eBook

Made to Stick: Strategies to Drive Learning Technology Adoption

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Ensure your learning technology delivers an engaging experience that keeps employees coming back so you can **maximize the ROI of your learning solution.**

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Grow Your People, Grow Your Business

One of the best ways to <u>advance organizational maturity</u> — and reap the bottom-line benefits that come with it — is to nurture a learning culture that gives your people the tools they need to grow.

But while <u>making the right technology choices</u> is essential to any successful organization's <u>digital maturity</u>, it's only the first step. After all, a learning technology's value is ultimately determined by the people who use it — or don't.

Introducing and maintaining a valuable learning solution is a challenge facing nearly every modern HR and learning leader.

Organizations invest a great deal of time, money, and effort into implementing modern learning solutions, and for good reason. An effective learning platform is the mechanism that fuels access to professional development — something that <u>92% of employees</u> say is important or very important to them in a job. But at the end of the day, no matter how great the technology is, it will never deliver the intended value if employees don't adopt it.

So, how can employers make their learning solution a place that employees visit more often and for longer periods each time? In other words, how can employers make a learning solution "sticky"?

In this eBook, we'll explore practical ways to ensure your learning technology delivers an engaging experience that keeps employees coming back for more so you can maximize adoption, impact, and ROI.

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What Makes a Learning Solution Attractive?

"If you build it, they will come" might work in '90s baseball movies, but in the real world, people won't visit your learning platform just because it exists. The key is to turn learning from a dreaded chore into an engaging, productive activity — and the right learning technology can help.

When evaluating learning platforms, here are four essential capabilities that will help you create a learning space where employees want to spend time:

1. Connection to career growth

Today's employees have a lot on their plates, so motivating them to engage with your learning solution requires them to understand WIIFM ("What's in it for me?"). If you can't show how the solution will help them do their jobs better or achieve the next level of success in their career, forget it.

Addressing the WIIFM aspect by clearly connecting your employees' career aspirations to personalized development plans will help make your learning solution feel like somewhere employees want to be — not somewhere they have to be.

2. Anytime, anywhere access

Employees only spend an average of 24 minutes per week on formal learning, with the biggest barrier being a lack of time. Fortunately, this is an easy fix with the right solution. Making learning accessible from anywhere empowers employees to turn a spare 15 minutes into valuable learning time while waiting for the bus or sitting on the couch. Leveraging a learning platform with a native mobile app for iOS and Android lets you serve relevant content to any mobile device, increasing learner engagement and productivity.

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3. Personalized, relevant content

In the age of Netflix and YouTube, employees expect a learning platform that supports personalization and leverages machine learning to offer relevant recommendations across various formats.

With content-agnostic learning platforms, you can also deliver any type of content from any provider you choose, resulting in an impressive roster of engaging learning content — all housed in one place.

4. Social and gamification capabilities

When learning feels less like work and more like fun, it becomes something employees want to do — not something they feel obligated to do. Learning is most engaging when it is an interactive, social, collaborative experience. Incorporating game mechanics and social elements into learning can excite employees and increase engagement via quizzes, leaderboards, gamified learning paths, points, and badges.

Moreover, enabling employees to interact with each other through discussion boards and team-based learning exercises housed within your learning platform can help cultivate a learning culture and make your solution a place employees want to be.

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Making Learning a Regular Habit

Attracting employees to your learning platform is important, but it's only the first step. The next step is often more challenging — namely, getting them to stay and take advantage of all the solution has to offer.

To drive learning platform adoption and usage, HR and learning leaders must develop a culture of continuous learning wherein learning becomes part of employees' everyday activities.

Here are six ways you can help employees change their view of workplace learning from a tedious box-checking exercise to a proactive daily discipline:

1. Leverage the power of habit stacking

Upon finding and implementing a modern learning platform that works for your business, you might heave a sigh of relief — but unless you want to risk your learning platform meeting the same fate as that treadmill you've turned into a place to hang laundry, the work isn't over yet.

So, how can you encourage employees to use your learning solution regularly? By helping them build a learning habit.

A study by Duke University found that up to 45% of our daily actions are automatic. In other words, they result from habits rather than conscious decision-making. One way to help employees build and maintain a regular learning routine is a method known as habit stacking. Popularized by James Clear's best-selling book "Atomic Habits," this approach essentially involves linking a new habit to an existing one. For instance, to develop a meditation habit, you may choose to meditate for two minutes after your daily cup of coffee; if you're aiming to be more active, you might decide to put on your running shoes immediately after brushing your teeth in the morning.

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In these scenarios, your established habit — drinking coffee or brushing teeth — is a "prompt" that reminds you to complete the new habit you want to build.

