

E-Learning: Could it be Wasting your Money?

Businesses and corporations large and small have invested billions of dollars in e-learning, yet according to a recent survey, only 30% of employees complete a given e-learning course. And in a separate survey, almost 90% of the respondents "rated work-based scenarios as their top choice as a tool for improving the effectiveness of e-learning."

Taken together, these points illustrate the major problems with current e-learning design: It's mind-numbingly dull and disconnected from real life. Often the module is a "death by slide" presentation, full of bullet after animated bullet. Participants don't get much from being pounded with facts. And watching the Product Manager's talking head can be a sure-fire snoozer. Participants desperately start clicking the fast-forward button so they can get back to the real work — *the very work the e-learning module was probably trying to improve*. Poof, just like that, the company's e-learning investment is wasted.

Most e-learning requires learners to read text or watch a video, then demonstrate 'mastery' via a multiple choice quiz. This design pattern is adapted from educational practices present in public education since the late 1800's. If you've ever helped your child with homework, you'll recognize the pattern: memorize times-tables, drill on twenty multiplication problems, take a final math test. But adults don't learn that way; we draw on previous learning to solve current problems.

Let's say you're about to make a sales call to a new customer. Your colleague called on them once. He suggests the customer enjoys tough negotiation. You'll recall previous times you've been involved in tough negotiations. You'll form your strategy from those experiences.

Our experience suggests that 'workplace reality' requires an employee to master two key skillsets. The first is human relations skills, such as listening, conversing, decision-making, managing, and teamwork. The second is job performance skills, such as following procedures and performing tasks. We believe both can be effectively improved through game-based simulation. In our simulations, you'll be presented with a typical problem, and you'll actually hold a conversation with computer-generated workmates, customers, and managers. You'll ask questions and they'll answer you realistically. You'll make choices *and those choices can impact the outcome of the scenario*. You might even have to perform tasks with virtual objects. That's more powerful than reading a case study and answering questions.

Cause and effect is a powerful learning tool. We humans build skills by 'trying out' various options to see what happens. If one option fails, we attempt a different approach until it works...but we remember the failures as well as the successes. We know "where not to go" *from context*. This learning can save time; we don't always need detailed reasons why we failed. Existing e-learning design is often built so that if you fail a test or miss a question, you'll be required to read or interact with an entire lesson again. Ugh.

Sightline Learning has deep experience in management and employee development and training simulations. We build simulations for businesses that produce high engagement and better performance. We use a unique technical platform that's structured perfectly to meet the challenges of providing powerful simulation-based learning inside companies. Now you can deliver incredibly powerful simulations to your employees quickly and effectively. You can even combine your existing e-learning content with our custom simulations to extend your investment and still dramatically improve learner engagement and skill transference.