

The Ultimate Guide to Developing an Effective Employee Training Course



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A photograph of three business professionals walking in a modern office hallway. On the left, a man in a light blue shirt and dark tie walks towards the center. In the middle, an older man in a white shirt and dark tie holds a folder and gestures while talking. On the right, a woman in a light-colored blazer and trousers walks towards the center. They are all smiling and appear to be in a positive conversation. The background shows a bright, modern office with large windows and a staircase on the right.

The Current State of Employee Training in the Workplace

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How can employers ensure that more employees complete the training they're offered at a significant cost? This report is a guide to promoting better course completion rates. In this chapter, we'll discuss the most significant trends that are influencing the corporate training market, how much it's costing employers for training, how often employees complete their training, and more.

Employee training has become a number one focus for many companies trying to get an edge on the competition. At the same time, employers are struggling to keep up with new technology-driven skill gaps, while maintaining the productivity of current employees by training them for the future skills they will need. [A Payscale.com report](#) advised 23 percent of business and HR leaders said training and development would be their biggest investment area heading into 2019. This is wise, considering people are living and working longer, and new skills are not being churned out of colleges at a fast enough rate to keep up with organizational needs.

Even the way that training is distributed to learners has been adopted to employee preferences. This includes the use of on-demand course topics, social media live-learning, and more. Learning for work is no longer viewed as a solo activity, but has instead expanded to an ongoing part of a team's career success.

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How Much Money Organizations are Investing in Employee Training

Total training expenditures for U.S. employers reached a whopping \$87.6 billion, based on Q4 2018 data from [Dun & Bradstreet](#). That averages out to around \$1,000 per employee per year. Large companies of 500 or more employees are more apt to invest in learning, but smaller companies are taking advantage of less costly cloud-based learning platforms that allow them to streamline the onboarding of new hires and long-term career training.

Companies are expanding employee learning into new uses of technology, including AI-enabled and virtual environment courses, at an increasing rate. Despite all this effort, employees still find it challenging to complete their training as they are overwhelmed with work due to talent shortages. How can employers ensure that more employees complete the training offered by employers at a significant cost? This report serves as a guide to promoting better course completion rates.

Average Completion Rates of Employee Training Courses

It's nearly impossible to find specific data on the completion rates of employee training courses, mainly because every industry and every kind of training varies slightly from one organization to the other. So too, employees can be very different in how they like to learn.



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However, we do know from [past research](#) that when it comes to general online learning by the average adult student, somewhere between 40% to 80% of students drop out of online classes too early. Much of the time, this is due to low levels of engagement, a preference for other types of learning, or a general lack of time. In the next chapter, we will talk more about why people often leave courses uncompleted.

The [2019 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report](#) revealed that getting employees engaged in learning is a significant challenge. The report showed that “more than half of respondents said that increasing learner engagement is the top challenge for their teams in 2019; yet talent developers only spend a small sliver of their time (15%) marketing learning opportunities to employees.” Generally, employees discover new courses via email and through the company intranet, but there are many ways to promote learning and help employees complete training at work. Look for these strategies in the next chapter of this eBook.

The Impact of Digital Disruption on Employee Training Completion

It's clear that online learning has become the leading way that employers train their workforces today. While introducing online courses has been disruptive to the traditional formats of instructor-led classroom learning, younger generations of employees are responding well. Older workers are still adjusting somewhat, but coming around as they become more comfortable with the technology.

Most employees would say that online training is a lot more fun than sitting through a boring slideshow presentation. Even so, there are high numbers of employees who either neglect to participate in employee training, never go back in to finish it, or worse yet -- just click off on the right boxes to say they completed it but get nothing from the training.

Employers Still Seeking a High ROI for Investing in Employee Training

Given that organizations are spending a large share of their HR budgets on employee training and development, it's only natural that they expect a decent return on investment (ROI). This is the way of the business world. Statistically, corporate learning is a good investment.

We will dig deeper into how companies can create measurable KPIs to track the return on investment of learning.

Henry Ford once said, “The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.”

Increasing Pressure for Corporate Compliance Proof

At the same time that companies are struggling to justify the cost of employee training, they are facing increased pressure from outside sources to prove that their training is producing more compliant employees. Topics like safety, sexual harassment, and workplace violence have become mandatory for companies to provide or source training on.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored shirt, is seated at a desk. She is looking down at a large sheet of paper on the desk, holding a pen in her right hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing office shelves and a window. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

Challenges of Employee Training Relating to Completion

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Trouble Engaging Employees in Training Modules

Employers often find it challenging to maintain employee engagement in their work, let alone training. According to Careered Lounge, employees often view compliance training as:

1. Punishment
2. Pure compliance
3. Irrelevant

Employers must find ways to overcome these attitudes and misconceptions about workplace training.

