The Top Issues Learning & Development Managers Need to Overcome eBook
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Problem 1 - Dealing with Change
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Change can often be seen as a bad thing, as it disrupts the status quo, but change is incredibly important within any business to ensure that people have the room to grow and build on their skill set to support company growth overall.

As a Learning & Development Manager, supporting change within your business will be a massive part of your job. Your training calendar will need to adapt to any changes that happen, and it's essential that you're best placed to deal with that.

Let's take a look at some of the most common big changes that may happen in your business, and how you and the Internal Training team can support them.

Adapting to New Company Goals

One change that will happen regularly in any business is the adjustment of the company goals and what your company wants to achieve for the upcoming year. This will obviously affect the type of training you need to offer your team and the training outcomes that you will need to hit.

It may be wise to take the time when new company goals are set to complete a training needs analysis for your entire business to ensure every training session you schedule is working towards hitting those larger company goals.

Here are the basic steps you should take when completing a training needs analysis:
Problem 1 - Dealing with Change

1. Prioritise company goals – Your business may have a lot of company goals which have been decided for the year, and it may be impossible for you to tackle them all with training alone. It’s important to sit down and discuss the main goals that training will need to support, as well as the goals which are the top priority for your business to complete, as this will focus the creation of your training calendar.

2. Decide on required staff skills – Your management team and your Internal Training team will need to take some time to decide on the skills that your staff need to have for the business to be able to hit those company goals. Maybe if you have a goal relating to better customer interactions, you will need to recognise that staff need better face-to-face customer service skills.

3. Measure the skills your staff currently have – Next, you need to try and figure out the skills that your team already have in place, as these will not require any further training at this time. You can do this by checking their past training records, speaking with their direct management team, and also completing competency assessments to test their current skill level.

4. Highlight skills gaps – Now you know what skills you want your team to have, and what skills they actually have, any skills that are missing are knowledge gaps which you will need to address with your training schedule.

5. Plan your training calendar – Now you know what skills you need to focus your training on, you will be able to create your training calendar around this. As we mentioned above, you will want to prioritise the training to coincide with the most critical company goals to ensure your training is supporting the completion of these goals.

Onboarding New Members of Staff

Another constant change in any business will be hiring and onboarding new staff members. It’s key to make the onboarding process as seamless as possible so you can get new team members up to speed and working as a cohesive member of the business as soon as possible.

The key to ensuring this process is as effective as possible is to create custom learning plans for every new hire. This will allow you to plot out all the initial training they will need to complete, as well as the order and any deadlines you need to set for completion dates.

Custom training plans will allow you to schedule company-wide
Problem 1 - Dealing with Change
training (such as training on specific software systems or fire safety training), department-specific training, and then any training which is specific to their job role, all in one place. If you use a learning path which both your Internal Training team and the employee can access online, you will be able to plan out the order the training should be completed in. This also means you will both always be able to see how much training has been completed and if the training schedule is still on track.

Bringing in New Tools and Processes

A change which will affect everyone is if your company decides to bring in new software or tool into the business. Not only will team members require training on these new systems, but this will inevitably lead to changes in current processes and the way things are done, which may need additional training.

Again, the creation of a training plan for your entire team (or the team affected by the changes) will make this process much easier to handle. You will need to plan out the different training sessions that need to be attended (such as how to use the new system, how the new processes are going to work, etc.) as well as who will need to attend them as the changes may not affect everyone in the company.
Supporting New Teams or Restructuring

The final major change that you may need to support as a Learning & Development Manager is the creation of new teams or the restructuring of current teams within your business.

New teams and structures will mean different job roles, and this will require the creation of new training plans or learning paths to ensure the desired training is planned out and completed by everyone involved.
Problem 2 - Developing Leaders
Problem 2 - Developing Leaders

Using training to develop leaders within your business is another crucial issue that Learning & Development Managers will need to deal with on a daily basis. Not only do you want to ensure you are working with managers to create the training plans that will work best for their teams, but you also need to ensure you are supporting management at all levels with training specifically tailored to them.

**Work with Management to Create Training Structure**

When it comes time to create training plans for your team members, it’s essential that you work closely with department managers to ensure you are creating a training plan that everyone is happy with. You want to make sure you are hitting all the key points and developing the correct skills to support each job role within your business, and your management team will be able to guide you on what is required for each member of staff.

Working with department managers to create these training structures will ensure they always have training at the front of their minds and are always thinking about what they can do to help their team grow and develop.

They will also be able to bring you training suggestions they have thought of themselves, or ones that have been suggested to them by members of their team, which will allow you to create a truly collaborative training calendar that will work best for that team.
Support Managers with Training

As well as creating training plans with management, it's also key that you support your management team by providing training for them as well. Not only will they require training on company-wide matters, as well as things relating to their specific departments, it's also vital that they build and grow on management-specific skills to ensure they are always performing their job to the best of their abilities.

This could include things like processes for one-to-ones with team members, dealing with conflict within their team, and the most current interview processes for your business.

