Exploring How can Enterprise Holding Inc. in Alberta Benefit from the use of the online Training of Employees for Professional Development

By

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Disclaimer

The information, opinion and analysis contained in this report are those of the researcher and do not represent the official position of the institution or employees who responded to the inquiry during the time I was working on this project.

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Abstract

Many researchers have studied and documented the benefits and challenges of using online training of employees for professional development (PD). In recent years, many companies and organizations have started to invest in online training for professional development to complement the traditional face-to-face PD training or do away with the traditional and continue with the online training alone. Even though online training for PD has proven to be successful, Enterprise Holdings Inc. (Ehi) in Alberta continues to spend much money for transport, food, accommodation, and allowances to finance face-to-face training for professional development. In this paper, I have attempted to explore the following questions: 1. How can (Ehi) benefit from online training for professional development? 2. What are the most common models or strategies for delivering online training to employees? What are their various strengths and weaknesses? 3. What model of strategy or a combination of models might present the best fit for the needs of Enterprise Holdings Inc? 4. What steps does an organization like enterprise need to introduce an online training strategy, and what factors do they need to consider in evaluating its values to the organization? Findings suggest that Enterprise Holdings Inc. in Alberta can benefit from online training by switching their training from face-to-face to online or by using online training as a complement to the face-to-face training. Various modes of delivery methods include the hybrid or blended method, synchronous, asynchronous, and extended asynchronous, although each has its limitations. Ehi in Alberta can benefit by utilizing either online training only or the hybrid method. They can start investing in online training by commissioning a task force of experts which will bring recommendations with timeline and cost for implementations.

Keywords: Online training, employee, professional development, e-learning, education, community of practice, hybrid, blended.

1. Introduction

Enterprise Holdings, Inc. (Ehi) is a company that operates upon a philosophy: "Take care of your customers and employees, and profit will follow" (Kazanjian, 2013, p. 7). Organized in 1957 at its headquarters in Clayton, Missouri, in Greater St. Louis in the United States of America, it grew to become the largest car rental company in the world. In the province of Alberta in Canada, and from their headquarters in Calgary, they operate Enterprise Rent a Car, Alamo Rent a Car, and National Car Rentals, which provide service to Canadians and other travellers across the province. They have branches in every city and airport, and customers who need their services can access their products by walking into one of their branches, booking, or reserving for the services through phone or online.

1.1 Description of training needs and requirements for the organization

To successfully pursue their philosophy of taking care of their customers and employees and then profit would follow; they recruit, employ, and provide ongoing training to their employees. Enterprise Holdings Inc. believes in training and promoting its employees from entry-level management trainees to the highest rank in the organization. A career path begins as a management trainee, then assistant branch manager, to branch manager. Once one has attained the branch manager's position, based on the level of training and performance, a successful candidate can rise to the rank of zone manager up to the top position of the general manager for the entire province.

Although an education qualification for the entry-level to the company is any bachelor's degree plus a valid driver's license, the work of the management trainee requires skills such as customer service, marketing, fleet management, accounting, computer skills, managerial skills,

driving, and ability to lift lightweight boxes or merchandise. While it is true that all these skills are essential for the company's operation, they do not expect to have any job seeker to possess all these skills at the time of the interview. Instead, the company has established a system of training that will enable employees to learn before and after they have started working.

1.2 Description of the role and importance of training within the organization

The training of employees at Enterprise Holdings is one of the secrets of their success as a company. Once they have determined the persons they wish to hire, they would organize for a one-week training in the class for the management trainee position at any of their branches. All new employees will go to Red Deer, where their training center is. They would stay in the hotel at the cost of the company while attending an initial compressed training. The training introduces new hires to the company's history, their brands, how to reserve a vehicle for the customers through their computer system, how to deal with customers in the brunch. Other training includes inspecting a vehicle for damages, tire pressure, fuel level, and selling their insurances to the customers before leaving the vehicle facility. They also teach how to manage their fleet, dealing with insurance companies, body shops that repair vehicles. Also, they would train on how to do marketing, accounting, dealing with difficult people, and conducting personal surveys to the customers they serve daily. A good example would be before the customer leaves the branch; an employee who served that customer should ask them the following questions: How was our customer service? If a customer says anything, other than excellent, a follow-up question would be, what could we do better so that our services are excellent? Moreover, whatever the customer says, an employee is bound to do it plus one or do it beyond the request of the customer to maintain good relations and excellent customer service.

Without this kind of training, it would almost be impossible for anyone, regardless of education, to function and meet or exceed their requirement, which is to take care of their customers and employees, and then the profit will follow. The one-week training is not an end to itself; new employees will have to attend advanced training from time to time as they make their progress to the first significant milestone, which is to become an assistant branch manager. Once an employee has attended enough training and has proven himself or herself to be highly effective, they will be allowed to write a comprehensive examination to test their knowledge. If one passes this examination, then the next level is to attend a "Grill session" where you appear before a committee of selected high-ranking officers of the company who will also examine your understanding on a practical basis. Successfully candidates will be on the list to become brunch managers. Furthermore, once one is a branch manager, he or she will always attend another level of training to help advance to an area manager, zone manager, etcetera.

1.3 Current training programs: strengths and challenges

Currently, Enterprise Holdings, Inc. does have a training center in the Red Deer area where they bring all trainees from across the province from time to time. The strength of this program is that they have a training manager whose work is to coordinate the training and growth of all employees throughout the year. Also, when one is required to go to the training, the salary will not be affected; they would pay for a hotel, food, and transport so that an employee does not have to think about these things. Another strength is that bringing people together from their workplace provides a sense of relief from their daily routine and socializing with their colleagues from different branches, cities, and towns in Alberta. Every new employee is working through

the direct mentorship of his/her branch manager. The training will continue even at the workplace when and if an employee asks questions to the manager.