Apprehension About Equipping Employees with the Right Training

Employers can also find it worrisome that they may not be giving employees the right training that they need to grow and be productive. Setting specific KPIs for what the training needs to accomplish can help to define things. For example, if the company wants to improve sales results, the KPIs may be related to specific tasks that salespeople need to be able to perform, like using a sales software to track prospect and customer progress.

Making Employee Training Accessible to all Employees

Impactful training needs to be accessible to all employees. This includes any employees who may be handicapped, work remotely, or otherwise have challenges completing the training. Training that is blended,

including some instructor-led sessions and cloud-based training that can be accessed 24/7 from any internet enabled device is often the best solution.

The Problem of Mandatory vs. Non-mandatory Training

As mentioned earlier, employees often view training as a form of punishment or something they must complete because they're told to do so. Many times, employees rush through the training, getting nothing out of it at all.

Employers can correct this by creating learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant to the work they do. Instead of it being punitive or required, allowing employees to participate in training that incorporates compliance with career growth training is often the best approach.

Getting Employees to Finish Training with Incentives

According to Patti Shank, Ph.D., and founder of Learning Peaks, LLC., there are several [reasons employees don't complete training](#). These can include:

- The course not needing to be completed to meet the need.
- Workers not having time to complete courses.
- Workers are needing something else instead.
- Workers are needing something additional

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- Workers getting stuck due to unanswered questions.
- The content is too difficult to understand.
- The course being unnecessary.
- The content being in the wrong format.

A method that can work for some companies is to create incentives for completing the course modules. Using brief knowledge checks and assigning a digital certificate can be easily added to any course. Employee recognition and performance tied to training is very useful. Going beyond this, providing cash incentives for completing a section of modules that lead to career growth is a good motivator.

Not Having a Good System for Tracking Employee Progress

Since employee training is so vital to the success of an organization, it's crucial to track the progress of every employee. A cloud learning platform should include an administrator section that allows leaders to monitor the progress of individual employees in real-time. Several areas can be challenging to track, including course completion, assessment results, if there are sections of the course that are creating obstacles for learners, gathering learner feedback, and more.

A group of four business professionals in an office setting. Two men and two women are gathered around a desk. One man is seated at the desk, working on a laptop. Another man stands behind him, looking at the screen. A woman is seated to the right, holding a pen and looking at the laptop. Another woman stands behind her, also looking at the screen. The scene is overlaid with a blue tint. The text 'Why Employee Training Completion is Important for Business' is centered over the image.

Why Employee Training Completion is Important for Business

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Produces a More Knowledgeable and Skilled Workforce

The primary purpose of employee training is to support the growth of the company through a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce. To compete in any market, people need strong skills and know how they fit into the goals of the company. Knowledge leads to more innovation, which elevates the company to the next level.

Increases Employee Satisfaction and Retention

Training has many benefits for organizations, including the ability to keep employees engaged in their jobs and retaining them for more extended periods. According to [LinkedIn's 2019 Workforce Learning Report](#), 94% of employees indicated that they would stay with a company longer if the company invested in helping them grow through learning.

Contributes to Improved Employee Performance and Safety

When employers can convince employees to complete their corporate training, and get excited about it, there are proven business benefits. Employees who embrace learning can improve their skills, which results in higher productivity levels. According to [Chron](#), employees who receive structured training about company policies are better able to meet safety standards, complete procedures, and work consistently.

Supports Short- and Long-term Goals for Corporate Growth

Employee training courses can be designed for both short- and long-term

performance goals. Employees can be introduced to training as part of their onboarding experience, then include more advanced and specific learning topics to improve their skills. The initial short term need is to bring employees up to speed quickly so the company can recoup hiring expenses. However, the company needs skilled people for real corporate growth. Therefore, ongoing learning is critical.

Demonstrates to Customers Dedication to Industry Experience

Customers want to work with the best companies that employ highly knowledgeable workers. It's one thing to tell them that your employees know how to serve their needs, but it's more impressive to show them. Learning programs that are designed to exceed industry standards can include certificates of achievement — a valuable proof that your people have the best skills. Involve customers in training too by offering them the opportunity to receive online tutorials on your services and products.

Meets the Requirements for Compliance Training

There are many new human resource and industry topics that require employee training. In most states, it's necessary to provide employees with sexual harassment awareness training, workplace violence prevention, and safety training. Some industries require specialized training that is related to specific tasks, such as HIPAA training which is needed by anyone handling sensitive data in the healthcare or insurance fields. Being able to track employees and ensure that they have completed the training meets the requirements of these rules.



What Happens When
Companies Don't Invest
in Employee Training
Completion?

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Lack of Organizational Growth and Widened Innovation and Skill Gaps

According to a [study conducted by Axonify](#), one-third of U.S. employees do not receive formal training. Even those who do receive some kind of formalized training, 43 percent report that it's ineffective. These are sad figures that indicate not enough employers are taking advantage of the latest developments in employee training. This is also a tell-tale sign that employers are not pushing their workers to complete their training. This sets the stage for weak organizational growth due to increasing skill gaps in the workforce.