It can be tempting to think that once people have reached management level within a business, they perhaps don't need as much training, but it's still important to support them in their role and ensure they have all the skills required to perform the job effectively.

Allow for Progression

While you will want to use training to build on the skills people need for their current job, it's also important to offer training which will allow team members to progress and perhaps go for promotions and higher roles within the business if the chance arises.

Staff should feel that they can progress within your business and won't just be stuck at the same level forever, and training can help
Problem 2 - Developing Leaders

support this. It makes sense to keep good team members within your business rather than them having to leave if they want to progress.

You can also offer access to additional training which is outside the standard training plan which staff can pick and choose themselves and complete in their own self-development time. This will allow them to build on the skills they feel they need to work on for the role they are aiming for.
Problem 3 - Engaging Learners
Engaging learners, or even knowing how engaged learners are with your internal training offering, can be a tricky business. It’s important to research how your students are engaging with your learning content and look at the things you can do in the future to ensure you are making it as easy for staff as possible to engage with your training programme.

**Reporting on Engagement**

The first step is to make sure you are actually reporting on student engagement with your learning content. This can be difficult for classroom-based sessions and may merely rely on assessment results to give you some indication. However, if you offer eLearning or blended learning, student engagement can be easier to track.

Here are just some of the things you can track through a learning management system (LMS) to see how well your students are engaging with the content you have provided for them.

- **The time spent on each training course** – You should have a rough idea of how long it will take a student to work through a training course, and therefore seeing how long students spend working through the material can give you an indication if they are engaging with the content or simply skimming through it.

- **Completion rates for each course** – Are students starting courses and then not finishing them? This issue needs to be delved into further to find out what is preventing students from completing their training, as it may be something you can change on your side and ensure deeper engagement in the future.
Problem 3 - Engaging Learners

- **Assessment results** – Seeing the assessment results for each student will give you a good indication of how well a student engaged with the content. It could be that a student simply struggled with a particular topic, but if you notice a pattern of a lot of poor marks, it could suggest poor engagement and changes that need to be made to the training content.

- **Report per module** – As well as reporting on engagement for a training course overall, it’s a good idea to look at each module within that training course as well. If engagement starts to drop at a certain point in the course, reporting on a module-by-module basis will make this easier to pinpoint, rather than assuming there is something wrong with the course as a whole.

Adapt to Different Learning Styles

Supporting different learning styles within your company can be an excellent way to help increase engagement within your team. While it won’t be possible to offer lots of different versions of the same training course to provide the ideal type of training for everyone, it can be a good idea to mix up the content in your training courses to try and ensure there is something for everyone.

This could include altering the delivery methods or mixing up the types of assessments you use.

Offer eLearning

eLearning can be a great way to increase staff engagement with your training. Because staff can complete the training in their own time, and at their own pace, it means they will be able to choose the best time for them to engage with the content fully. They will also be able to take breaks or stop when things get too much, or they can go over material multiple times to ensure they fully understand it before moving on.
If you want to really understand how your staff are engaging with your training content, then you need to provide them with a forum for feedback. This will give you the most detailed insight into what is going on, and what changes you need to make to your training to achieve the best results.

Sending a feedback survey to your students at the end of every training course is a great habit to get into, and it means you will always have the chance to make changes to the course content before you rerun the session.

If you want to know about student engagement specifically, then make sure you tailor your survey questions to get this information from your respondents.
Problem 4 - Delivering Consistent Training
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If you work in a business which has a lot of different locations, or even offices in different countries, it can be hard to ensure you are providing a consistent training experience for all your team members.

You want to make sure everyone is being treated the same way and receiving the same level of training. Luckily, there are a few things you can do to make sure your training is always consistent and always fantastic!

Embrace VILT and eLearning

If you want to make sure your students are receiving the same training experience no matter where in the world they are based, then making the most of eLearning or virtual instructor-led training (VILT) can be the best way to do this!

Here are the benefits of both types of training:

**VILT**

- Remote staff can all dial into the same classroom and learn at the same time.
- Staff still get interaction with an instructor and can ask real-time questions.
- Students can still interact with each other as they would with a classroom-based session.
- Ensures teams can all attend the same training session and be up-to-speed on the content at the same time, rather than having
Problem 4 - Delivering Consistent Training

to schedule lots of different sessions for remote staff, and possibly having some people trained before others.

eLearning

- eLearning can be used to set completion deadlines to ensure the entire team completes the training and is ready to implement their new skills in the same time period.
- Can ensure that all students involved are receiving the same content and there aren’t any discrepancies between different instructors.

Create Similar Training Schedules

If you do need to use classroom-based sessions, as might be the case with some training topics such as practical sessions, then it’s important to create similar training schedules for all your office locations.

Again, you want to make sure everyone has the most up-to-date information, and everyone starts working in the same way at the same time, so ensuring everyone completes their training at the same time is key to this.

Create Consistent Training Content

The last key point when it comes to ensuring you are delivering consistent training is to make sure the content you create is consistent. This is the first stage of the training process, so if you get it wrong here, then it will be easy for things to go off track going
Problem 4 - Delivering Consistent Training forward.

