

# How to create a buzz around learning

Eight key steps



## How to create a buzz around learning

Employees can sometimes feel like passengers – or even prisoners – rather than truly engaged participants in learning programs. If they've been sent a link, pushed to take part by someone else or if they're coasting through without really connecting with the content on an emotional level, it's unlikely they'll be engaged and apply what they learn back in the workplace. This is likely because it won't speak to them personally, set the context, or explain what's in it for them.

To truly engage every learner – so that they fully participate and are brave enough to apply their learning afterwards – you have to communicate why the learning itself really matters and how it's relevant.

Many L&D teams struggle to create the necessary excitement or 'buzz' around their learning. It's not enough to provide enjoyable or even engaging content. If a participant hasn't fully bought into the purpose, context or the need for development, he or she will never gain maximum benefit. This is a vital success factor and it applies to all methods of learning, whether it's face-to-face, virtual, digital or blended. Often, the biggest challenge L&D teams face is in successfully setting the content and sparking people's curiosity to learn, before they even take part.

Knowing that learning content will equip you with important skills is, in itself, relatively motivating – but it takes more than this to truly excite and engage people. For example, industry qualifications may help you to do your job better but they won't necessarily 'motivate' you to study.

Sometimes it's difficult to see a direct and immediate link between behavioral skills development, business performance and career success, so individuals may think 'is this something I need to be seen to be doing?' If you're asking them to invest time and energy, they'll naturally ask in return: **'what's in it for me?'**

### Eight steps to more effective communication...

Much of L&D's time is taken up with issues such as creating competency frameworks and designing, implementing and evaluating learning events. It's easy to imagine that communication falls under the remit of internal communications – and that it isn't part of L&D's role.

Plus, with the increasing role on-demand digital learning plays in the business world today, the importance of creating a buzz for the learning and benefitting from the engagement levels this can bring, cannot be understated.

When the learning and communications come together, it makes an enormous difference to the success of any intervention and helps an organization achieve its goals. Here are eight steps which can help you to create a buzz around your learning:

### 1. Start with 'why?'

Consider what benefits your initiative will bring for employees. Go beyond the skills they'll gain. What will they be able to do differently and why is it important for them to do that? What's the key driver here? What emotions will they feel once they begin to apply their new skills or work with a refreshed mindset?

To convince individuals to really care about a learning initiative – and to keep them engaged and motivated to learn more – you have to articulate how they'll benefit personally. If there isn't a definable advantage that's beautifully aligned with your business objectives then take some time at the beginning of the program to ask people to develop their own meaning behind what they'll learn.

Help them uncover how the learning will make a difference in their role – and how it links to the important strategic goals of your business.

### 2. Create a 'core repeatable message' that people can connect with emotionally

If you have a learning curriculum that covers several different topics, try to create an 'integrating story' which links together important themes or components running through the curriculum

Learning is more likely to resonate with people if you anchor it to a meaningful message; a single call to action or value statement that sums up the intent of your offering.

If your learning initiative is designed to bring about a specific business outcome... communicate it clearly and outline what success will feel like.

*“ In some organizations, a **silos mentality** exists which separates learning and internal communications ”*



### 3. Reinforce other organizational messages

Successful organizations are always keeping in touch with employees at all levels. Senior managers are often called upon to deliver memorable and engaging messages around strategy, brand and purpose.

Internal comms are often involved in highlighting the role of employees in achieving a vision. If you can find a way for your learning interventions to reflect and reinforce these same messages, it becomes much easier to 'light the spark' that motivates people to seek out for themselves the skills that will help them perform now and in the future.

### 4. Ensure the language and tone of voice of your communications are appropriate.

When you're creating a narrative, it's important not to simply list facts or talk in 'corporate-speak' but to use language that makes sense to people and 'feels' right to them.

Try framing things from the participant's point of view. What are they most concerned about? What might they be afraid of? How do you want them to describe their learning experiences when they're talking not just to their colleagues but also to their loved ones?

### 5. Generate interest and intrigue

Create an initial 'teaser campaign' for your learning intervention, to gain attention and arouse curiosity.

You don't need to give too much away in this initial stage; just try to highlight that people have a part to play and aim to tap into their emotions, so that they see the learning as real and relevant.

Animations, videos, games, quizzes, countdowns, newsletter adverts, email banners, blogs, vlogs, podcasts and social media related comms can all be all utilized to grab attention and frame the start of a journey.

### 6. Build the context

Build on your initial teaser campaign to further increase awareness and set the context. Start to explain what's in it for individuals and for the business.

Ask questions that get people thinking about why the training is important for them and relevant to what they do. Stakeholder videos, posters, virtual briefings for line managers and virtual sessions for employees can all be deployed to expand the story.

### 7. Keep them engaged

Once the learning intervention is up and running, the main challenge is to sustain momentum. Share feedback and use reminders, quick-win stories, shout-outs and progress updates – via emails, videos and social media sharing. We find our Digital Hub is a great tool for this and we see engagement levels of over 90%.

Highlight what's changed for people – how they are thinking and acting differently as a result of their learning and the results they're achieving. Look at your analytics and see what's landing well with learners – what's engaging people the most? Build on success.

Use personal stories to go beyond technical capabilities and highlight how people's careers are being enhanced through the learning they've experienced.

### 8. Encourage pride

After each intervention stage or milestone, highlight the impact and the results achieved, including the part stakeholders have played in this. Utilize analytics, 'distance travelled' visuals and personal anecdotes that illustrate beneficial results.

Consider creating a film, or a series of awards, as a celebration. Promote positive changes for the business externally through news releases, case studies and social media posts.

### In summary...

When it comes to learning and development, stop 'taking prisoners' or letting learners passively attend. Find a way to communicate why learning matters and why people should care personally about their development. As far as possible, set this personal story in a corporate context and wrap it in a core and easily repeatable message.

Leading organizations are now realising the benefits of bringing learning and communications together, to drive engagement levels, align efforts behind business goals and support improved productivity.

The buzz around your learning should be contagious and personal.

#### Why not use our Digital Hub?

A beautifully designed and engaging platform and content – Drive improved engagement, aligned to the context and goals of the business.

If you are interested in creating a buzz around your organizations learning programs, please contact us:

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