HR and talent leaders looking to help employees develop a proactive learning routine by teaching them the power of habit stacking can start by encouraging workers to spend five minutes in a microlearning course in the morning, with the stipulation that this occurs after turning on their computer and before opening their email. To reinforce a culture of learning, ask managers to conclude every 1:1 asking about employees' learning plans for the week. Employees are far more likely to use your learning solution when learning is at the forefront of their daily work activities —especially when it's tied to something they already do.

2. Support learning in the moment of need

Making learning easily accessible in the rhythm of the workday is closely tied to habit stacking. When employees are required to engage in context switching (namely, shifting their attention between different tasks, platforms, or projects), they're less motivated to engage with your learning solution, which is why integrating learning directly into the flow of work is essential.

Half of all employees say they want to access learning at the precise moment of need, so making content easy to find, mobile-friendly, and quick to consume is critical. With the SumTotal Intelligent Assistant (SIA) browser extension, a learner can highlight a topic of interest in the web browser or social platform they're already using and instantly gain access to bitesize, contextual learning in the form of videos, courses, books, and audiobooks — all available through SumTotal's platform.

3. Link learning to performance

Putting learning at the heart of the performance process is essential to building a culture of learning. In fact, research by LinkedIn revealed that performance reviews are the No. 1 way managers find out about learning resources, beating out promotional emails and the onboarding process.

When learning and performance objectives are connected, employees can clearly see why learning matters and how it will benefit them. As such, they will be more motivated to engage with your learning platform when activities are personalized and directly tied to individual and business goals.

Linking learning to performance also gives managers complete visibility into how employees are progressing against growth plans, which equips them with the insights they need to recommend specific courses.

Simply put, a learning solution that delivers intelligent learning recommendations and personalized learning paths based on an employee's specific performance objectives can help solidify the learning-performance connection, ultimately driving learning adoption.

4. Bring managers into the fold

Managers are the top contributor to employee engagement and

retention, with Gallup estimating that they account for at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement scores across business units. And while there's little doubt about the tremendous impact that managers can have on a company, employee learning is one area in which their involvement is often overlooked.

Research has revealed that 56% of employees would be motivated to spend more time learning if their manager directed them to complete a course to gain or improve specific skills. To drive adoption of your learning solution, it's vital that managers use their influence to build a culture of learning on their teams.

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When employees see leaders above them promoting the importance of learning and development, they are more likely to embrace your learning platform — whether you're their direct manager or all the way up in the C-suite. Fortunately, things are moving in the right direction: In March 2021, [62% of L&D pros](#) reported that their CEOs were active champions of learning, up from just 27% a year prior

5. Solicit employee feedback

Implementing a learning platform is not a set-it-and-forget-it activity. After rolling out your learning solution, monitoring its use and capturing ongoing employee feedback is essential to

understanding why employees are (or aren't) using it. This insight will empower you to make informed adjustments where necessary.

For example, you might hear employees aren't using your platform because they don't know how to use or access it, which is an issue that can easily be solved through training and communication. If employees feel the learning content itself isn't very engaging, that's another easy fix — especially when you use a content-agnostic platform that allows you to serve up any content you choose.

From conducting polls to attending department meetings, there are many ways to capture employee feedback. What's most important is that you

solicit input consistently and with an open mind — and that you share how you're acting on it after you receive it.

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6. Share employees' progress toward their goals

You've probably encountered those flashing signs that indicate how fast drivers are going, but did you know they're among the most effective ways to slow speeding cars? In fact, when alerted by a radar sign, speeders will slow down up to 80% of the time, despite the lack of an associated penalty or incentive. Why are these signs so effective? Because they provide clear, easy-to-understand, and immediately actionable information (namely, the number of miles per hour at which you're traveling).

Similarly, the wearable tech product Fitbit tracks and shares users' progress toward their goals, helping them keep fitness top of mind and enabling them to quickly course correct if needed.

With this in mind, one way to encourage employees to use your learning solution consistently is to regularly loop them in on their progress. If you leverage a learning solution that tracks users' activity via real-time dashboards, sharing employees' progress is even easier.

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Learning ROI Hinges on Employee Adoption

Learning solutions are a significant investment for organizations — and, like with any investment, you expect to see a positive return.

To ensure you get the business value you're looking for, it's important to choose a modern learning solution that connects learning to career growth, enables easy access, delivers personalized and relevant content, and uses social and gamification techniques.

That said, a thriving L&D program is more than acquiring new technology; it also requires you to build a continuous learning culture centered on that technology.

By developing a robust technology adoption strategy and helping your employees make learning a regular habit, you can ensure your learning solution benefits your employees and your bottom line.

Take learning from transactional to transformational
Want to see how SumTotal's learning solution can help you deliver the personalized, engaging experience your employees expect — and the bottom-line results your business needs?

Let's chat.

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