

# Strategy, not technology, should drive how organisations approach training their employees

 By [Lyndsey Moorhouse](#)

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South African companies should not treat e-learning as a one-size-fits-all solution for training employees in new business systems and processes, but instead regard it as one tool of many for making their business strategies come to life.

Many companies are beginning to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of e-learning as the market matures.

A few years ago, e-learning exploded as companies bought into the concept as a means of improving training capacity while reducing costs. E-learning seemed cutting-edge and sexy, adding to its appeal. So, companies invested a lot of money in e-learning materials with expensive production values.

## The trouble with e-learning

Now, many companies are taking a step back and asking whether they have used e-learning with inflated expectations and for the wrong purposes. Many organisations are finding that they do not get the end-user impact they want when the software dictates the training. In particular, employees often battle to remember and apply theoretical learning from e-learning materials when it is time to use their knowledge in their jobs.

The result is that many companies are starting to look at e-learning to complement and support on-the-job training and classroom learning rather than as a standalone solution. They are starting to think about adaptable training strategies that blend these tools together into optimal mix for different segments of their workforce and for types of training.

E-learning works well as a means of introducing users to theoretical concepts, ahead of more practical training. It is also well suited to training people in areas such as company culture or basic policies and procedures.

But, increasingly, companies are supporting digital training materials with more tangible learning and job aids, such as summarised decision matrices, graphical business process flow diagrams, paper-based "how do I" guides. A common complaint in e-learning is that people can't easily find reference notes - they can't easily thumb through online materials as they can a manual. This makes it hard for people to get to the info they need when they're in front of their computers trying to use the system in which they were trained.

## Support tools

Another trend is for companies to build support and workflow tools into end-users' business applications - for example, guiding a call centre agent through a flow chart of questions to ask a client. This masks the complexity of the business system and process from the employee so that he or she can focus on softer issues, such as customer service.

As systems become simpler and more transparent to the end-user, we can expect to see more focus on training in softer skills than on tech training. And here, e-learning can't compare to role-playing in a classroom environment in terms of impact.

Companies should take a flexible approach to training and education, starting by focusing on the outcome they want to achieve and the employee audience they want to reach. The training requirements and strategy should determine the tools and technology to be used, rather than the other way around.

## ABOUT LYNDSEY MOORHOUSE

As Can!Do's managing director, Lyndsey Moorhouse oversees the delivery of high-impact ERP education solutions that help companies drive real ROI from their investments into applications. Lyndsey has been working in the ERP end-user education and change field for 20 years, 10 of those with Can!do Consulting. During this time, she has held trainer, team lead, project manager, change consultant, strategic training consultant operations management roles on a range of projects for blue-chip clients.

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