• Ensure you create the content yourself if your training sessions are going to be run by a number of different instructors across different locations. This way you can make sure everyone is receiving the same information and everything is consistent.

• eLearning is a great way to create or purchase content and then ensure everyone is receiving the same training, no matter their location.
Problem 5 - Skills Utilisation
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Skills utilisation is all about your staff gaining skills in training and then actually going back to their regular job role and using those newly-acquired skills in a useful way. There’s no point in learning lots of skills in training sessions which then don't apply to the day-to-day roles of staff, as this is just a massive waste of time and money.

Here are just some of the ways you can ensure that you’re providing the correct training and that staff are using what they learn in their daily tasks.

Perform Training Needs Analysis

As we mentioned above, a training needs analysis is a great way to make sure you are providing training for the skills you want and need your employees to have. It’s so important to link your training plans back to your broader company goals wherever possible, and regular training needs analysis is a key part of this process.

Prioritise Training

We also touched on this above but prioritising your training to make sure the training for the most critical skills in your business is being performed first and foremost is really important. There was always be additional training that you want to schedule or get requested to run, but the training that relates to those critical skills always needs to take priority.
Make Changes Based on Feedback

After training sessions have run, it's important to get feedback not just from the students who completed the training, but also from their management team, to see what effect the training has had on their day-to-day working.

If the training is targeting a particular skill or knowledge area, you need to do follow-up work to make sure the training has had the desired effect and improvement has been seen in those areas. If the training isn't working as hoped, you will need to go back and rework it to ensure you are achieving the desired results.
Problem 6 – Assessments
Problem 6 – Assessments
Assessments are a vital part of the training process because they test the knowledge your students have learned and will take back to their job roles with them. They allow you to check for understanding within the material and ensure everyone involved has an appropriate grasp of the course content.

Here are some tips on how you can make sure that your assessments are the best possible and are providing you with the information you need.

Choosing the Right Assessment
Method

First up, you want to make sure that you’re choosing the correct assessment type to test your students’ knowledge effectively.

- **Online or classroom-based** - Choosing how to administer an assessment can be the first stage of the process. Online assessments can be sat and repeated in the student’s own time, meaning there is less admin and manual work involved for your Internal Training team. However, you may wish to administer a test under classroom conditions to ensure students are focussed and aren’t able to cheat.

- **Assessment type** – Selecting the kind of assessment you want to use may indeed depend on the course content involved. For quite a simple training course, you may simply want to use multiple choice questions to make sure students can select the correct answer based on what they have learned. However,
Problem 6 – Assessments

for more detailed or complex courses, it may be a good idea to do things like essays or long-form questions to really test the specific knowledge points each student has learned along the way.

• Make use of mini-assessments – Mini-assessments are a great way to check for understanding throughout the course instead of just waiting until the end for one more extensive assessment. Not only will they allow you to see if students are understanding the material as you go along, but it will also give students the chance to see how well they are doing, as they may have to do some additional work before the final assessment to secure a passing mark.

Ensure You Are Testing Knowledge

The main point of assessments is to make sure you are testing for the knowledge you want your students to have learned along the way. This means when you are coming up with questions for your assessments, they all need to focus in on particular knowledge points to ensure they are actually checking for understanding on a specific point.

Use as many separate questions as you need in order to test for all the knowledge points you would expect your students to come away with.

Use Reporting to Make Changes

Reporting on your assessment results is a great way for you to get a quick overview of company-wide results and see how students have been doing across the board.

If you notice that particular training courses are consistently producing poor results, then this may be something to do with your course content rather than the students. Reporting on assessment results like this will allow you to spot a problem before it becomes a wider issue, and then you will be able to make positive changes for future training sessions.
Problem 7 - Improving Learning Effectiveness
If your learning isn’t effective, then you have a huge problem. Not only are your teams wasting loads of time in training sessions for no reason, but you’re also not producing any positive results for your business or helping them achieve the wider company goals.

Let’s take a look at some ways you can ensure your learning is always as effective as possible.

**Speak to Management**

If you want to find out if your training sessions are effective, then you need to speak to your management team and find out if they are having a positive impact on the day-to-day activities of a department.

If management hasn't noticed any positive changes since their team members have attended a training session, then perhaps it wasn’t as effective as you hoped it would be.

Find out what results they would have expected to see after the completion of the training sessions, and then consult with your training material and instructors to see how this topic was handled in training. It may be that you need to make some changes to the way the course is taught to improve its effectiveness.
Study Feedback

Post-training feedback is such a valuable resource because it gives you insight from each person in the company on what the training experience was like for them. Studying and comparing this research will allow you to spot patterns in the feedback and see if there are consistent problems which keep cropping up and could be affecting the overall training experience.

Make Positive Changes

If you want to improve your training effectiveness, then you need to be ready to make positive changes to your course delivery or course content when a problem is raised. It can be easy to create a training course and then never do any more work on it, as you may think you got it right the first time around. However, feedback from staff and management can highlight things that need to be improved upon, and it’s vital that you use this feedback wherever possible and always improve your training when you get the chance.
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