

WHY YOU SHOULD ADOPT SOCIAL LEARNING?

by ASHA PANDEY | Chief Learning Strategist, EI Design

BEGIN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	3		
Introduction	4		
Article 1: What Is Social Learning And How Can You Use It To Foster Collaborative Learning	5		
– What Is Social Learning?	6		
– What Is The Relationship Between Social Media And Social Learning?	7		
– How Can Social Learning Help People Learn?	8		
– Is There A Flip Side?	9		
– Are There Any Best Practices That Can Help?	10		
– How To Use Social Learning Meaningfully?	11		
– Key Takeaways	12		
Article 2: Why You Should Adopt Social Learning	13		
– How Effective Is Social Learning In Helping Learners Learn?	14		
– Why Adopting Social Learning Makes Sense	15		
		– Is Social Learning Relevant For All Organisations (Small/Medium Or Large)?	16
		What Kind Of Programs Would Work?	
		– Key Takeaways	17
		Article 3: How Can Social Learning Spice Up Your Existing Learning Strategy?	18
		– How To Use Social Learning To Enhance Your Existing Learning Strategy	19
		– What Is Social Learning?	20
		– Why Should You Adopt Social Learning?	21
		– How Exactly Can You Use Social Learning To Enhance Your Existing Learning Strategy?	22
		– What Is The Additional Value This Approach Will Bring?	23
		– How Can You Establish Quantifiable Gains For The Learners And Business?	24
		– Key Takeaways	25
		Looking To Adopt Social Learning? EI Design Can Help You With That And More!	26
		Contact Us	27



PREFACE

As a Learning Strategist, I am always on the lookout for newer ways to craft better and more effective Learning solutions. While several organisations the world over are making an attempt to embrace newer technologies and Learning strategies, it is imperative that they get to know the right way to go about it.

In this eBook, I have addressed the questions you may have as L&D professionals on how to integrate a trend like Social Learning meaningfully in your training delivery.

The structure of this eBook typically covers the three pertinent perspectives - What, Why and How through my articles that explain:

- **What? De-mystify the new concepts.**
- **Why? Outline their relevance and why you should adopt them.**
- **How? Show how they can be used in your organisation.**

These insights will certainly help you uplift your learning strategy by incorporating collaborative learning in your organisation.

For regular updates, sign-up for monthly Newsletters [Sign-Up - EI Design](#)

I would love to hear from you! For any suggestions and feedback, write to me at apandey@eidesign.net

INTRODUCTION

We don't always learn from formal teaching and learning methods.

Rather than structured formal learning, most of us prefer to explore things on our own or seek inputs from our peers or seniors. Learning through observation is a human tendency, a fact that Dan Pink firmly asserts in his book "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us", stating that people have a strong desire to be both autonomous and inter-connected. He cites this as one of the key motivating factors for people to chase greater accomplishments.

This is also reflected in the **70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development** that describes how learning happens. According to this, most of us pick:

- 70 percent of our knowledge from our on-the job experiences.
- 20 percent from interactions with others.
- 10 percent from structured or formal training.

Realising this, several organisations are adopting Social Learning as an integral part of their learning strategy.

