



Learning Campaigns vs. Traditional Courses: Improve Engagement, Collaboration and Performance

Learning campaigns represent a significant step forward in how L&D leaders design solutions to meet dynamic business and performance needs in their organizations. Let's explore the impact of delivering learning in an extended campaign format, rather than as a single event.

Learning Campaigns vs. Traditional Courses

Embracing and implementing the 70:20:10 learning framework brings many changes to how learning is designed and delivered. 70:20:10 fundamentally shifts the focus from course delivery to performance improvement. One strategy supporting this shift is to transform courses into learning campaigns.

Unlike a typical program, learning campaigns occur over an extended timeframe and include a variety of activities and resources, many of which are embedded in an employee's daily experience. A campaign may involve formal educational components delivered in person or online; social exposure to ideas, coaching and collaboration with others; and on-the-job self-directed learning on specific challenges paired with performance support tools.

Two key learning campaign elements include spaced opportunities for practice over time (organized into challenges) and guided reflection about progress and outcomes. Depending on the performance objectives, there can also be social interactions among a cohort working on common challenges as well as individual or team development activities.

Measuring Impact of Campaigns

So how do you evaluate the results of a learning campaign? Traditional strategies won't work effectively when there's a variety of activities and steps being performed over an extended timeframe. We recommend a new approach that assesses the impact of a learning campaign on several dimensions including:

- participant engagement
- social interactions and collaboration
- verifiable performance outcomes.

Gathering Campaign Data

Campaigns can be supported using emails and virtual meetings to introduce each new challenge, and a virtual collaboration space to post content, and collect progress and outcomes on challenges. Surveys and de-brief meetings can be used to collect data on impact and impressions of social collaboration.

Using a learning activation platform can provide a uniquely engaging experience because participants work on a series of challenges online, sequenced over time, documenting their progress with photos, videos, documents, and links. Progress can be shared in a social feed that encourages comments and peer support. Participants can receive coaching from colleagues, managers, or mentors. L&D leaders decide if the completed challenges need

We recommend L&D leaders create a dashboard for each challenge in their campaign that provides real-time metrics on:

- Engagement: are participants actively posting progress on their challenges?
- Social learning and collaboration: are participants supporting each other's progress?
- Results: are challenges being completed? (reaching 100 points on a Learning Outcomes Index - LOI)
- Manager validation of performance improvement: are results being verified on completed challenges?

The Learning Outcomes Index™ (LOI)

is a self-evaluation for participants to track their progress on challenges. We recommend a 100-point scale, with at least 4-5 progress markers, that begins with planning and ends with performance improvement at 100 points.

Fort Hill Research Findings

1. Campaigns Increase Participant Engagement and Results

Our research into the outcomes of a variety of client campaigns yields many promising insights that could dramatically improve your programs. Here are five examples of learning campaigns in which we collected data. (Note: the first three campaigns ***required manager validation*** of results on completed challenges):

Type of Development Initiative and Level of Accountability	Number of Group Challenges in Campaign	Length of Learning Campaign	% Participants Active with % Completing Challenges (100 points on LOI)
Mid-Career Leadership Academy - results validated by participants' managers and reported to company executives	4 challenges	5 months	72% active with 50% at 100 LOI
Early Career Entrepreneurship - results reported to executive sponsors of initiative	6 challenges	4 months	96% active with 68% at 100 LOI
Early Career Management Development - results validated by participants' managers and reported to executives	2 challenges	3 months	100% active with 75% at 100 LOI
L&D Practitioner Program - open enrollment without direct manager involvement	5 challenges	2 months	100% active with 24% at 100 LOI
Global High Potential Program - no direct manager validation of results	6 with group, plus private individual development challenges shared with a coach	12 months	56% active on group challenges with 10% at 100 LOI

What's exciting in this data is ***the average level of participants active (posting progress) in one or more of the challenges was 85%***. The average percent of participants with completed challenges was 45%. If we compare the three campaigns with the higher level of accountability (with manager validation of results), ***the average percent of participant engagement increased to 89% and the average completion rate rose to 64%***. This is an extremely high level of engagement that dramatically lifts the performance outcomes of the initiatives.

In contrast, our research shows less than 20% of people will practice and apply learning well enough to demonstrate improved outcomes on the job when left to their own devices.

Engagement in Standalone Challenges

We also have clients with groups working on single challenges associated with unique learning programs. In the examples below, the groups were active periodically over 12 months.

1. A geographically dispersed team at a large biotech company had four unique development challenges (ranging in length from several weeks to two months). Across the four challenges, the **group's engagement level ranged from a high of 75%** to a low of 38%.
2. A diverse team at a financial services company had six unique challenges spread over a year on different initiatives. The engagement level on these disconnected challenges ranged from a **high of 55% on one**, to a low of 22%.

We observed a high level of variability of engagement on the standalone challenges accompanied by relatively low challenge completion rates.

