Modernize Your Corporate Learning:  
The Time Is NOW

What’s New, What’s Changed, Plus Five Strategies to Get You Started Today

We all know it: The world of work has changed. Between the Great Recession, heightened global competition, huge technology advancements and the changing demographics of today’s workforce, our work environment is barely recognizable from just a decade ago. Consider these thoughts:

- While the economy is stronger than it was in the depths of the recession, the Conference Board notes that in 2015 “global growth is not gaining much traction.”¹
- Despite the anemic global recovery, globalization has surpassed its pre-recession heights,² putting pressure on companies to innovate or lose out to their competitors. And they’ll have to do this while losing their most experienced workers.
- With as many as 10,000 Baby Boomers retiring every day, over 20% of this generation has already left the workforce, and many more will do so in the next few years as they reach retirement age.³
- With robotics, big data, artificial intelligence and myriad of other technologies showing promise, Kevin Kelly, the first executive editor of Wired magazine, predicts the next 20 years are going to make this past 20 years pale in comparison.⁴


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One thing is certain: The pace of change is intense, and everybody is under pressure to get results quickly.

Most organizations are struggling to keep their workforce productive, engaged and delivering on corporate objectives, while also dealing with changes in globalization, demographics and technology, with little help from the economy. The challenge is immense.

**The Solution: Modernize Learning**

Based on recent studies, Corporate America is finally catching on to the fact that transforming and accelerating corporate learning can be a big part of the solution. According to Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends 2015 Report, learning and development is now in the spotlight: the number of companies that rated this area as “very important” tripled since just last year.

Yet even as the importance of learning rose, these same companies realized they still have work to do: readiness to address the issue dropped dramatically (nearly in half). Only 40% of respondents rated their organizations “ready” or “very ready” in learning and development in 2015, compared to 75% in 2014.²

There’s no doubt. It’s a new work environment — one that calls for more modernized learning methods.

**Three Top Reasons to Revamp Your Learning**

According to the Deloitte report, “Companies see an urgent need to build skills and capabilities and are now focused on transforming their learning strategies.”

Is your organization one of them? If so, you can expect to experience a number of benefits from updating your approach to corporate learning. Check out these three:

- **Improved job and organizational performance** — CEOs are looking to the learning organization to close skills gaps and improve the organization’s capabilities. Successful projects require competent employees. And successful employees need skills, experience and mentors, but they also want a challenging and collaborative work environment where learning and teamwork are top priorities. A modernized learning program will improve skills and capabilities and also demonstrate that corporate culture and commitment.

- **Better retention** — Effective learning programs and a learning culture also play a key role in attracting and retaining top-notch employees. Employees want to learn and grow — and feeling stagnant can lead them straight to the door. According to the recent Saba Employee Development Survey, approximately one-third (32%) of surveyed employees said they were “likely” or “very likely” to look for a new position in the next six months. Even more employees, 42%, said they were unhappy with some aspect of their jobs, and the most cited reason (15.1%) was a lack of career development.

- **More efficient learning management** — Next-generation learning programs — and the advanced computing technologies that drive them — will not only help your learners, but also make your L&D team more efficient, giving them more time to focus on creating programs that have real impact.

Where Do You Begin?
Five Strategies to Guide Your Way

According to Jim Lundy, formally the lead analyst covering corporate learning at Gartner and now president of his own firm, Aragon Research, “Learning is becoming a more personal, user-driven, social and mobile experience.” To help you take your learning strategies to the next level, here are five strategies to consider.

Strategy #1 — Collaborative and Social Learning: Blend It In.
In recent years, collaborative and social learning has truly taken hold — and for good reason. Social learning:

- Enhances formal learning programs by providing easy access to content, pre-work and ongoing discussions
- Ensures continuity with longer-running programs (e.g., leadership development)
- Increases learner engagement through active and collaborative learning
- Improves content while reducing costs, thanks to learner contributions that keep material fresh and timely
- Supports crowdsourcing and just-in-time learning

Despite these concrete benefits, however, many organizations have yet to fully embrace collaborative and social learning. According to a study published by HCM Advisory Group in January 2015, only 26% of survey respondents said their organizations were truly using social learning. The rest were either not using it at all (27%) or using it only to some extent (47%).

Strategy #2 — Mobile Learning: Make Way for the Masses.
A critical component of modernized, just-in-time learning is the ability to access resources from any device, anywhere and anytime. The growing prevalence of mobile devices is paving the way.