Furthermore, each employee is motivated to grow and therefore each one of them will dedicate some time each week to study or learn about things they wish to know better. Once a month, the area manager would take all management trainees for lunch where among other things, personal progress would be reviewed and sometimes role play will take place to demonstrate some experiences. The branch manager will also dedicate time monthly to have lunch with management trainees and everyone under his or her mentorship for the same purpose as the zone manager. Generally, employees feel happy to learn and grow and that's something that speaks volumes of the strength of this training at the workplace.

Weaknesses of this program are first, once one completes first or any training session, the company does not offer any online support for a new employee as they depend on the branch manager. The problem with this is that the branch manager can be busy with work and may not have enough time to provide that additional training. Another weakness is that they spend a lot of money on transport, food, and accommodation for the trainees from time to time. They do not provide books or references for their trainee to refer to during a time of need. Employees will have to rely on their notes or the branch manager for clarification. Also, another weakness is that the trainer is forced to compress a lot of information to a short period of training because the same trainees are being waited to go back to their branches and work. Sharing too much information within a short time causes fatigue and lack of enough concentration on the part of trainees especially. With lack of enough concentration, comes a problem of not comprehending or remembering everything or somethings that were taught and as the result of this we find it to be a weakness of the program.

1.4 Unique aspects/requirements of training needs

For Enterprise Holdings, Inc. to provide training to their employees, they require all employees to be off duty on days they are scheduled to attend training. As if this is not enough, they must pay for their transport, accommodation, and food to each one of their trainees. Other costs associated with the training include stationery and other allowances. At the end of the training, every employee is getting ready to return to their workplace on the next business day and practice every new skill acquired. Also due to the short time available per training session in comparison to the information to be shared you find that the trainer must compress a lot of information in a short time. So, the second and subsequent training will last any time from a day to three depending on availability of human resources at the workplace and money.

1.5   Testing and evaluation programs

In cooperation with the zone and brunch manager, the training manager will assess and evaluate the progress over time. For example, if they wish to know how someone does with customer service, they have hired a company that surveys a few customers that every employee has served to determine if they were delighted with customer service or not. If they find that 50% of the people surveyed were not completely satisfied in one month, they know that some skills need improvement. If they wish to know how good one might be at selling their insurance, they will see how many sales one has made. When it comes to managerial skills, they observe interaction with other employees, customers, and whether an employee is causing loss or profit to a company. Also, at the end of the first year, since the new hire started to work, the training manager would provide an examination which would gauge the level of understanding of an employee. This examination will test a level of your knowledge about the company, their

products and how they operate to care for their employees, customers so that lucrative profit would follow.

1.6 Curriculum, training materials, standards development

When it comes to curriculum, training materials, and standards development, they provide some stationeries, and an employee is supposed to write notes during the training for their future reference. The curriculum is available, but employees do not receive a copy of the curriculum, but at every stage, they will hear about what they are supposed to learn during that time, or during the course of the training. Enterprise has a group of training managers who are responsible to develop the curriculum that can be used across the continent with minor changes that reflect their territory and jurisdiction.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

Adopting social networks and online technology as a new learning system and promoting organizational communication, business and public relationship among government and non-government organizations is a subject of great interest. Even though social networks and online training can facilitate training and enhance professional developments, Enterprise Holdings, Inc. in Alberta continues to spend a lot of money and resources for transport, food, and accommodations to bring their employees together from across the province for short term training. Online training could provide a cost-effective strategy to improve learning outcomes and provide just-in-time training resources. If adopted for practice it can augment the current arrangement for training and professional development at Enterprise Holdings Inc.

1.8   Research Questions

1. How can Enterprise Holdings Inc. in Alberta benefit from online training for professional development? 2. What are the most common models or strategies for delivering online training to employees? What are their various strengths and weaknesses? 3. What model of strategy or a combination of models might present the best fit for the needs of Enterprise Holdings Inc? 4. What steps does an organization like enterprise need to introduce an online training strategy and what factors need to be considered in evaluating its values to the organization?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Online training for professional development within organizations, among employees and employers is a subject of great interest and discussions in the circles of many researchers in our society today. According to Michael (2021), we are currently living in society 5.0, which unlike society 4.0 and other societies before, is characterized by a high level of technological advancement, which is helpful to create an intelligent society in which online training plays a very vital role. Much discussion has taken place among scholars regarding the positive contribution of online training for professional development in the various organization (for example, Aryal et al., 2019; Kim & Gray, 2021; Rohlman et al.,2021; Nami, 2022; Pittman & Lawdis, 2017; Guilbaud et al. 2021; Sato & Haegele, 2017; Green & Huntington, 2017; Ahadi et al.,2021; Stark & Aiello, 2021).

Online training, also known as eLearning, is defined as utilizing electronic technologies to deliver skills or education online through the internet, different and unique from the classroom experience (Thalheimer, 2017). Professional Development (PD) is an ongoing learning or scholarly activity which is related to the profession that takes place after one has obtained an initial certification ((Elliott, 2017; Pamela Beach et al., 2021). Despite a sheer volume of literature about online training for professional development, Enterprise Holdings Inc in Alberta has continued to spend much money on food, transport, and accommodation to facilitate their employees' in-person or face-to-face training and professional development. I can hear a solid and passionate appeal for organizations to consider online training for professional development when the author of the online training: The application of the society 5.0 says, "Businesses that often provide training to their employees must adapt to how the training course is conducted. while most training courses are conducted face-to-face, online training courses with technology utilization must be considered" (Michael, 2021, p. 1). In the United States of America (USA), many organizations resorted to investing in online training of their employees to sharpen their knowledge, increase productivity, and retain employees for a long time (Wargo, 2017).

