

A Look eLearning Industry Trends

An Interview with Kristin Ford Hinrichs, Chief Effectiveness Officer, Best in Learning

What are the main challenges that will continue to be critical in the eLearning market?

"We see that the challenges will continue to be the rapid changes that take place in technology platforms and authoring tools. For the most part, they keep getting faster/cheaper/better which are stunning advances for us all. However, the challenge is the rapid change. It is very difficult to remain current and cutting edge in the environment. A lot of organizations lock themselves into multi-year agreements and it is simply not practical to remain current and agile in the environment. The balance between price/quality is always a precarious one. What a dream come true would be - is to watch a move away from platforms that simply run, track and report and are code based, to more flexible platforms built around how people actually learn, that are able to leverage multiple media and methodologies."

What are some keys to ensuring customers can select the best eLearning solutions to meet their needs?

"The key will always be to track the learning objectives to business objectives. It is absolutely critical to do this. We find most of our prospects and customers initially cannot answer this question. It is also key to get buy-in from every level, including the learner and the learner's manager. Change is hard. In order for a performance metrics to occur we have to be ready for the change to happen. Also, knowledge is not enough. We have to tackle skills-based learning with multiple methodologies as close to the work flow as we can possibly get it."

How can an eLearning provider effectively partner with customers in an elearning project?

"A partner is an organization or a person who is truly an expert in their products and services who is willing to hold the customer accountable for measurable results. This means taking the time to understand the business problem that is trying to be solved, and how we would know when we got there or not. If we're not saving you money or making you money, don't spend any money."

What do eLearning customers typically require in a solution?

"They demand, as they should, a very high quality for price paid. We recommend not doing a project unless it is level 3 interactivity or above. The reason for this is how our brains actually work. If they don't really need to know it, remember it, and/or apply it, why in the heck are you doing it in the first place? The absolute only exception to this is compliance. If you really just need to check the box, then check it, and call it a day."

What would you say is the biggest value that Best in Learning has for customers who are looking for eLearning solutions?

"We connect solutions to problems, with a core expertise in learning solutions that are enabled through technology. We are brokers of multiple solutions (currently over 50 vendor partners) and after a discovery process we will suggest alternative ways and providers that can solve the problem. We do, in fact, only work with customers and prospects that demand measurable results. We offer tremendous value to both our customers and vendor partners in that our business model is such that the customer never contracts with us, and never pays us for any services. They are actually contracting with the solutions provider that we have sourced. We only get paid once the customer has successfully selected and purchased a solution that is right for them."

What are some of Best in Learning's most interesting projects?

Blended, customized technical training for channel partners and engineers at TE Connectivity, who installs and provides wireless networks throughout the world. Other custom projects include emergency procedures for Dakota County, a fairly significant change piece for Valspar Corporation, product knowledge for Herman Miller (largely EPSS) on both computer and multiple mobile devices. Currently working on newer technologies that are really exciting. They include fully simulated environments accessed on iPad or desktop, Complete learning path for on-boarding published into an app, and some pretty cool advanced gamification for surgeons.