CONTINUE READING



INTRODUCTION

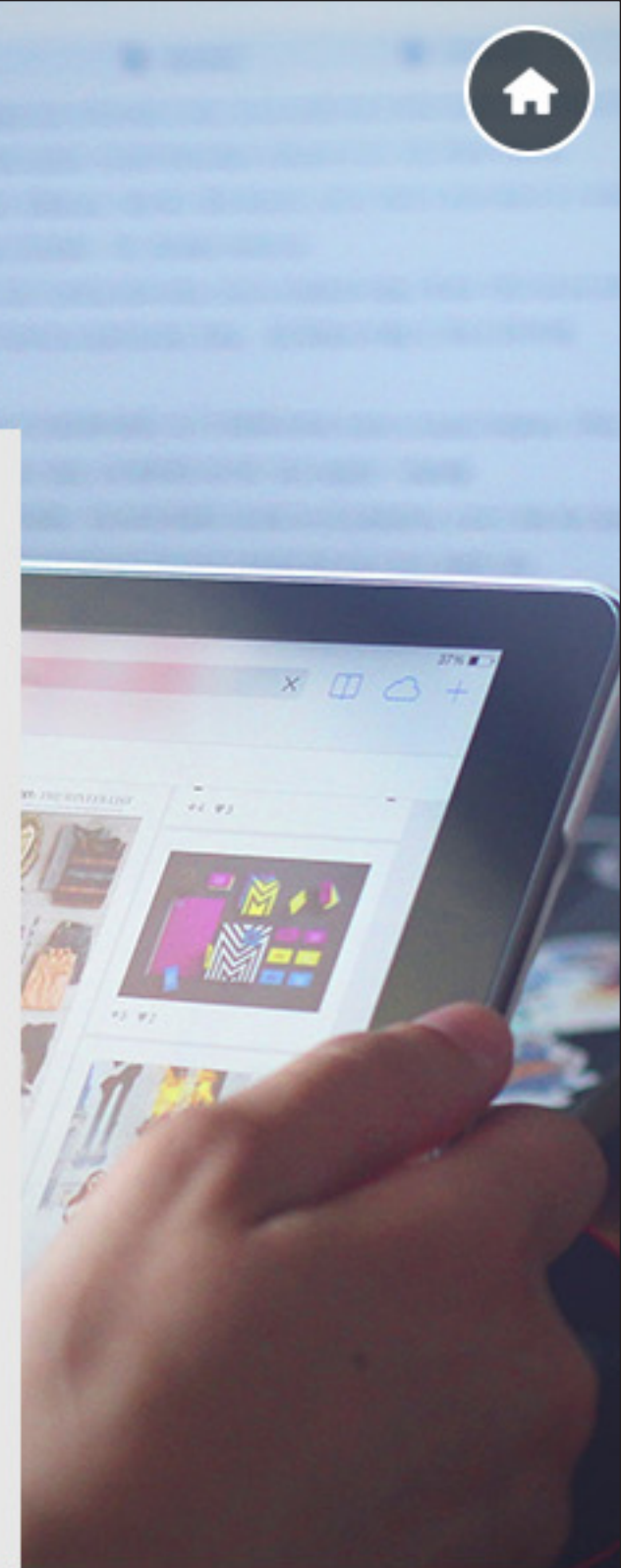
In this eBook, I share three articles that will answer several questions you may have on the concept of Social Learning, whether you should consider it and how it will help you increase learner engagement and application of learning. You will also get cues on how you can apply Social Learning in your organisation.

What Is Social Learning And How Can You Use It To Foster Collaborative Learning: This article outlines the concept of Social Learning, its benefits and how it can be used meaningfully in an organisation to enhance collaborative learning. The article also provides some best practices that you can use.

Why You Should Adopt Social Learning: This article builds from our first article and outlines clear gains that Social Learning provides to learners as well as to the business. It also provides the background (through two theories) to establish why Social Learning indeed works.

How Can Social Learning Spice Up Your Existing Learning Strategy: This article focuses on how you can apply Social Learning in your organisation. It also outlines the value this will create and quantifiable gains that your organisation will see by fostering collaborative learning.

Do [contact us](#) if you would like to set up a consultation on how you could potentially use Social Learning in your organisation.



WHAT IS SOCIAL LEARNING AND HOW CAN YOU USE IT TO FOSTER COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

As learning professionals, most of us are familiar with the 70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development that describes how learning happens. According to this, most of us pick:

- 70 percent of our knowledge from our on-the job experiences.
- 20 percent from interactions with others.
- 10 percent from structured or formal training.

It is no surprise that today more and more companies are using some form of Social Learning that enables employees to learn from each other. In this article, I will touch upon the concept of Social Learning, its benefits and how it can be used meaningfully in an organisation to enhance collaborative learning. I will also share some best practices.



WHAT IS SOCIAL LEARNING?

In simple terms, Social Learning is learning with and from others. This can either happen online (for instance over popular social media tools like LinkedIn, Twitter and so on) or offline (during group discussions, over coffee or during conferences).

What are the aspects that most of the popular social networks provide that can be used to learn or collaborate and learn?

