-sized pieces. Microlearning directly responds to the cognitive science that people learn incrementally and in a hierarchical way, i.e., they learn the simple elements first, then progress to more complex concepts.[53]

> **First, learners encounter vocabulary, definitions, the language of their field. They can then use those terms and definitions to understand how to do things — if training is intended for novice bank tellers, they might first learn the definitions of different types of accounts and transactions. Next, they will learn how to do things with those words: open or close an account; deposit, withdraw or transfer money. Finally, learners can apply this knowledge to a variety of scenarios. Moving from simple to complex provides opportunities for both cognitive and behavioral learning; it also provides ways to ensure that learners get early successes. Feeling successful and seeing progress motivates learners to continue engaging.**
>
> Neovation Learning Solutions, 2023

Microlearning offers advantages and benefits for content creators, training providers, and learners alike: Adaptive content, learner control, game mechanics, spaced repetition learning, personalization, accessibility and flexibility via m-learning, and resource efficiency all combine to offer a significant opportunity to enhance an association's education program and to enrich its value proposition. Membership organizations have a proven pedigree in advancing knowledge and innovation through provision of impactful L&D, CE, and training programs to millions of learners all over the world. Amongst the many methodologies employed to deliver professional adult education, microlearning has emerged as the frontrunner in transforming the membership sector's learning landscape; and against the backdrop of rapid technological change, and remote and hybrid working practices, associations can pioneer the widespread adoption of microlearning as a scalable, cost-effective, and impactful model for learner engagement and member benefit.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Included in the white paper but also used more widely in professional education.

Adaptive learning	Adaptive learning, also known as adaptive teaching, is an educational method which uses computer algorithms as well as artificial intelligence to orchestrate the interaction with the learner and deliver customized resources and learning activities to address the unique needs of each learner.
Action learning	Is concerned with solving problems while simplifying solutions, often in a group dynamic. Learners follow a process of asking questions about the problem to better understand it, reflecting on what possible solutions might be, identifying the best one, and then finally taking action.After taking action, learners reflect again, questioning their process, the results, and how they could improve them.
Andragogy	The art and science of teaching adults, as opposed to pedagogy, which is the art and science of teaching children.
Blended learning	Blended learning or hybrid learning, also known as technology-mediated instruction, web-enhanced instruction, or mixed-mode instruction, is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with physical place-based classroom methods.
BYOD	Bring your own device refers to being allowed to use one's personally owned device, rather than being required to use an officially provided device. It references a policy of permitting employees to bring personally owned devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) to work, and to use those devices to access privileged company information and applications. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as IT consumerization. BYOD is making significant inroads in the business world, with about 50% of employees in developed markets already using their own technology at work.
Cohort learning	Learners enter an online program with a small group of peers and interact with them throughout the course, swapping information and engaging in per-to-peer discussion, debate, and learning.
Continuing education	Describes one type of professional development in which an individual (typically someone who already has completed an academic qualification) pursues additional learning from a higher education institution or a professional membership body.
Customization	Customization is done by the user. A learning management system may enable users to customize or make changes to their experience to meet their specific needs by configuring layout, content, or system functionality. Customization may involve moving items around an interface to reflect the users' priorities, selecting topics of interest, or other factors related to the visual design of an interface.
Experience Application Programming Interface (xAPI)	An e-learning software specification that records and tracks various types of learning experiences for learning systems. It allows providers to deploy several new capabilities that were not supported with SCORM (see below), such as recording learning from non-browser activities, such as games and simulations; platform transition (e.g., start e-learning on a mobile device and finish on a desktop); team-based e-learning; and tracking learning plans and goals.

