Training on Smartphones: Five Critical Questions to Ask Before You Begin

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There are many compelling reasons to deliver your training directly to your employees' cellphones. To cite just a few...

- Mobile training can be conveniently delivered to large numbers of employees who work in multiple locations.
- There is no hardware cost and no need to install a training center.
- There is no need to hire a trainer every time you want to start a training class.
- Employees can complete different units and modules whenever and wherever they prefer.
- Millennials and other younger employees like using mobile devices and are therefore more likely to enjoy and complete training.
- You already have older computerized training materials – or even older printed training manuals – that should be easy to convert to mobile training programs.

terms. Are there other issues to consider before you move ahead with mobile training? I asked Dan Black, vice president of client engagement at Tortal Training. Dan, who is a master training designer, recommends asking these questions before making the decision to distribute some or all of your training to your employees' phones.

Question One: What percentage of your employees have a smart phone?

If not, how will you deliver your training to those who don't? You will need to provide tablets or laptops that they can use in the office. That could mean designing several versions of your training materials for different platforms. Be sure to look before you leap.

Question Two: How will employees be compensated for training when they are not at work?

If employees will complete training when they are not at work, you will have to compensate them for that extra time. They will need to track and report those extra hours. Another option is to require them to complete their training at work.

Question Three: Is mobile connectivity easily accessible while your employees are on the job?

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This is another question that some companies overlook as they rush to mobile. What, for example, is the state of Wi-Fi connectivity in all your work locations, stores, etc.? If it's not already there, or if it is sub-par, what will it cost to set up across all your locations? If your trainees will access your materials while they are not at work, can you expect them to shoulder the usage costs?

Question Four: Do your employees in the field have mobile-enabled tablets?

Many companies are discovering that mobile training works best when delivered on tablets, not smartphones. But they are also finding that few employees have tablets that are part of their mobile plans.

Question Five: Is your training the kind that works well on mobile?

Dan Black maintains that mobile devices are best for delivering what he calls "performance support," which means training that is delivered to employees **after** they've gone through a larger and more detailed learning interaction.

Performance support is like a reminder. You know that sign in your company bathroom that reminds employees to wash their hands before returning to work? That's an example of performance support, which is defined as essential, bite-size pieces of information that you deliver where and when they can affect employee performance.

terms. Some examples are:

- Overviews of product features and uses
- A review of how to handle a customer-facing process or procedure
- Quick instructions on how to fill out a form that documents a service call or a sale
- Simple videos on cleaning, troubleshooting or performing preventative maintenance

The bottom line is that mobile training should be short, sweet and to the point. Think about YouTube, the largest training resource on the planet. If people don't know how to do something, they find out how on YouTube! Think the same way about mobile training. The idea is to provide information that reminds your employees how to handle a process or procedure – information that they can access where and when they need it.

In Summary...

Yes, mobile is great, but it's not great for everything. It can be a powerful tool in your organization's arsenal if you use it in combination with the full suite of technology, classroom and other training that is available to you.

#millennials

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