All of us use their standard communication and collaboration features like comments, posts, instant messaging, group discussion boards, wikis, video chats and so on. As an extension, you can bring a semi-structured approach to encourage this collaborative learning by building virtual communities to encourage them to provide a forum to share ideas, share knowledge and curate new inputs into a knowledge centre.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL LEARNING?

Social media provides basic technology to connect people. All of us use it to keep in touch with our friends or for networking with business contacts and often to share our thoughts and opinions. But its capability does not end here. It can also be leveraged as an effective tool for collaborative or Social Learning. The key being, how we use this meaningfully to encourage exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing.





HOW CAN SOCIAL LEARNING HELP PEOPLE LEARN?

According to Mason and Renniet (2008)*, there are four major benefits of learner-generated content that these tools provide:

- Users have the tools to actively engage in the construction of their experience, rather than passively absorbing existing content.
- Content will be continually refreshed by the users rather than requiring expensive expert input.
- Many of the new tools support collaborative work, thereby allowing users to develop the skills of working in teams.
- Shared community spaces and inter-group communications are a massive part of what excites young people and therefore should contribute to users' persistence and motivation to learn.

IS THERE A FLIP SIDE?

The jury is still out on determining the value of Social Learning and the time it takes to create an impact. While it is true that the process of going beyond individual learning to learning collaboratively can take time, it is still a worthwhile approach.



ARE THERE ANY BEST PRACTICES THAT CAN HELP?

Yes. Some of these best practices can make your Learning initiative a success:

Facilitating a Social Learning platform where learners are spaced apart; this will help:

- In distributed problem solving whereby small problems could be nipped in the bud without being allowed to cause bigger challenges later on.
- Nurture a creativity-fostering environment.
- Form temporary workgroups to tackle business challenges.
- Create a flexible work environment.

Encouraging learners to build a collaborative knowledge base of their own rather than depending on others' assistance

Bridging the distance gap between learners and fostering team spirit through:

- Increased participation.
- Projecting them as representatives of the corporate brand.
- Developing a community.

Providing them adequate motivation as it is a prerequisite for any learning to take place

HOW TO USE SOCIAL LEARNING MEANINGFULLY?

Social media has a number of benefits and uses. Some of the ways in which it can be used to good effect are:

- It can serve as an auxiliary element to formal learning in the form of discussions, sharing of experiences, lessons learnt and so on.
 - It can be used as a tool to encourage employees to generate, gather, explore, get access to, learn and relearn and review knowledge and skills to unravel hidden information.
 - It can also help learners with “personal knowledge management” or “smart working”. For example, they could use blogs to gain that extra bit of information or learn on demand using forums such as Wikipedia or YouTube to seek answers to any queries that they may have.

Select the arrows to navigate.



Source: Robin Mason & Frank Rennie – “E-Learning and Social Networking Handbook: Resources for Higher Education”.

HOW TO USE SOCIAL LEARNING MEANINGFULLY?

Social media has a number of benefits and uses. Some of the ways in which it can be used to good effect are:

- It helps create “Communities of Practice” for groups such as those of new employees, teams, project team members or other similar groups.
- It facilitates the creation of a structured Social Learning framework. With Social Learning, one can accumulate informal content from learners and extract useful ideas and find solutions to problems that formal training may not be able to address.
- With Social Learning, managing the inflow of informal content effectively and measuring of the benefits accrued on account of the same is possible.

Select the arrows to navigate.



Source: Robin Mason & Frank Rennie – “E-Learning and Social Networking Handbook: Resources for Higher Education”.

Key Takeaways

Social Learning Is learning with and from others and can take place online as well as offline. It fosters learning. Specifically, it

- Facilitates collaborative learning and provides a platform for learners to share ideas, share knowledge and curate new inputs into a knowledge centre.
- Helps learners actively engage in the construction of their experience, rather than passively absorb existing content.
- Facilitates constant update of content by learners rather than requiring expensive expert input.
- Helps learners develop the skills of working in teams.
- Encourages shared community spaces and inter-group communications.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

3

Key Takeaways

Additionally, you can use Social Learning:

- As an auxiliary element to formal learning in the form of discussions, sharing of experiences, lessons learnt and so on.
- To create “Communities of Practice” for learner groups.
- To create a structured Social Learning framework.
- To manage the inflow of informal content effectively.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