Campaigns + Accountability = Great Results

By comparing data from both approaches, we see that creating and supporting a structured learning campaign results in significantly higher engagement across a variety of learning experiences, as compared to standalone challenges. In addition to higher engagement, participants in campaigns with validated performance outcomes showed the highest level of performance improvement and completed challenges.

2. Social Learning in Campaigns

Although it can be difficult to evaluate the level of social learning happening in your campaigns, you can survey participants to determine:

- How they feel about the development experience? (e.g. use a Likert scale with positive, neutral, and negative criteria)
- What people are they connecting with for social learning support?
- What tools and resources are they using for informal learning support?

The Sentiment Index™ measures how participants feel about their learning and progress on each challenge providing insights into their motivation. Response choices include Happy, Challenged, and Stuck. Sentiment Index data in the table below represents the aggregate percent of positive and negative responses, and excludes neutral – thus the numbers don't add to 100%.

Fort Hill's research looks at a variety of informal and social learning activities. When reporting progress, participants are asked about their sources of informal and social learning support. They also respond to the question, "How are you feeling about your learning and progress?" (the Sentiment Index – see above)

The answers to these questions provide a unique view into what's occurring in the work environment (outside of formal settings) that supports and promotes self-directed learning. The responses also illustrate how participants feel about their learning experience overall, which ties into their motivation level. Looking at four of the five learning campaign groups, we see that the Sentiment Index correlated positively with a high level of engagement in the challenges, as illustrated below:

Type of Development Initiative and Level of Accountability	Number of Challenges - Campaign Duration - Engagement %	Sentiment Index (How are you feeling about your progress?)	Who or what helped with your learning? Highest % responses selected from list (Forms of Social Support)
Mid-Career Leadership Academy - results validated by participants' managers and reported to company executives	4 over 5 mos. - 72% of group was active on challenges	69% Positive 27% Challenged	16% Project Planning 11% Problem Solving 9% Talking with Others 8% Feedback from Others
Early Career Entrepreneurship - results reported to executive sponsors of initiative	6 over 4 mos. - 96% of group was active on challenges	72% Positive 28% Challenged	18% Talking with Others 12% Manager 10% Web research
Early Career Management Development - results validated by participants' managers and reported to executives	2 over 3 mos. - 100% of group was active on challenges	75% Positive 19% Challenged	17% Watching Others Perform 17% Take Personal Initiative 13% Apply Course Learning 12% Talking with Others
Global High Potential Program - no direct manager validation of results	6 over 12 mos. - 56% of group was active on challenges	72% Positive 24% Challenged	28% Talking with Others 11% Participating in a Meeting 9% Watching Others Perform

Two examples from the above campaigns are highlighted below:

- The Mid-Career Leadership Academy had 152 progress posts with 138 likes, and 221 comments. **50% of the challenges were completed** with a **69% average positive response rate on the Sentiment Index**.
- The Early Career Management Development Program had 32 progress posts with 35 likes and 45 comments. **75% of the challenges were completed** with a **72% average positive response rate on the Sentiment Index**.

Social Learning in Standalone Challenges

The two clients discussed earlier with standalone challenges for specific initiatives, had a wider variation on the Sentiment Index and less consistent social interaction:

- The financial services client had an **84% average positive response rate on the Sentiment Index**, the highest of all groups in this study. However, of the 67 posts made on the four challenges, there were 57 likes but only seven comments posted.
- The biotech client had a **63% average positive response rate on the Sentiment Index** and a 26% challenged response rate across their four challenges. The 78 progress posts only had 28 likes and 11 comments posted.

This analysis suggests that social learning in campaigns is dramatically more substantive — involving more specific comments and peer coaching interactions — than it is in standalone challenges. This may be a result of more social cohesion among group members as they continue to work together on shared challenges over an extended period of time.

Whether clients create learning campaigns or have standalone challenges, social learning will be influenced by many factors — including the context of the initiative and the type of challenges, the group's physical proximity (co-located vs. geographically dispersed), and the expectations communicated for peer coaching and supported by program sponsors.

3. Campaigns Activate Engagement and Results Far Beyond Formal Learning

By looking at these metrics, it is clear that learning campaigns can yield stronger performance outcomes than traditional, shorter-term standalone forms of application after a course. Considering that many formal courses lack any type of support for sustaining behavioral change, you can make significant improvements in the outcomes of your programs by:

- building in a plan for a sequence of challenges and practice activities focused on key skills, behaviors, and knowledge application;
- supporting social learning with shared challenges and using a collaboration platform;
- engaging managers in coaching and validating performance outcomes;
- communicating the expectation for practice and application of learning from the start to the finish of every development experience.

If you would like to learn more about the 70-20® learning activation platform and how it can help you scale the delivery of campaigns and measure their performance outcomes, please visit www.70-20.com or contact us at info@70-20.com.

Katherine L. Granger - President
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