

## **Bite-Size Learning**

"Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs." - Henry Ford

### **What is bite-size learning?**

Bite-size learning is a phrase that has come to prominence in the last five years or so. In particular, promoters of the Learning at Work Day have adopted the phrase to refer to training courses that can be run for employees in the workplace without impinging too greatly on their output.

An obvious implication of the phrase 'bite-size' is that whatever it is, it's a small chunk that can be easily digested - in the case of learning, quickly learned and easily remembered. It means offering a small number of easily remembered pieces of information is something that training providers should bear in mind when constructing their training packages.

### **Bite-size eLearning**

- Learning in front of a screen is different to learning from a trainer, or even from a book. We tend to 'scan' a computer screen in a different ways and in most of today's offices we're doing it in the company of many other - distracting - people. Hence whatever we're seeing or hearing on our screens must grab the interest, make its point, and move on. You can't relax comfortably into an armchair with a 17-inch screen!
- It can be delivered to the desktop and therefore doesn't require extensive logistical preparation. For a training course to run, it is typical that a room must be booked, a trainer engaged, materials prepared, timetables consulted and so forth. To get maximum benefit from this use of resources, the course will probably run for at least half a day, and usually more. By contrast, elearning can be accessed by learners when they need it and according to their own schedule - fifteen minutes here, half an hour there.

### **Bite-size blended learning**

In 2004 two major reports, a UK based survey from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and a transatlantic study from Balance Learning and Training Magazine, co-sponsored by the American Society for Training and Development was drafted. Most respondents to the CIPD survey, however, favoured a blended learning approach, with 80% saying that e-learning worked best when combined with traditional methods of training.. Blended learning is extremely flexible, it can be tailored to the needs of individuals as well as organisations, offering unique learning experiences in a series of intense shorter sessions.

Balance Learning and Training Magazine's study found that blended learning is more popular in the States where it is seen as the most effective and efficient form of training, used by 77% of organisations. In the UK, it is used by 55% of organisations and ranks as the fourth most effective training approach - behind instructor-led training, 'on the job' training and coaching and behind 'on the job' training and coaching.

Blended learning is used for:

- 67% management and leadership training
- 52% interpersonal skills training
- 41% customer service training

According to the study, one of the main reasons behind the predicted growth in blended learning is that 67% of organisations say they are looking to reduce participant time away from the workplace by up to 50%. Less than two thirds of organisations (64%) said that the cost per participant was a key factor when developing a training solution.

### **The Future?**

The prevalence of broadband, the ubiquity of cheap computing, the expectations of media savvy employees, the increasing cost of travel, the focus on daily productivity - all of these elements suggest that learning on demand, in a bite-size format, will play a greatly increased part in working life.

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