3

Key Takeaways

You can maximise the impact of Social Learning by:

- Facilitating a Social Learning platform.
- Encouraging learners to build a collaborative knowledge base.
- Bridging the distance gap between learners and fostering team spirit.
- Providing them adequate motivation.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

3

WHY YOU SHOULD ADOPT SOCIAL LEARNING

It is exciting to be part of the new era in corporate learning that leverages on social and collaborative learning. Today, Social Learning is more than a buzz and is increasingly used by forward thinking organisations to foster collaborative learning and more significantly its application on the job. While there will be a continued need for formal training that meets specific learning outcomes, there is a clear need to create platforms for informal or Social Learning where learners can network, share, collaborate and exchange ideas on problem-solving.

In this article, I will outline why you should adopt [Social Learning](#). I will also outline some best practices and ideas on where you can use Social Learning meaningfully.

In simple terms, Social Learning is learning with and from others. This can either happen online (for instance over popular social media tools like LinkedIn, Twitter and so on) or offline (during group discussions, over coffee or during conferences).

CONTINUE READING



WHY YOU SHOULD ADOPT SOCIAL LEARNING

What are the aspects that most of the popular social networks provide that can be used to learn or collaborate and learn? All of us use their standard communication and collaboration features like comments, posts, instant messaging, group discussion boards, wikis, video chats and so on.

As an extension, you can bring a semi-structured approach to encourage this [collaborative learning](#) by building virtual communities to encourage them to provide a forum to share ideas, share knowledge and curate new inputs into a knowledge centre.



HOW EFFECTIVE IS SOCIAL LEARNING IN HELPING LEARNERS LEARN?

It is worthwhile to look at two theories that support why and how Social Learning indeed works:

Select each button to learn more.



Social learning theory



Active learning

Social learning theory



According to Wikipedia, it integrated behavioural and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a comprehensive model that could account for the wide range of learning experiences that occur in the real world. As initially outlined by Bandura and Walters in 1963 and further detailed in 1977, the key tenets of Social Learning theory are as follows:

1. Learning is not purely behavioural; rather, it is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context.
2. Learning can occur by observing a behaviour and by observing the consequences of the behaviour (**vicarious reinforcement**).
3. Learning involves observation, extraction of information from those observations and making decisions about the performance of the behaviour (observational learning or **modeling**). Thus, learning can occur without an observable change in behaviour.
4. Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.
5. The learner is not a passive recipient of information. Cognition, environment and behaviour all mutually influence each other (**reciprocal determinism**).

Source: Wikipedia



Active learning



Active Learning is a model of instruction that focuses the responsibility of learning on learners. It was popularised in the 1990s by its appearance on the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) report (Bonwell & Eison 1991). In this report, they discuss a variety of methodologies for promoting “active learning”. They cite literature which indicates that to learn, students must do more than just listen: They must read, write, discuss or be engaged in solving problems. Active learning engages students in two aspects – doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991).

Source: Wikipedia

WHY ADOPTING SOCIAL LEARNING MAKES SENSE

Let's see why you should adopt Social Learning and how it will foster collaborative learning:

Select the arrows to navigate.

1. The Learner Perspective.

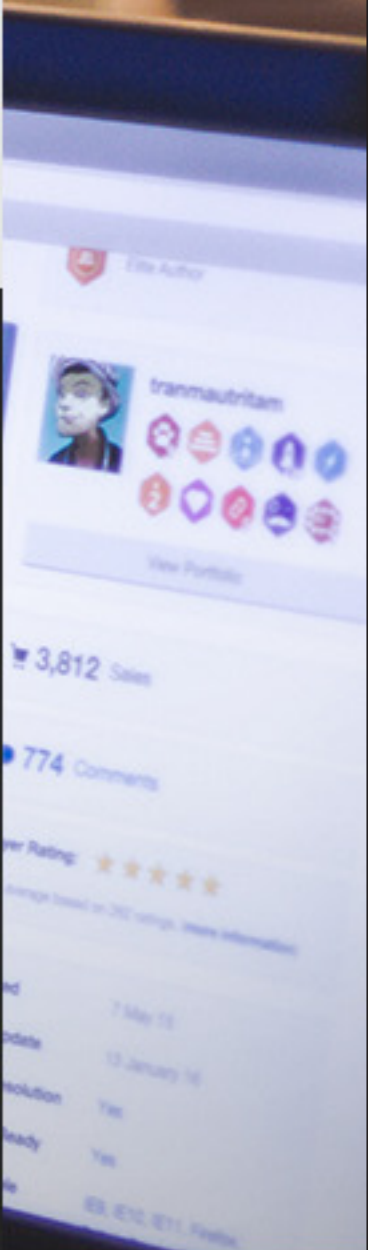
How learning happens: According to the 70/20/10 Model for Learning and Development, most of us pick:

1. 70 percent of our knowledge from our on-the job experiences.
2. 20 percent from interactions with others.
3. 10 percent from structured or formal training.

Using Social Learning clearly facilitates learning by interaction through others.

Appeals to Millennials: Millennials are increasingly becoming a notable part of the overall learner population. This profile is used to networking, leveraging on social media and adapts quickly to Social Learning.

Social Learning empowers learners: There is greater application of the learning on the job as learners have greater control over their learning.



WHY ADOPTING SOCIAL LEARNING MAKES SENSE

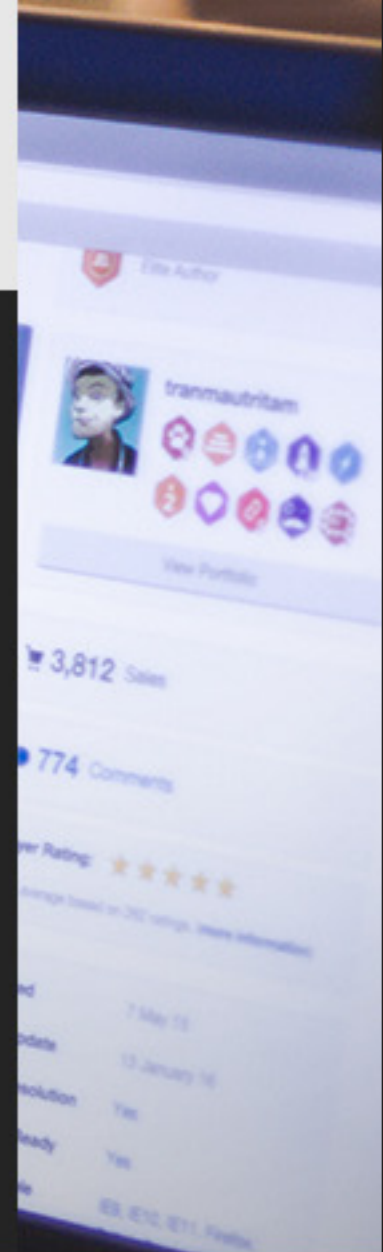
Let's see why you should adopt Social Learning and how it will foster collaborative learning:

Select the arrows to navigate.

2. The Business Perspective.

Organisations will see value in Social Learning as it:

- Connects disengaged learners.
- Helps learners self-organise.
- Facilitates collaboration.
- Can be applied across training needs: While Social Learning can be applied to supplement varied training needs, it is very effective for new initiatives including specific change management mandates.



IS SOCIAL LEARNING RELEVANT FOR ALL ORGANISATIONS (SMALL/MEDIUM OR LARGE)? WHAT KIND OF PROGRAMS WOULD WORK?

You may have noted more case studies in Social Learning featuring large organisations where the size and geographically spread out teams may not have ready access to other teams. However, Social Learning is equally relevant to small or medium organisations.

To realise the full potential of Social Learning,

Select initiatives that:

- Have a common goal.
- Facilitate participation.

Use them through techniques like:

- Discussions.
- Sharing.
- Curating.
- Communities of practice.
- Panels of experts.

Key Takeaways

Adopting Social Learning will lead to benefits for:

- Learners, as it:
 - Facilitates learning by interaction through others.
 - Appeals to millennials.
 - Gives them greater control over the learning and empowers them.
- Businesses, as it:
 - Connects disengaged learners.
 - Helps learners self-organise.
 - Facilitates collaboration.
 - Can be applied across training needs.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

Key Takeaways

Additionally, you can see value in Social Learning as:

- The Social Learning theory establishes that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and that Social Learning indeed works.
- The Active Learning theory establishes that to learn students must not just listen but read, write, discuss or be actively engaged in solving problems.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

HOW CAN SOCIAL LEARNING SPICE UP YOUR EXISTING LEARNING STRATEGY?

