

Getting a bigger slice of e-learning pie

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Many of my clients have now implemented e-learning projects. They are now asking how to assess the success of their projects. It is heartening to work with people who are eager to improve e-learning. For all you keeners here is a way to have some fun and at the same time gain new insight into your e-learning project, program-or whatever you call it.

When folks ask me how to help them assess e-learning projects, one of the tools I use for a quick assessment is a simple eight-step process. It seems like a clear process to me, but experience tells me that what is clear to me is not always clear to someone else. So. If you have questions contact me using the information at the end of this article.

I've developed the e-learning pie to help you picture the eight-step assessment process.

The e-Learning Pie

I've noticed eight key elements of e-learning implementation so I've sliced the pie into eight pieces. Each slice represents a critical area, based on my e-learning implementation experience. You might name the pieces differently in your organization. Likewise you might decide that you need more or less than eight pieces to capture e-learning implementation issues in your organization. It's your pie, you can cut it into as many pieces as you wish, you can name the slices as you wish. (Anybody thinking of blueberry pie not e-learning pie. I am. It's my favourite.)

Steps

Here are the steps for using the e-learning pie to assess the current state of your e-learning project. Consider each of the eight areas of pie. Do they apply to your organization?

Revise the pie as you wish to reflect the issues in your organization. For example, some of the organizations I work with prefer to use the term human resources for talent, number 6. Some organizations add additional pieces such as vendor off-the-shelf courseware and Learning Management System, LMS.

Assess each of these criteria on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest. You may use the sample questions below to help you with this.

Draw a line across the piece of pie to indicate your assessment. (For example, if you give a rating of five for resources, you would draw a line as I have done across the resources piece of pie.)

Reflect on what this pie tells you about e-learning in your organization. What does it suggest about improving e-learning? (Getting a larger piece of pie?) Why are some areas rated higher than others? Can you learn things from the highly-rated areas that you can apply to the less highly-rated areas? For example, you have given technology a high rating. Is there something about the way that technology achieved a high rating that you can incorporate into another area so that it is rated at the same level as technology? Based on the ratings you gave items and the relative importance of each item in your organization, answer the following question.

The e-learning implementation issues that I need to work on are (20 words or less for each issue.)

The issues that I need help with are (20 words or less for each issue.)

People who can help me or resources or actions that will help me are.

The person I will engage in this process so that they can hold me accountable are.

The actions I am going to take are.

My simple workplan for taking action, with dates is.

The person holding me accountable will know that I have achieved what I set out to do when I have taken the following actions.

I will celebrate my success by.

Questions to ask yourself

You can use these questions to rate the current state of your e-learning project.

Business case: How well aligned is e-learning with organizational goals and objectives? How compelling is the evidence that e-learning will help achieve these? How well have you made the business case?

Culture: What is the appropriate culture for e-learning? Does your organization have it? If not, are you doing what you need to do to get there?

Quality of content: Is the material (training, education and information) being delivered through e-learning relevant to learners' needs? Is there the right amount? Is it instructionally sound?

Resources: Are sufficient financial resources available for e-learning projects? Does the project have access to them? If there are not enough financial resources how can you obtain more?

Speed: Does your e-learning respond quickly enough to change? Does it convey new learning materials fast enough? Are you doing what you need to do to increase your capacity to act quickly?

Talent: Do you have the people with the skills to implement e-learning on the scale required? If not, are you doing what you need to do to groom them.

Technology change: Is the organization responsive to new advances in e-learning technology? Are you constrained by the existing IM/IT infrastructure? Are you inhibited

by security, compatibility and other issues arise from existing internal networks/systems? Have you tried to do anything about them? Have you involved the IM/IT community to the extent required?

Leadership. Are leaders well-briefed, supportive, reasonable and available? What can you do to ensure that leaders are providing the sense of clarity and vision that ensures that the stakeholders are marching to the same drum?

We all want to have successful e-learning projects. We all want larger slices of pie. Assessing where you are and taking steps to address issues will help you succeed with e-learning. It can be yummy.

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