

Employers should shift focus from staff development to performance enhancement

In the realm of business, the consensus among leaders and HR professionals is clear: the key to success lies in employee performance. This understanding underscores the importance of employee development as a strategic priority. Yet, a change in thinking may be necessary - from a focus on development to a focus on performance - to truly unlock the potential of your business and its people.



Michael Gullan, at the helm of G&G Advocacy, an eLearning consultancy that collaborates with mid to large-scale corporations, advocates for a development strategy centred on employee performance within their workflow.

Gullan challenges the status quo, stating, “The conventional development model that prescribes courses based on perceived employee needs has lost its relevance.” He elaborates, “Effective learning in the adult workplace transcends mere knowledge acquisition. It necessitates the application of this knowledge to improve performance. This is the path to realising a return on your learning and development investment and propelling your business towards its objectives.”



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Gullan suggests this shift in focus to transform employees into the dream team business leaders need to survive and thrive.

Start differently

Traditional Most development programmes start by asking key questions: What skills do my employees have, and what new skills do they need? Doing this may result in course and assessment completions which may infer that some knowledge was acquired.

New Start with understanding what your employees need to be able to do (perform) and then define what information is required to support their performance enhancements.

Focus on application

Traditional Address two types of learning: upskilling (more knowledge) and reskilling (new knowledge), and test how well employees complete and pass their assessments.

New A performance-first approach looks for when new knowledge will be applied, and these moments of application inform what new or more information is needed to support mastery.

Only crucial information

Traditional Can be lengthy, time-consuming, and costly, with little focus on the moments of application.

New Only essential material that supports performance needs is included. This also supports adult learners who are distracted, busy, and under pressure to perform.

Enable learning while at work

Traditional Information is available at work to reskill and upskill employees.

New Enables real application within the workflow, which is the best time to apply new knowledge and fuel engagement. The workflow is where experiential learning thrives, knowledge is integrated, and success is immediately validated.

Ongoing performance measurement

Traditional Employee development is measured by course completion and assessment results.

New Performance-based eLearning can be measured with greater precision, such as:

- Increased employee adoption
- Increased performer confidence
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased performance and time to successful performance
- Use of mission-critical assets or procedures
- Optimised workflow and productivity
- Decreased gap between low and star performers

There is much scientific evidence to prove that performance-based learning is effective beyond traditional fact-and-skill learning. “L&D teams and their eLearning partners need to get out of their own way and make the shift,” concludes Gullan.

“Organisations need skillful employees, more than they need reskilled or upskilled people. Only skillful employees can move

corporates toward their goals.”

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