Moreover, due to the ongoing advancement of communication technology, e-learning or online training has become the most viable option for professional development, with about 80% of USA farms using it ("Enhancing Employee Development through Online Training," 2017). If utilized, online training for professional development can be very instrumental in increasing productivity, customer satisfaction, and revenue growth in many organizations. While researchers have said a lot about best practices for online or hybrid professional development, they have not mentioned how Enterprise Holdings can use online or blended training for the

professional development of their employees. This paper will provide a positive contribution to how Enterprise Holdings Inc can invest in hybrid or online training for the professional development of its employees.

2.2 Objective and Scope

This literature review aims to identify and compare different studies, methods, or online training models for professional development. To find the suitable studies to be included in this review, the search criteria included ("web-based" OR online) N2 (learning OR education OR teaching OR instruction)) AND (approaches OR strategies OR techniques OR methods) AND (employee* OR employer* OR workplace). I also searched by (("web-based" OR online) N2 (learning OR education OR teaching OR instruction)) AND (approaches OR strategies OR techniques OR methods) AND "professional development." Also, I used "online training OR online education AND employee OR worker* AND effective* OR success* OR advantage. Furthermore, I limited our search to academic journals published within the last five years to date but left it open for business reports and other studies in professional development so that we could get a plethora of knowledge on the subject. Afterwards, I did include dissertations during the process, and all searchers were limited to information written or published in the English language.

2.3 Thesis and Overview

According to (Amador et al., 2019; Stark et al., 2021; S. A. Wynants & Dennis, 2017), online training for professional development is very effective in sharpening employees' skills and knowledge while cutting down the cost of training. Moreover, employees can enjoy learning

together despite their geographical boundaries (Martins et al., 2019). The findings of this literature review suggest that organizations can employ face-to-face and online training for the optimum benefit (Dolowitz et al., 2021). Living, working, and doing business during the digital age has opened a wide door of opportunities to continue learning through online technology to keep up with the ever-changing technology and lifestyles (Bennett, 2019). However, to succeed with online training for professional development, companies and business organizations must embrace and apply best practices for success. Some of the best practice includes making sure that they adopt the curriculum which promotes and guarantee learning that focuses on content or syllabus, uses modes with good practice, can provide coaching and support from experts, can give feedback and reflection is offered on a sustained duration while offering active learning and supporting collaboration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Other best practices include mandatory annual training and employee policies that promote and reward growth (McKenna, 2020; Noonan, 2007), including collaboration and coaching based on syllabus content (Voogt & Knezek, 2018). Furthermore, professional development should be ongoing, interactive, interest-driven and differentiated, collaborative, provide resources, and implemented professionally to provide educational experience enriched with social, cognitive, and teaching presence (Elliott, 2017). Below, I will continue with my review by identifying and comparing different methods or approaches for online training of employees. In the end, I will shift the attention to the strength and weaknesses of various approaches that I will have discussed while giving more weight to the critical lessons and considerations from the literature review.

2.4   Different approaches/ methods of online training

A careful study of the literature review suggests several methods or modes of delivery for online training for professional development that different organizations have adopted. For example (Elliott, 2017) has categorized them into six modes of delivery, named:

1. Online training for professional development through websites and available resources online,

2. Asynchronous online training for professional development,

3. Synchronous professional development,

4. Online Professional Development, which works by video conferencing,

5. A combination of synchronous and asynchronous online training for professional development,

6. A blended approach for online and face-to-face training for professional development.

Other scholars have categorized them in terms of the kind of platform or medium of sharing the information and whether it is synchronous or asynchronous. For the sake of this review, unlike Elliott, drawing from information on the face-to-face method of professional development, I will discuss the online delivery method, which focuses on synchronous and asynchronous, and after that the hybrid method, which involves a combination of face to face and online delivery method.

According to (Brysch 2020), effective professional development is possible as employees access a learning experience that incorporates technology. In society 5.0, online training has received popularity due to the efficiency and scalability in distributing knowledge. Because of this, it is very critical for employers to provide their employees with an opportunity to grow their skills and knowledge as they continue to contribute positively to their organization (Barmada et al., 2018). This kind of extended or continued learning or training of employees online, without any geographical or technological limitation, is also called lifelong learning, the concept that professionals must continue to update their skills and knowledge in order to cope with the ever-changing technology (Ranieri, 2019). When it comes to the methods or modes of online training for professional development to the employees, there are two main models; hybrid or blended approach, which involves both online and face-to-face delivery, and online training without face-to-face delivery which means everything happens online. However, these two delivery methods come in many forms, as will be discussed in this review. Before discussing online and hybrid delivery methods, I will investigate a face-to-face delivery method. After that, building on this, I will now shift the discussion and investigate the current prevalent practise for professional development, which involves online training and hybrid method.

2.5   Face-to-face Delivery Method

Brysch (2020) and Talati et al., (2018), state that face-to-face or traditional methods or models for professional development have continued to be popular because of personal interactions that come as the results of students socializing and high motivation interaction with a trainer in real-time. In the academic journal (Webb et al., 2017) comment on the benefits of a face-to-face mode of delivery that "in particular, facial expressions and body language are more

visible, leading to richer communication (p. 612). However, because face-to-face requires people to be in one place for training, the teacher will also have to be at the exact location most of the time. Research suggests that sometimes with this method of delivery, they can incorporate technology to allow the teacher to present lessons even when he is far from the place, and this is what they refer to as technology-enriched face to face professional development, which must not be confused with online training of hybrid (Webb et al., 2017).

Therefore, for this mode of delivery, teachers will prepare handouts and PowerPoints and deliver the training intended to provide awareness and increase skill set or knowledge to a particular field of study. While it is true that many people may prefer face-to-face training due to the reason given, this mode of delivering knowledge has its limitations and challenges. Limitations, on the one hand, includes the cost associated with time spent travelling, food and accommodation for trainers and trainees and on the other hand trainers have limited time to cover much information something that causes trainees to be fatigued and fail to focus on the training (Michael, 2021; Talati et al., 2018).

