

Enhancing employee training in retail

The retail sector can be a challenging industry to thrive in. Meeting the demands of customers throughout the working day is a difficult task, but it is crucial for a business's success.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Gone are the days when employees can get away with letting others pick up the slack; today anyone who fails to know every detail of the products on offer will quickly be found out and, worse still, see their company torn apart in a social media feeding frenzy.

Just as thorough knowledge of goods and services is required, so too is attention to detail when it comes to staff training, particularly in respect of specific product training such as might be seen in the health and wellness sector.

Equipped with skills

Philip Hanly, director at South African online learning provider New Leaf Technologies, believes the greatest skills training needs in the retail industry include customer service, sales, product knowledge and digital literacy.

“With the rise of e-commerce and online shopping, employees need to be equipped with the necessary skills to operate digital tools and platforms, communicate effectively with customers online, and handle customer inquiries and complaints. Employers can rest easy knowing that their employees have these skills.”

Especially with remote and hybrid work now an accepted part of retail, eLearning is playing a greater role in corporate training. Industries that have a geographically dispersed workforce, those that require consistent training across multiple locations, and those with a high employee turnover rate are ideally suited for eLearning solutions.

Autonomy

“These days, autonomy is one of employees’ biggest demands. eLearning provides a flexible and cost-effective way to deliver training content to a large and diverse group of employees, allowing them to access the training at their own pace and convenience,” Hanly says.



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eLearning also offers personalised and adaptive learning experiences that cater to individual learning styles and needs, as well as provide real-time feedback and performance tracking.

“This means that the amount of time that learners spend in training can be reduced, but we are also training them on the things that they don’t know instead of the things they already know,” Hanly says.

Bite sized content

Adriana Gomes, franchisor office training facilitator at stationery chain PNA, has used a cloud-based platform to help her staff.

“We had to accommodate our learners in terms of providing picture-based, bite-sized content because, in retail, you don’t have much time to physically sit in front of the computer and go through the training. You also can’t afford to take your employees out of the office for extended periods of time,” she says.

“We then created these small batches of information at a time, so that the learners could get it done in about 20 minutes. We also didn’t want to scare them away from their training, so we communicated with them throughout and made it feel like it was coaching rather than learning.”

PNA staff were “really happy” interacting with the platform and enjoyed that it was easier to negotiate, she said.

Hanly says it is important for retailers to find partners that understand the eLearning space and can assist in developing engaging and interactive content that is relevant and practical to employees’ roles and responsibilities.

He also advises that regular feedback and support to employees will reinforce their learning and track their progress. Importantly, collaboration and knowledge sharing among employees should be encouraged to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Finally, training content should always be evaluated and updated to keep it aligned with business needs and industry trends.