Experiential learning	The idea that experiences are generated through ongoing interactions and engagement with the world around us, and learning is an inevitable product of experience. This theory of learning is different from cognitive and behavioral learning theories as it takes a more holistic approach. It considers the role that all of our experiences play in learning, including our emotions, cognition, and environmental factors.
Gamification	An approach that seeks to motivate students by using video game design and game elements in learning environments. This includes progress mechanics (points/badges/leaderboards), narrative and characters, immediate feedback, collaborative problem solving, scaffolded learning with increasing challenges, and social connection.
Handheld device	Any portable device that can be carried and held in one's palm. This can be any computing or electronic device that is compact and portable enough to be held and used in one or both hands. A handheld may contain cellular communication, but this category can also include other computing devices.
Learning & Development	Encompasses any professional development an organization provides to its people. It is considered a core area of human resources management and may sometimes be referred to as training and development, learning and performance, or talent development. Onboarding and new hire programs, career development, ongoing training, corporate universities, leadership development programs, skills training, talent strategy and management, and required courses such as compliance training, are all initiatives a learning and development team might provide.
Learning Management System	A learning management system (LMS) or virtual learning environment (VLE) is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, materials or learning and development programs.
Personalization	Personalization is done by the system being used. Instructional designers set up the learning system to identify users and deliver to them the content, experience, or functionality that matches their role. Personalization can be done down at the individual level, or at group or audience level, for example an intranet displaying information specific to those in a certain location or a certain role, such as a job function.
Professional development	An umbrella term that describes individuals learning new skills and knowledge that they can apply to further success in their professional field.
Project-based learning	Centers around the idea of learning by doing, usually as a group. Learners acquire knowledge in a more holistic and deep fashion when they explore a real-world issue and do so for an extended timeframe. Learners will understand knowledge more completely as a result of having to actively apply it.
Reflective (Passive) Learning	One-directional and passive with no participant-based interaction. This includes reading articles, case studies, and industry data, as well as listening to podcasts and watching digital content.

Self-Directed (Unstructured) Learning	Constitutes all unsupervised activities, including reading articles and publications, such as journals, trade magazine, industry-specific news feeds, and peer-reviewed books and studies. The premise is that the adult learner will take the initiative to understand and seek out what they need to learn and who will help them.
Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)	SCORM is a set of technical standards for eLearning software products. It tells programmers how to write their code so that it can "play well" with other eLearning software. It is the de facto industry standard for eLearning interoperability, although xAPI is quickly overtaking.
Social learning	A process by which people acquire knowledge and skills through social interactions. As opposed to traditional models of learning, it encourages learners to communicate with one another and share experiences in order to retain information. The theory posits that people do not just learn from formal instruction, but also through informal interactions with their peers.
Spaced learning	A learning method in which highly condensed learning content is repeated three times, with two 10-minute breaks during which distractor activities such as physical activities are performed by the learners.
Structured (Active) Learning	Adopts an interactive approach underpinned by participatory learning. Integral activities include training courses, workshops, conferences, seminars, lectures, and e-learning. It can also cover career orientated assessments and exams.
Subject matter expert	A person who has accumulated great knowledge in a particular field or topic and this level of knowledge is demonstrated by the person's degree, licensure, and/or through years of professional experience with the subject. SMEs are often recruited by associations for development (and delivery) of their L&D programs.
The Cloud	Refers to servers that are accessed over the internet, and the software and databases that run on those servers. Cloud servers are located in data centers all over the world and by using cloud computing, users and companies do not have to manage physical servers themselves or run software applications on their own machines. The Cloud enables users to access the same files and applications from almost any device, because the computing and storage takes place on servers in a data center, instead of locally on the user device.
Transformational learning	The ability to use learning to transform the way the learner views the world. The theory posits that through an instructor introducing new concepts, challenging assumptions, and disrupting perspectives, a learner can shift their world view in significant ways, resulting in a completely new frame of reference.
Wearable technology	Also known as "wearables," this is a category of electronic devices that can be worn as accessories, embedded in clothing, implanted in the user's body, or even tattooed on the skin. The devices are hands-free gadgets with practical uses, powered by microprocessors and enhanced with the ability to send and receive data via the internet. Wearable technology is evolving into an important category of the Internet of Things, with life-changing applications in medicine, education, and other sectors.

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