2.6 Online Delivery Method

As humanity continue to live in a society that enjoys a high level of technological growth that promotes online training or online education for professional development (PD), I find that there is a great need to explore and utilize online training for PD. Online training that uses modern technology has proven very practical and valuable in promoting professional development (Barmada et al., 2018; Lee & Huh, 2018; Muhammad Ashar et al., 2021; S. A. Wynants & Dennis, 2017). Before Covid19, some organizations were already using online training for professional development. However, the prevalence of the Covid19 pandemic made

it even more necessary for organizations to consider utilizing the online platform for seminars and professional development due to travel and capacity restrictions that were in place as part of the measure to contain the pandemic (Gottlieb et al., 2020; Voogt & Knezek, 2018). Howbeit, the nature of delivery through online technology is not the same as in a traditional class teaching method. Two types of learning for the online model exist synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous learning (Goode et al., 2019). Real-time learning or synchronous learning happens when a teacher and students interact simultaneously but in different geographical locations, while asynchronous learning occurs when students interact with the instructor at different times and locations (Amin Marei et al., 2021; Naresh & Rajalakshmi, 2020). Synchronous learning occurs primarily by using charts, messages, webcams, and zoom platforms, while asynchronous training takes place through online assignments and postings of course work (Elliott, 2017; Parsons et al., 2019).

According to (Elliott 2017), there must be a social, cognitive, and teaching presence for online training for professional development to be effective. He suggests that while cognitive presence refers to the online environment a student interacts with, social presence refers to other people who go through the same training. Furthermore, a robust teaching presence will require that a teacher or instructor be well equipped to teach and design the course or lessons to make it easier for students to follow through. This kind of practice is in harmony with the community of practice theory which requires the domain, community, and practice. While domain represents the place of knowledge that would make it possible for people or students to come together, the community refers to the people who interact for professional development and speak to the source of information or knowledge (Smith et al., 2017). Another component that will guarantee that online training delivers on its promise is to ensure that instructors or teachers responsible for

training others online have gone through thorough training on how to use technology to teach.

Studies have shown that some instructors responsible for training others online were not

adequately equipped with skills and knowledge to use technology to teach but knew how the

technology works (Motte, 2020; Rhode et al., 2017; Upitis & Brook, 2017). In addition to

learning about how technology works, online instructors need to learn the best ways to facilitate

online teaching. According to (Amin Marei et al., 2021; Farhad Seraji & Sara Khodaveisi, 2019;

Mohr & Shelton, 2017), online instructors need six proven teaching and coaching models to go

through and be comfortable with their implementations. These include setting goals,

conversations about teaching strategies on online platforms, sharing feedback, implementing

strategies, and reflections.

2.7 Hybrid or Blended Professional Development

Hybrid or blended professional development training incorporates face-to-face and online

training sessions. While face-to-face training is considered the initial learning opportunity that

involves interaction between the students or colleagues with the facilitator, the online portion of

this training complements face-to-face training (Brysch, 2020; Webb et al., 2017). Because

professional development functions as lifelong learning, face-to-face training cannot satisfy the

training needs of busy employees and companies who can only afford a few days of the week

occasionally. Michael (Michael, 2021) explains that face to face training alone cost companies

much money and yet do not satisfy the need for professional development because trainers are

often doing their best to compress much information within a short time, something that leaves

the trainees tired and at times without a complete comprehension the lessons. Companies may

adopt different structures to provide practical blended training that suits the organization's needs.

For example, (Katz et al., 2019) suggest that "Whereas much of the research on blended learning has focused on combinations of in-person and asynchronous online meetings, the online portion of our blended model differs by including extended synchronous discussion and interaction, embodying our commitment to supporting teachers socially and personally" (p. 219).

Due to the nature of online learning, I have learned that the human touch and social aspect of face-to-face are often missing, although very important. The remedy to this situation will be a strategy that provides solutions to these challenges and beyond. To enjoy the best worlds of face to face and online training, there is a need to make sure that the training incorporates active learning, is content-focused, provides expert support and coaching, supports mutual collaboration, provides feedback and reflection for the students and that the lessons are to be delivered in a sustained duration to motivate success. Research suggests that the hybrid model successfully builds professional development (Ranieri, 2019). The hybrid method incorporates face-to-face training, which brings people together, provides social interactions and emotional support, and extends the opportunity to learn through an online platform regardless of geographical boundaries.

Furthermore, there is a deeper connectedness and engagement with course material, which positively contributes to the trainees or students (Akoglu et al., 2019; Philipsen, 2019). Researchers state that although people doubted if the blended or online professional development model would be able to replace face-to-face completely, time and again, research has proven beyond doubt that the hybrid method if planned and organized professionally, can exceed the expectation of the outcome. With this in mind, they propose that companies enjoy the optimum benefit while implementing the hybrid method, or online, by including both extended synchronous and asynchronous options. It will be easier to cater to diverse employees when this

happens regardless of their schedule and geographical limitations (Katz et al., 2019). Challenges

of this method include costs associated with the delivery of face to face and online platforms,

development of instructors who can manage technology for teaching and management.

2.8   Strength and Weaknesses

According to (Lee & Huh, 2018), although there are many advantages for utilizing online

platforms for training and professional development, designing, and implementing online or

blended training is complex and time-consuming. While it is possible to establish a design that

will make it possible to achieve learning results that are equal or better than face to face, I have

known that online learning and teaching happen in a very different interface and students or

trainee's interactions happen significantly different from face to face (Martin et al., 2019). These

differences cause challenges that make it difficult for both trainees and trainers to adapt to the

new learning environments. Some of the common problems that trainers and trainees

continuously face include adapting to the digital environment, computer knowledge, and self-

motivation. In addition to the list, there is time management and technical problems (Amin Marei

et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2020).