According to Cisco’s annual Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update (released February 2015), more than 11 billion mobile-connected devices will be in use by 2019 — approximately 1.5 per person in the world.
“The number of mobile users is growing four times faster than the global population itself,” Thomas Barnett, director of service provider thought leadership at Cisco, told eWEEK, noting that by 2019, 69% of the people in the world will be mobile device users.

Mobile access to virtual classrooms, e-learning, social discussions, job aids and other tools can give your learners much-needed flexibility, plus the convenience they crave. Coupled with search and browse features, these resources can also help employees solve problems in the moment of need, making workers more productive overall.

Let’s face it — mobile is the personal computing platform of choice, and should be part of every organization’s learning program.

**Strategy #3 — Content Mix: Make It Engaging.**

Regardless of how mobile and social your learning efforts may be right now, your content must still be compelling enough to drive results. That’s why many savvy organizations are transforming their content strategies to become more engaging and immersive than ever before. Their shifts are toward:

- Virtual classrooms and recordings — These are ideal for global learning initiatives affecting people in different time zones. Learners can attend from their office, home and even while on the go from their mobile device. And if they miss the broadcast, they can watch the recording later, at their convenience.
- User-contributed content (social) — Learners are finding and sharing online content sources, including articles, blogs and videos.
- User-generated content — People are also creating their own videos/recordings with simple tools (e.g., Saba Meeting and Saba Mobile) and sharing that content with others to increase knowledge transfer.
- Simulations — These take effort to build, but done well, can speed learning of specific skills.
- Gamification — Games, especially the features of recognition and rewards, can work very well in social communities.
- Learning standards — The Experience API (aka Tin Can) is an emerging standard that enables the learning management system (LMS) to track a much wider range of learning activities, so the organization will have a better understanding of what works best.

Learn more

*Mobilize Your Learning: Success Stories Plus 5 Tips to Get You Started*

Learn more

*Optimizing Your Content for Today’s Learning*
Strategy #4 — Predictive Learning: It’s Already Here.

If you’ve ever used Amazon, Netflix, Pandora or an online dating site, you’ve already experienced the power of predictive learning. In each case, intelligent algorithms take an active role in understanding your preferences over time and offering new choices, many of which you’re sure to love. The more you use this technology, the more it learns about you and the better it gets.

This concept, however, goes beyond movies, music and relationships — it’s already impacting today’s learning programs. This same technology is already helping today’s learning management systems find relevant people, communities, content, mentors and classes based on each employee’s unique interests, activities and profiles. This intelligence can lead to:

- Better job performance
- The foundation of a career development program
- Better profile data so HR can make better workforce decisions

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The Story of Intelligent Talent Management

Strategy #5 — Embrace the Cloud and Accelerate Success.

Learning management systems have improved greatly in just a few years, thanks in large part to the cloud, and deployments are booming. What’s behind the growing popularity?

Power — Computing power and data storage continue to grow exponentially — while costs remain stable. Compared to bringing servers in-house and managing the technology yourself, cloud technology is very accessible and inexpensive. This enables organizations to start harnessing the results of a cloud-based solution without a huge up-front investment.

Availability — Because cloud-based systems are so prevalent, organizations can now have a new LMS in place within months, not years. That means you can start modernizing your learning programs now, and not risk falling behind your competition.

Automation — The processing power behind today’s cloud-based systems can help learning administrators easily manage large training programs. Assignments are dynamic, so if an employee changes jobs or location, their enrollments, registrations, class activities, communities — their whole learning plan — changes too, all automatically.
Unified — Being in the cloud means all of your learning and development efforts can exist in one unified platform. Catalogs, communities, e-learning libraries, virtual classrooms, content creation, content management, predictive learning, surveys and assessments are all connected, enabling you to quickly and easily create dynamic programs and tap into reporting and analytics.

Evolution — Clearly, cloud-based systems are the way the industry is moving. Innovations such as predictive learning happen first in the cloud. Sharing content and connecting systems is easier in the cloud. These factors all work together for an exceptional user experience.

Putting It All Together
In Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends 2015 Report, the authors note that, “Learning today has become a business-critical priority for increasing skills, improving the leadership pipeline and enhancing employee engagement.” It’s little wonder that Deloitte recommends that this is the year to assess your current learning environment and implement a new vision to build a corporate learning experience that touches every employee in a significant way.

The workforce and workplace have changed, but so have learning content, delivery and supporting technologies. Engaging content as well as social, mobile, predictive and cloud-based services are all entrenched in our personal lives. Now is the time for the L&D team to bring these to work to the benefit of your employees and organization.

Learn more about Saba’s Learning solutions, and for help getting started, contact us today.