In this article, I will touch upon what Social Learning is and the reasons why you should adopt it. I will also outline how exactly you can use it to enhance your existing learning strategy and the business gains that will accrue as a result.

HOW TO USE SOCIAL LEARNING TO ENHANCE YOUR EXISTING LEARNING STRATEGY

Collaborative learning has always had a positive impact on learners. The advent of social media has provided experts in the Learning industry with more food for thought with regard to creating better and effective learning solutions that leverage on collaborative learning. Let us see how you can practically use [Social Learning](#) to spice up your existing learning strategy.

I begin with a definition of Social Learning and why adopting Social Learning makes sense, and how it will foster collaborative learning in your organisation. I will also walk you through both learner and business perspectives that clearly establish a business case why you should use it.

WHAT IS SOCIAL LEARNING?

Simply put, Social Learning is learning with and from others. Social Learning is not restricted to any one type of learning. If you're learning using online social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and so on or gaining knowledge during informal offline activities such as group discussions, conference interactions or even over a coffee conversation, it's Social Learning all the same.

WHY SHOULD YOU ADOPT SOCIAL LEARNING?

Social Learning not just benefits learners but your business as well. The kind of positive learning experience that Social Learning provides to learners has a direct impact on the effectiveness of your learning initiative, which in turn translates into significant business gains and a positive ROI.

Select each button to learn more.



The Learner Perspective



The Business Perspective



The Learner Perspective



How learning happens: According to the 70/20/10 model for Learning and Development, most of us pick:

- 70 percent of our knowledge from our on-the job experiences.
- 20 percent from interactions with others.
- 10 percent from structured or formal training.

Using Social Learning clearly facilitates learning by interaction through others.

Select the arrows to navigate.





The Learner Perspective



Appeals to millennials: With every passing year, millennials add up to the size of the world's total learning population. They form a notable chunk of the overall learner population already. The millennial generation thrives on going social – the percentage of millennials using social media to look for information (59%) is way higher than those in the older age group categories (29%). Millennials engage in social networking frequently, use social media for their various infotainment needs and can adapt quickly to Social Learning.

Select the arrows to navigate.





The Learner Perspective



Social Learning empowers learners: Have you observed your productivity go up and your tasks witnessing earlier completions when collaborating with your peers on the job? There might have been times when your mind just stopped working and you took to your Messenger to seek help from your colleague. A couple of minutes on the chat window and once you get the inputs or a little push that you needed, you're back on track again. That's the sort of impact Social Learning has on your learning and performance. Social Learning helps bring about greater application of the learning on the job besides giving learners greater control over their learning.

Select the arrows to navigate.





The Business Perspective



Organisations will see value in Social Learning as it:

- Connects disengaged learners.
- Helps learners self-organise.
- Facilitates collaboration.
- Can be applied across training needs: While [Social Learning](#) can be applied to supplement varied training needs, it is very effective for new initiatives including specific change management mandates.

HOW EXACTLY CAN YOU USE SOCIAL LEARNING TO ENHANCE YOUR EXISTING LEARNING STRATEGY?

One of the approaches is to work with a bigger picture of “[Learning and Performance Ecosystem](#)” and drive training through multiple channels (including formal and informal learning, Social Learning and performance support). This combination ensures that multiple learning avenues are available to learners and instead of one-off trainings, the focus shifts to “learning as a continuum”.

To illustrate how this can be designed, here is a quick glimpse of a typical “Learning and Performance Ecosystem” solution.



WHAT IS THE ADDITIONAL VALUE THIS APPROACH WILL BRING?

What we have done here is to retain the existing formal training piece and extend it to include aspects that facilitate individual and collaborative learning. As a result, the focus has shifted to Social Learning as well as informal learning as shown here:

Select each number to learn more.

1. Learn collaboratively (Social Learning).

This could include:

- Learning from peers.
- Communities of interest.
- Coaching and mentoring.