A literature review has shown that interactions mediated by technology, individual

differences and self-motivation and autonomy for trainees are some of the significant issues in

the research. Trainers have often complained about the management of the trainees, teaching

platform and technical glitches while teaching or preparing to teach. Another challenge that

trainers face constantly is the absence of constant open communication with trainees, which

impacts how to examine a level of participation, responses, and comments from students (Martin

et al., 2018). In comparison to face-to-face, online training administration often takes more time

to deliver, especially during the early stages because all settings must be ready for a smooth operation of the class.   Also, change in learning and teaching modes come with unique challenges mainly because what is required is to have both a trainer and trainee's competencies elevated and yet the trainer's role in an online and blended platform is quintessential for encouraging trainees to participate and collaborate with their peers. Henceforth, trainers need training in technology and pedagogy to structure lessons online while addressing additional communication requirements (Martin et al., 2019). Another obstacle or weakness is that a lack of policies relating to professional development in some organizations contributes to the problem where some trainees do not have the motivation to complete the training they are supposed to do. For example, the availability of a clear policy that rewards accomplishment and dedication of some portion of time from employment for professional development will go a long way (McKenna, 2020; Noonan, 2007). Some trainees have been found not to finish the online training due to family obligations when they get home, and long working hours do not allow them to learn online because of being tired (Barmada et al., 2018).

Despite the challenges, Online and hybrid training are still the most viable and best options for professional development (Elliott, 2017). A literature review has indicated many reasons for its viability, strength, and benefits. Some of the benefits include trainees having the ability to oversee pace, flexibility, and ongoing access to resources (Wynants & Dennis, 2018). The ability to control pace comes with much relaxation because trainees control the time, and one can study at the comfort of their living room and yes, even while wearing pyjamas. One can enjoy learning regardless of the geographical boundaries provided there is internet and computer. Flexibility and ongoing access give people access to the information 24hour and seven days a week. Trainees can collaborate online and communicate in real-time while sharing feedback as

they advance their knowledge and skills for their companies' professional growth and development (Howard, 2010). Another strength that I see is that because resources are available online and trainees can access the training anytime during the course; the trainer does not have to compress all the training quickly, leaving trainees tired due to too much information (Michael, 2021). Also, online training and or blended for professional development, among other things, reduce the cost for travelling food, accommodation and other allowances that could be given or used if they only had face-to-face training. Attendees of face-to-face professional development cannot be at work on the day they have to attend the training. When this happens, fewer people or workforce remain at the workplace because some would-be away to attend the training.

2.9 Lessons and considerations

From many literature reviews, I have understood and established that we live in a society 5.0 characterized by ever-changing technology. We live in such a society that requires businesses and organizations to invest in online training for the professional development of their

employees (Ahadi et al., 2021; Gottlieb et al., 2020; Michael, 2021). Investing in online training will contribute positively to the growth of professionalism in various industries due to the new knowledge that will help employees perform their work excellently and professionally. At the same time, it will help reduce the cost associated with travelling, food, and accommodation while preserving the institution's knowledge, increasing employee retention and loyalty, and facilitating the best quality interaction among employees and employers (Howard, 2010; Ranieri, 2019). Before using an online platform for employees' professional development, companies relied on face-to-face training, which was still valuable. However, it involved much travel, food, accommodation, and other allowances to bring people to one place for the training to continue.

Due to the high cost of facilitating this training, the training would often take just a day or a few days to curb the cost. Also, it meant that trainers were forced to compress much information quickly, which would cause trainees to be so fatigued and, therefore, fail to entirely focus on training (Brysch, 2020; Michael, 2021; Webb et al., 2017). When many companies adopted online professional development training, it proved to be effective and a blessing to these organizations (Bedford et al., 2021; Jiménez et al., 2021; Walsh, 2019), however not without challenges.

From the literature, I have learned that professional development occurs in three ways: face-to-face, online and hybrid or blended (Brysch, 2020; Thalheimer, 2017). Some organizations adopted face-to-face training, while others have chosen hybrid or blended. Still, others decided to use online training only for professional development. Organizations that started using the online platform for professional development in their early stages have used simple technology like zoom, videos, power points presentations occurred online, chat messages, etcetera. For example (Gottlieb et al., 2020) say, "We have presented several strategies for designing and implementing large online PD conferences in the era of social distancing. Strategies have included the utilization of multiple platforms, transformation of large and small group sessions using digital technology, reapproaching the abstract sessions, and creating virtual networking opportunities" (p. 191). For the online training to be successful, the author argues that trainers and everyone involved in the planning should make sure that they familiarize themselves and perform testing before the launching of the training. I have also learned that trainers need to ensure that the topic needs to be in the format and degree of interactions. For example, smaller groups may work best in breakout rooms to ensure that trainees can easily interact while large groups can enjoy the benefits of using webinars. Abstract lectures can occur

using the synchronous method, which involves video-mediated discussions, and asynchronous

posters with comment forums. During preparation, trainers can create a table with a checklist of

components, strategies that they would use to accomplish their mission and example of

technologies that best suit the need for the training. Others have adopted websites that offer a

wide range of topics to be covered so various courses can be available on the platform and

individual students can learn at their own convenient time with a deadline set for the completion

of the course. This type of arrangement is also known as asynchronous online learning because

the training involves pre-recorded videos, presentations and assignments, which may include

discussion threads for feedback and interaction of trainees whenever each one of them can do so

(Naresh & Rajalakshmi, 2020; Philipsen, 2019; Stark et al., 2021; S. Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

The use of a similar planform can also happen for real-time online training or, in other words,

synchronous.

