White Paper
Return on Investment in Today's Learning Marketplace
Calculate the Benefit of Training for your Organization

Current Trends in Learning

Skills Packaging

A significant trend has emerged among our learning customers, and we term it skills packaging. As opposed to a full day of learning the complete capabilities of office automation packages, our clients are increasingly requesting mini-seminars on a wide variety of topics they need to enable or enhance performance. In as little as two hours, our clients learn how to perform specific actions in popular desktop, technical, or networking software that they need to perform their jobs. Such learning opportunities typically include a review of the basics for the subject operation, demonstrations of the steps with outcomes, instructor-led practice exercises, and connections with associated applications. Before the day is out, clients are back on the job, testing the new skills immediately, and realizing realistic benefits of time spent in learning. Questions concerning learning content are resolved while the instructor is readily available. This learning is typically conducted in small groups to provide coverage back on the job itself.

On Demand, At Hand

A second trend emerging for our customers is to request desk side training in performing a specific action or series of actions. Open time in the seminar schedule is set aside for coaching individuals directly at their sites or workstations on a topic of choice. The subject matter is agreed upon in advance to ensure that the instructor is prepared, and time is limited to guarantee that the needs of the overall organization are met on an on-going basis. This format brings learning directly into a student's environment and produces visible results. Workflow is typically supported in this scenario, not lost to learning.

Electronic Learning

Our observations increasingly indicate that many electronic learning initiatives have regressed into information repositories as opposed to interactive learning opportunities. The essential element in adult learning remains the presence of another qualified, encouraging, and thoroughly experienced adult.

Essential Returns

Enhanced Skill Sets

One obvious outcome of learning is that skills essential in the workplace are assimilated and put to practical use. Time spent in learning by accident destroys productivity and increases frustration. Most product manuals serve to hold shelves firmly on the floor. Directed learning produces results that can be evaluated by a trained observer, the instructor.

Tactical Skill Application

Skills closer to point of use

Someone in every organization knows how to use all the software the organization purchases. That expertise is undoubtedly in various parts of the organization; upper management, the "training crew," or line supervisors. But unless that knowledge reaches the point where customer and internal interactions occur, it is providing little value to the organization. Structured learning opportunities put the expertise where it will have fullest expression and provide the highest return on the investment made in it. Learning enhances performance.

Self Confidence

Both enterprise and bundled software applications have features that are rarely used. While this can be attributed to needing only a narrow range of operational capabilities in a large software package, it can also result from a lack of confidence in the dusty features of the application that are not used routinely. Targeted seminars on features that support the organization's workflow, but are not commonly used, increase confidence in an application overall and provide the tools to apply those features. Learning builds confidence.

Return on Investment

SSSI recommends two methods to evaluate your return on investment. We cannot specifically define the mechanics of these methods for your organization. They must be calculated in conjunction with your accounting department or other financial professional. But, once calculated and evaluated on short and long term bases, they can indicate the return on your learning investment.

Cost per Action Performed

Every hour of every day and every action taken by your organization costs money. Each one of those actions has a discrete step or series of steps. The efficiency, speed, or productivity with which the actions are performed can be quantified. Learning supports reduced time to full productivity, increased efficiency, and greater speed in performing more actions per unit time. Metrics are available to quantify changes in costs per action over time in any number of configurations. Apply them.

Profit per Action Performed

An identical approach can be taken to evaluate profit per action performed. Objective benefits, bringing skills close to the consumer, and increased confidence promote high performance organizations. And profit.

Flexible value of training with

A less understood learning outcome is tactical skill application. While absorbing new skills is essential for success at all levels, knowing when to apply what skills and in what manner or order can be even more important. Most learning opportunities provide plenty of what, but few provide much why and when. It is the interplay between instructor and student that lays the foundation for understanding and applying this expanded approach.

Measurement of Return

Objective Benefits

Most learning opportunities are outcome based. A series of long range and short term objectives are formulated in advance and the course content is composed to meet the objectives. The advantage of this approach is that the actual learning outcome can be measured against the original objectives. This approach has served both vendors and customers in the learning community alike. But some outcomes cannot be measured. Some individuals just want to produce more with greater satisfaction. For some, error and duplication reduction is a primary goal. Managers can seek to increase efficiency in work processes, enabling increased output per hour or worker. Some just want to free up time spent in informal "how-to" sessions across the cubicle wall. Organizations definitely seek to reduce time spent in support calls to software vendors, or reduce implementation time for enterprise packages. Some vendors even charge for telephone or electronic mail support. Learning saves money.

xpdlearn

xpdlearn offers a unique approach to learning. Our courses run a few hours in length over a series of days in a wide variety of topics. Your staff can rotate though our state of the art learning center and be back on the job to apply new skills the same day. Our packages offer a unique bundled approach to multiple application features that work together to achieve a greater result. Your staff learns the essential skills to perform an integrated function in one smooth professional seminar.

Technology Center

SSSI offers a fully equipped Technology Center with the finest in equipment, capabilities and facilitators for our learners. Individual computers are provided for each participant, linked through a state of the art wireless network. A maximum of 16 learners are accommodated at any one time, providing a close instructor/learner ratio. Desktop application and technical training are available. Presentation equipment of all types is available for maximum communication between instructors and learners. Our mobile technology center can bring all this to you.