

How to use e-learning in leadership development

 By [Michael Gullan](#)

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The success of an organisation rests on the quality of its leadership. Leaders - whether within teams, departments, or c-suite - set the tone, culture, and ultimately the success of your organisation. Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, in their book *Extreme Ownership*, explain that there are no bad teams, just bad leaders.



Image: Supplied

“ Leadership is the single greatest factor in any team’s performance. Whether a team succeeds or fails is all up to the leader. The leader drives performance — or doesn’t. ”

Like any employee, leaders need to be developed so they can perform at their jobs and so that your organisation can remain competitive. What’s more, post-pandemic hybrid working models require new leadership competencies, that not many South African leaders have mastered.

The good news: e-learning can assist in closing the skills’ gap and eliminating the need for time-consuming face-to-face training which, let’s face it, can be clunky, expensive, and not that fitting with today’s hybrid working life. An e-learning leadership development programme can be advantageous in the following ways:

1. It accommodates diversity, such as working mothers, remote employees, people with caregiving responsibilities, or people with disabilities.
2. It's more inclusive and accessible and can include people from different offices and time zones and remote workers.



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Leadership learning outcomes

Any successful e-learning programme must start with an understanding and clearly documented outcomes. Here are some to consider when developing and deploying your online leadership development programme:

- The ability to create a strong leadership succession plan by developing leadership competencies within aspiring leaders.
- Developing skills to enhance their team performance.
- Developing the know-how to assist their teams in reducing stress, creating opportunities for growth, and developing a more inclusive workforce.
- Increasing and enhancing employee engagement.
- Increased business performance by aligning leaders with your organisation's needs, strategies, and tactics.

5 Steps for successful leadership e-learning

Step 1

Develop an assessment plan, and don't leave it as an afterthought as it should be the thing that drives the whole programme. Identify the key performance indicators (KPIs) to be used to evaluate success. You can use objective measures, such as rates of change, number of innovative ideas, plans implemented, and growth metrics.

Step 2

Ensure your leadership e-learning is actively supported by the executive team. Include live sessions, such as webinars, as often as possible. This will challenge and inspire aspiring leaders to see what's possible for them.

Step 3

Understand and align with your organisation's goals, strategies, and tactics. Ensure you're developing competencies that your leaders will need to achieve your goals and be ready for future challenges in your industry.

Step 4

Include soft skills, such as upskilling leaders on creating positive employee experiences. This will nurture a sense of belonging and help employees to feel valued.

Step 5

Remain agile. Be sure to frequently evaluate your leadership e-learning programmes so you can do more of what works and less of what doesn't. You don't have to make radical tweaks, but rather keep them incremental and only make updates that will truly enhance the whole programme.



Important components to include in your leadership e-learning

Because of the nature of hybrid working, it's important to include the following new and innovative strategies:

- Coaching, mentoring and constructive feedback loops
- Experiential learning and simulations
- Skills practice by creating safe practice zones so your leaders can practice, fail, and iterate
- Personalised learning, allowing your leaders to select from a few learning paths according to their individual needs and desires
- Microlearning, via Content Capsules™ that are short, sharp, and focussed on today's time-sliced adult learner
- A robust e-learning platform that is tailored to your organisation, learning content, and that provides a dashboard that reports your leader's learning journey.

Remember, the leaders set the direction, tone, and culture of your organisation and a toxic, weak, or bureaucratic leadership and culture can set you back years from achieving your goals. When you're focussed on continually developing your existing leaders, and nurturing aspiring leaders, you will achieve a healthy, purposeful leadership team and create a solution-focussed culture of innovation. Information and training are power, it's up to your e-learning to unlock it.

ABOUT MICHAEL GULLAN

Michael Gullan is the founder and CEO of G&G Advocacy. Michael provides strategic consulting to G&G Advocacy's clients at a senior level. Michael is passionate about the science of adult learning in the corporate workplace and has made it his mission to provide innovative and effective e-learning solutions designed to nurture an educated and high-performance workforce in South Africa so we can build a stronger, sustainable economy which creates more jobs and opportunities for society.

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