Studies have shown that there was significant success in accomplishing the online

training, although the level of activities for some students was affected by factors such as

feelings of working alone when it comes to asynchronous training (Lawdis et al., 2017; Motte,

2020; Philipsen et al., 2019). Finding suggests that regular communication by trainers was

essential to establish and maintain students in the professional development. To accomplish this,

trainers need to master facilitation, managerial and technical strategies (Martin et al., 2018;

Walsh, 2019). The facilitation strategy will involve a social presence through participation in the

discussion forum, providing trainees with ways to reach the trainer, among other things (Martin,

& Bolliger, 2018). Managerial strategies can succeed well when an instructor provides trainees

with timely responses to questions and concerns, highlighting regular announcements and

activities that must take place within a specific time frame. The technological strategy will

involve a trainer's ability to provide content-rich in utilizing technology. All these things call for much creativity on the part of a teacher. Another lesson from the study is that some organizations prefer a hybrid method. The reason for that choice is, from time to time, they would provide for a time to meet in person or face to face while most of the work is continues online. With the initial training happening in person, online training compliment the first one (Brysch, 2020; Webb et al., 2017). Other Lessons for consideration include organizations' need to study and understand the best way to design online training or hybrid training, its delivery, and evaluation without forgetting the best ways to help and support instructors (Leary et al., 2020). Supporting instructors to perform well in providing online training involves coaching using evidence-based methods (Bedford et al., 2021; Mohr & Shelton, 2017). Therefore, institutions that wish to invest in hybrid or online training will have to come up with the kind of professional development programs which will support a smooth transition for trainers to hybrid and or online teaching where trainers develop their role online, which include but not limited to active engagement, visible online presence, and intentionality (Mohr & Shelton, 2017).

A final discussion on lesson for consideration is organizations' emphasis on providing professional development programs for the trainers who train employees online or via the hybrid method. I have learnt that "Several professional organizations such as the Online Learning Consortium and Quality Matters offer webinars, workshops, certificates, and other forms of professional development in online teaching the instructional design process, the affordances of learning technologies, and establishing a presence in an online course." (Martin et al., 2019, p. 199). Such training will enable participants to develop theories and practices essential for online training. Even more important, this kind of arrangement will expose instructors to cutting-edge information and share experience with other instructors in the field of a particular study. For

organizations that may not have much money to invest in the professional development of their instructors, their instructors can sign up for free webinars. While learning through webinars and various websites that might have information for professional development, it is crucial to remember critical areas of the study. These will include knowing about the management of the systems of learning, resources that can help become a better instructor, revision, of course, determining what is working, and reviewing a teaching plan by another colleague, which involves giving feedback. Also, I learnt that in the process of learning, the instructor needs to be very proactive to search for materials and become a good expert with information or data that can be helpful to shed some light on how best students and, in this case, employees would learn.

3. Recommendations for Enterprise Holdings

Online training, also known as eLearning, is defined as a process of utilizing electronic technologies to deliver skills or education online through the internet, different and unique from the classroom experience (Thalheimer, 2017). Professional Development (PD) is an ongoing learning or scholarly activity related to the profession after one has obtained an initial certification (Elliott, 2017; Pamela Beach et al., 2021). Therefore, *online training* for professional development involves using electronic technology through the internet to deliver skills and knowledge necessary to perform their work with excellence and professionalism. Researchers have proven that there is an increase of evidence that online training for professional development can produce similar and better results than face-to-face training (Walsh, 2019; Webb et al., 2017). However, the success of online training depends on the application of best practices that have been tested and found to be effective in imparting skills and needed knowledge for professional development. Below, I will recommend some of the best practices

for online training of employees, strategies for implementing online training programs,

evaluating online training programs, and steps towards introducing online training.

3.1 Best practices for online training of employees

While many organizations have utilized online training of employees for professional

development because of its effectiveness and applicability, other organizations have strongly

recommended a hybrid or blended method of employee training (Akoglu et al., 2019; Philipsen,

2019). Consequently, companies and businesses can enjoy the tremendous benefit from utilizing

a blended approach for the training of their employees. Moreover, because much research for

blended training focuses on face to face for initial training and then ongoing asynchronous

meetings online, I recommend that for the best practice, the online training will include extended

synchronous conversations, discussions, and interactions (Katz et al., 2019). For a successful

hybrid or blended training to occur, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) say that the following best

practices must be in place:

A. Online training must focus on content

B. Online training must incorporate active learning and collaboration

C. Online training must use varieties methods of effective practice

D. Online training must provide coaching and feedback from experts and trainees

E. Online training needs to be within a time frame that is sustainable

A. Online training must focus on content

I have learned that companies and various organizations get involved in online training of employees to achieve competency in a specific area of study, and because of this; an organization needs to create a syllabus or design a course with contents that will be the focus of training (Qian et al., 2018). Establishing an attractive course design with learning objectives that include an active learning mechanism is imperative. Students learn better when the course design appeals to their intelligence, and they can see that the course design is compatible with the content and the delivery approach. For a well-balanced syllabus to be fully developed, a company may consider hiring a diverse team of experts in instructional design, subject, multimedia specialists, people who have expertise in instructional technology, learning centre representatives, etcetera (Martin et al., 2019).

A team of experts can collaborate to structure and organize a course; in doing so, they would find and select and determine what would be included or excluded in the content and create the specific course activities. They would also work together to develop materials, design the assessment, and create the course timeline. Another critical piece is that a learning management system needs to be in place to assist trainees in uploading files, submitting assignments, and collaborating online in real-time or asynchronous (Mohr & Shelton, 2017). If a company or an organization cannot afford the money that may be needed to hire a team of experts, they may consider working with an instructor who has experience in online course design and work with the resources that are available at their disposal.