1

2

WHAT IS THE ADDITIONAL VALUE THIS APPROACH WILL BRING?

What we have done here is to retain the existing formal training piece and extend it to include aspects that facilitate individual and collaborative learning. As a result, the focus has shifted to Social Learning as well as informal learning as shown here:

Select each number to learn more.

2. Just-in-time learning aids.

[Performance Support Tools](#) (PSTs) that facilitate application of learning on the job.

Through this, we can provide a multi-channel learning platform to the learners. Given the different learning styles of different learners and the dynamics of increasing millennials in workforce, these measures will help you accomplish your goals of:

- Knowledge gain.
- Knowledge application on the job.
- Positive ROI on training.

1

2

HOW CAN YOU ESTABLISH QUANTIFIABLE GAINS FOR THE LEARNERS AND BUSINESS?

To maximise the impact, you need to relook at your existing learning strategy and adopt the following aspects:

1. Change from discrete formal training to a “learning journey” based approach.

Rather than having a finite number of formal training sessions that can happen for a finite number of days in a year, give the learners stackable bites of learning throughout the year.

2. Provide a clear learning path or journey for each learner.

3. Provide accesses to all formal and informal learning assets on the device of the learner’s choice.

You can extend your learning material from traditional eLearning to mLearning or mobile learning that is available on tablets and smartphones as well.

Select the arrows to navigate.



HOW CAN YOU ESTABLISH QUANTIFIABLE GAINS FOR THE LEARNERS AND BUSINESS?

To maximise the impact, you need to relook at your existing learning strategy and adopt the following aspects:

4. Use Microlearning assets extensively.

These small nuggets (running for a few minutes) can be used for both formal and informal learning. You can design a learning path that features multiple resources ([Microlearning](#) nuggets). These are available to the learners within their work-flow promoting their usage at the time of need.

5. Use innovative formats in learning delivery to increase retention (and completion rates).

You can use videos and other rich media formats extensively. You can also use mobile apps for both learning and for assessments.

Select the arrows to navigate.



HOW CAN YOU ESTABLISH QUANTIFIABLE GAINS FOR THE LEARNERS AND BUSINESS?

To maximise the impact, you need to relook at your existing learning strategy and adopt the following aspects:

6. . Use Gamification.

The [Gamification](#) solution gels well with the Social Learning concept as it induces the competitive spirit, makes learning fun and is aligned to a specific learning outcome.

Select the arrows to navigate.





Key Takeaways

To adopt Social Learning in your organisation:

- Establish a “[Learning and Performance Ecosystem](#)” for your learners in the workplace and drive training through multiple channels (including formal and informal learning, Social Learning and performance support).
- See value in shifting the focus to “learning as a continuum” by:
 - Facilitating collaborative learning.
 - Using just-in-time learning aids.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2



Key Takeaways

Additionally, you can use these insights to accrue quantifiable gains for your learners and organisation by:

- Changing from discrete formal training to a “learning journey” based approach.
- Providing a clear learning path or journey for each learner.
- Providing accesses to all formal and informal learning assets on the device of the learner’s choice.
- Using Microlearning assets extensively.
- Using innovative formats in learning delivery to increase retention (and completion rates).
- Using Gamification.

Select each number to learn more.

1

2

LOOKING TO ADOPT SOCIAL LEARNING? EI DESIGN CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT AND MORE!

Our innovative approaches and focus areas include:

- Gamification.
- Videos and interactive videos.
- Mobile Apps (for formal and informal learning + assessments).
- Decision making - complex branching simulations.
- Scenario based learning.
- Storytorials.
- Guided exploration.
- Microlearning and Social Learning.
- Designing for the millennial workforce.

We offer a comprehensive services portfolio that includes custom online (eLearning and mLearning) and blended solutions. With a focus on performance gain, we offer a wide range of Performance Support Tools (just-in-time learning/job-aids). We also have a large Localisation practice covering over 26 global languages.

CONTACT US

#160, Arun Arch, 9th Cross, Indiranagar 1st Stage,
Bangalore - 560 038, India.

email: info@eidesign.net

Tel(Direct): +91-80-25202680

www.eidesign.net

Stay Connected on EI Design Social Platforms for Regular Updates