B. Online training must incorporate active learning and collaboration

Active learning involves interactive online learning, which connects instructors and students to the content of the course. This process can help eliminate the feelings of loneliness

and isolation and reduce the number of students who drop out of the course. Active learning will engage the students to invest their emotion and efforts towards understanding the skills, knowledge and mastering the skill set as part of the online training goals. Unlike traditional classes, online classes require an intentional effort to make up for a robust social presence between teacher and student and between students. According to Bolliger and Martine (2018), instructors can use virtual rooms, collaborative activities, peer interactions, reflections, moderation of discussions by students, icebreaker conversations, peer reviews, and projects and activities. Instructors will use questions in combinations with probes to keep discussions going while answering the questions and responding to emails and comments on time (Noonan, 2007). Instructors can make the course relevant and exciting by facilitating and encouraging the participation of every student (Barmada et al., 2018).

When every student feels that they have the help they need and can engage in discussions with classmates and have their questions answered, they do not feel alone and will engage fellow students and remain active during the course duration (Martin et al., 2020). Other instructors used "weekly videos, discussion boards, instructor-created content, and interactive webinars to enhance the engagement of students studying the unit in an online mode" (Motte, 2020, pp. 15–16). Furthermore, research has proven that when an instructor ends a discussion with a question while maintaining a discussion thread and providing a personalized response to students, it will promote active learning and collaboration (Motte, 2020).

C. Online training must use varieties methods of effective practice

Studies have shown that effective practice for online instructors involves instructor as an "as a course designer, teacher, mentor, facilitator, "cheerleader," and even a "rule-setter." They viewed an important component of online pedagogy as "the engagement, the support, the

mentoring of the students as they move through courses" (Martin et al., 2019, p. 190). While there is an expectation this much of the instructor, it cannot happen without professional development training for instructors. Martin et al. (2019) assert that several organizations offer workshops, certificates, webinars, and other forms of professional development for online teaching. Such organizations include but are not limited to Quality matters and Online Learning Consortium. This kind of professional development training will guarantee that the instructor will prepare and deliver the course for the best results effectively.

Enterprise Holding Inc can look into investing in the professional development of its instructors because when instructors can master their work to reflect the qualities of a great course designer, teacher, mentor, facilitator, and cheerleader, the results will always be a success. Until such a time when Enterprise will invest in the professional development of their instructors, they can have access to free webinars and other workshops that are available from time to time. For personal and accessible learning, the instructors will learn how learning management systems work. They can get resources that can help them become competent instructors online. Also, they are advised to be reflective and become experts on how students or trainees learn online. Furthermore, they are encouraged to partner with other institutions that provide online training of employees and stick to what works effectively.

D. Online training must provide coaching and feedback from experts and trainees

Research has shown that professional development should draw from at least three parts of literature named community of practice (CoP), instruct trainees online, and the coaching program. Moreover, coaching "is an approach that uses active listening and inquiry to support and challenge a person in achieving personal or professional outcomes" (Gilmore, 2021). The literature review asserts that coaching helps process and facilitate change or professional

development in others. Gilmore (2021) states that while others use approaches such as GROW as in "goal, reality options, will" (p. 123), a recommendation is to use a coaching model which involves the setting of goals, conversations regarding online teaching strategies, implementation of the strategies in an online class or training, collection, and triangulation of data about implementation, feedback sharing and reflection. During the setting goal stage of coaching, trainers will learn how evaluation occurs.

They learn how to develop personal goals and work hard to accomplish them through this process. Furthermore, when they teach, if they follow through with the plan, they will have accomplished their task when the time comes for evaluation. When coaching through conversation, the coach will have a role of exciting and directing trainers to support the trainee activities to reach their goals. Moreover, this is what they refer to as constructive conversations. Trainees need to hear words of commendations, affirmation, and recommendations. People feel good when they know that someone appreciates what they are doing and provide them with constructive recommendations. While coaching is necessary for online teachers, it is equally important to employees who enjoy online professional development. The collection of data to track progress is also very paramount to coaching. The best way to do this is by using a dashboard, and with it, employees can identify areas that need improvement, areas in which they performed well, and if there was anything that they did not do, this could also be clear. While experts can provide coaching to the trainers, the trainees can utilize a feedback loop to share their experiences with the online instructor, the content of the course and the way it was delivered, and lessons learned. When organizations and trainers follow all these steps very closely, it will result in excellent performance (Amin Marei et al., 2021).

E. Online training needs to be within a time frame that is sustainable

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) state that professional development that guarantees a positive change in workplace practice cannot occur in one session or day of training. They continue to say that effective professional development will provide employees with enough time to learn, reflect on new strategies, and practice and put the knowledge in practice to implement the strategies. Researchers suggest that "the programs instead typically spanned weeks, months, or even academic years, with ongoing engagement in learning..." (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 15). While this is true that professional development requires an ongoing effort to learn and grow, it is equally valid that drop out of these courses are sometimes high because some courses are typically long and even tedious (Barmada et al., 2018) in addition to a busy schedule at work and family responsibilities at home. Therefore, I highly recommend that professional development training take an average of 49hrs per year to give enough room for employees to work while growing professionally through online training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). At the same time, the recommendation is to keep the course long enough to cover the subject but short enough to be interesting interactive to capture trainees' attention and engage with the content (Barmada et al., 2018).

3.2 Strategies for implementing online training programs

The ambition and the end goal of companies and different profit-making organizations are to make a profit while making a difference in their society through their products or services. Investing in online or hybrid professional development is inevitable to achieve this goal. Some of them have resorted to utilizing "collaboration tools including audio, video or web conferencing...

exclusively on the economic benefits they bring, by replacing much of the travel required by staff to meet with colleagues, clients, or partners" (Noonan, 2007, p. 10). Given that some of the working force in the digital age are millennials, more attention to the preparedness of online training of employees and its implementation needs some priority (Amador et al., 2019). Because I have already recommended how the online training design should look, at this time I will recommend strategies for implementing online training. Mckenna (2020) recommends the following:

A. Employees Training Assessment

B. Employees Policy

C. Annual Mandatory Training

D. Investing in Online Training Platform

E. Employees Retention

F. Unique Roles of Employees

A. Employees Training Assessment

Conducting an assessment to determine an employee's knowledge and performance is one of the best strategies to implement online training. I highly recommend a customer service survey on how a particular employee performed along with the knowledge test, which the training manager can offer in terms of a test or survey to the employee. When we have responses from

customers and the result from the knowledge test, this will help instructors or training managers facilitate a specific training apart from the general training to improve the skills and knowledge of employees. The assessment results will be kept in a digital dashboard for reference and growth tracking as training and work continues.

B. Employees Policy on Training and Professional Development

Developing a policy that addresses professional development in general and specifically online training for professional development is very important. This policy can address questions such as why we need professional development, online training, expected hours and days of training, topics to be covered, how to implement the training at the workplace, role plays and rewards to those who usefully pass the training. This policy can set the expectation for employees, for example: At the end of the training, every employee who attended the training must pass with a score of 85% to 100%, and if not, he or she can repeat the course for two more times and if it does not work then employment may be terminated. Those who pass the training will receive gifts with a raise in their income and other benefits. When a clear printed or soft copy of the policy is readily available to every employee, it creates awareness and expectation on the employee and employer.

C. Annual Mandatory Training

Another way to implement online training is by having an annual mandatory training session on the calendar. During this training, employees can learn many things, including co history, values, philosophy, and mission. They will also learn about best practices for customer services and other necessary skill sets to keep them refreshed and empowered to deliver an

excellent service. At the training, employees can listen to lectures, role play and enjoy snacks to capture their attention. Employers can also use this time to review the organization's general policy, clarify a few things, and explain any new policies that may have emerged. During this training, an employer can make it a time for reflecting on employee's performance in general and where the company has succeeded or failed.

D. Investing in the online training platform

According to Mckenna (2020), "the biggest challenge to implementing online training is undoubtedly developing and compiling the content" (p.79). While some companies or organizations have technicians and the necessary workforce who can work together to develop the course, others do not have enough resources and time to develop an online platform for training. Nevertheless, the benefits of an online platform for training outweigh the challenges associated with the money and time to establish one. Organizations or companies can consult with specialists in online learning and even hire them to develop a social and interactive system that will be useful as a training vehicle for many years to come. The good thing is that after the platform is up and running, it will require minimum management to keep it working and therefore, the cost and time of managing will decrease. I recommend consulting with organizations like a consortium, Tyton Partners, digital learning e-compass, WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies), Pearson, and others for their reach experience with the online learning platform (Allen & seaman, 2017).

E. Employees retention

Employees who feel that their employer is vested in their professional development and well-being tend to be loyal to their employers. One of the ways to improve retention is by establishing mentorship programs. With this relationship, supervisors or managers could spend time with employees during lunch or dinner or at any other time appropriate to review their performances, empathize with their challenges and help provide solutions. When mentoring, Mackenna (2020) says that supervisors should allow trainees or employees "to develop their unique ways of doing things; holding contests like pumpkin decorating or finding the most missing items; offering food, whether that takes the form of pizza at a training or a centrally located candy dish; and providing a suggestion box" (p. 79). Furthermore, the employees who are more knowledgeable and experienced than others can be assigned a role of mentorship while giving incentives for extra work that goes in as a reward and appreciation to employees. An Anonymous survey or suggestion box will provide an opportunity for employees to give feedback as to what they think can be improved on when it comes to mentorship at the brunch level. When those suggestions are collected, clear communication needs to go out to employees to let them know that their suggestions matter and that the company has provided a specific solution.

F. Unique Roles of Employees

The last recommendation is to assign every employee a specific role during online training and at work. For example, the first trainee may be assigned a moderate role during the online discussion while the other trainee is assigned the role of timekeeper. One trainee will be responsible for reading a paragraph loudly while another does play the role of a teacher. The

trainer needs to be super creative to ensure that synchronous or asynchronous learning is interactive, and trainees can collaborate to succeed as a team. When at work, the manager can divide duties to each employee during a role-play and work to reinforce the knowledge. Employees who are more skilled and experienced than others can serve as tutors to beginners and those who may not be comfortable enough with other skills.

3.3 Evaluating online training programs

The final strategy for the implementation of online training is evaluation. Usually, an evaluation will occur to understand and improve the content of the course, the delivery method, and the role of the instructor. The basis of the evaluation is on key performance indicators (KPIs), which will have the details of the expectation about the role of the instructor, content of the course and the delivery method (Gilmore, 2021). For example, it is very clear that instructors must play their roles accordingly for online training to be successful. As discussed before, their roles include working as a facilitator, course designer, course manager, subject expert, and mentor (Martin et al., 2019). Therefore, a survey will be ready with questions that will assess every role of a trainer. I recommend that the trainee evaluate the trainers, and the training manager will review the responses with the trainer for their improvement. (Becker-Redd et al., 2018) reported that in a post-training survey, trainees responded very well, with trainees reporting that they had retained much of the lessons they had learnt during the course.

3.4 Steps toward introducing online training

Enterprise Holdings Inc may need to take several steps towards introducing online training of employees for professional development. The first step is to take action at the board of directors' meeting to establish a policy that addresses the need to implement online training in compliment to the face-to-face training they currently have. They can also choose to forgo the face-to-face and focus on online training alone. The second step is to create a task force that may include training managers and other experts in subjects, technology, library, etcetera to investigate how to establish an online platform and keep it running for training throughout the years. When the task force brings recommendations with timeline and costs to the board of directors for approval, they can set aside a budget and resources ready for implementation.

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