Poor Accountability for Professional Career Growth and Performance

It's ironic that employers focus on employee performance reviews, which is supposed to be an opportunity for improvement, but they fail to make employees accountable for completing learning modules. It's almost impossible for employees to improve or grow in their roles if there is little to no career direction in the form of learning.

Legal Problems for Not Completing Mandatory Compliance Training

Companies never want to put themselves into an area of risk, especially when it could result in an employment law violation or reputational damage. However, if employers aren't enforcing the need for training, so employees understand its importance, this is precisely what can happen. [The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) reported they,



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“recovered nearly \$70 million for the victims of sexual harassment through litigation and administrative enforcement in FY 2018, up from \$47.5 million in FY 2017.” Imagine the damage a lawsuit could potentially do to your business if an employee failed to participate in sexual harassment training and was accused of related behaviors.

Safety and Process Problems Due to Inconsistencies in Training

One of the issues in many workplaces is a lack of consistency in the type of training and the information provided. In some cases, there can be silos of training information in different areas of a company, most of it conflicting and confusing. This can negatively impact corporate processes and reduce safety. It's always better to have a centralized training system where all training and instruction takes place, and all information is validated/updated.

Company Reputation Suffers When Training is Neglected

Poor or neglected employee training affects how employees perform their work, which is felt by customers. If an employee has not received the right amount of training or if they have been trained incorrectly, they can potentially harm a client relationship—contributing to a poor company reputation.

According to [Sh!ft eLearning](#), “Proper training will make workers better and more capable of their jobs, which will reduce the time it takes to search for information as they are working.”

Reduced ROI When Employees Are Untrained/Lack Knowledge

Companies often view employee training in financial terms because it is a significant investment in the future success of the company. But what happens when a company doesn't care about having well-trained and knowledgeable workers? The opportunities for innovation and added revenue are lost.

A background image showing a man and a woman in business attire working at a computer in an office. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The text is centered over the image.

How Modern Learning Trends Improve Completion of Employee Training

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Makes Employee Training Interactive and Interesting to Complete

The use of digital training platforms has dramatically increased the quality of course content, enabling the delivery of more interactive and exciting lessons. Instead of reading through manuals, having a supervisor perform a task, and taking assessments using traditional models; employees have access to gamification, self-directed learning experiences, and online assessments that track their progress and give immediate feedback. These factors support completion and information retention rates.

Completion Incentivized with Certificates of Achievement

Adults like to see their progress and then be able to show their supervisors that they've completed their training. A learning platform that includes digital and printable certificates of achievement can motivate employees to get their modules completed. When combined with digital badges that they can add to their email signatures, this can be an effective way to incentivize the learning process.

Custom Employee Training More Relevant to Employee Needs

According to [Jeffrey Bodimer](#), Chief Operations Officer / Chief Compliance Officer at American Higher Education Development Corporation, who contributes to The Balance, "The best type of employee training program for a workgroup is one tailored to their needs." It's possible to determine this by conducting a training needs assessment and observing the obstacles that employees have. Employees can get behind this because it addresses the skills that they need to perform their work. Make training relevant and customized to employees.

Training Accessible for all Employees, Even Remote Workers

To make sure employees can complete their training, it must be accessible by all employees, including those who work outside the office in remote positions and those with handicaps. All organizations should focus on [diversity and inclusion](#) when it comes to learning and design, ensuring that all technology used in employee training meets current accessibility standards.

Measurable Results and Built-in Analytics to Track Progress

Advanced learning management systems allow administrators to know at a glance that employees are completing training, if they are stuck in certain sections of training, or if they are exceeding company expectations. Human resources practitioners will find it helpful to review analytics to see the results of the training, and if it corresponds with performance metrics.

Proof of Employee Training Available with Certificates and CEUs

As mentioned earlier, certificates of achievement can incentivize employee training. Another aspect of this is the earning of continuing education credits, which can be applied towards professional licenses and certifications. CEUs support long-term career growth and provide proof to customers that the company has well-trained employees supporting them.



Identifying Your Employee Training Needs as an Employer

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What Training Do Your Employees Need to Complete to Be Successful?

All organizational leaders should be prepared to determine what employees need to be successful on the job while promoting corporate goals. According to [LinkedIn's 2019 Workplace Learning Report](#), training paths will continue to become more personalized for each employee to focus on specific skill sets. At the same time, companies need to be forward-thinking to include new technology and new job types that have not been invented yet. Technology supports these goals.

Which Employee Training is Mandatory for Completion?

In any company, there is a mix of training — some of which is skills based and some that is corporate compliance based. Examples of employee training that's mandatory for everyone include safety training, sexual harassment, workplace violence prevention, chemical use training, and HIPAA training where sensitive data is used. Online systems that include secure sign-on can house mandatory and skill training.

How Should the Training Be Delivered to Employees to Be Accessible?

There are limitations to delivering training via on-site instructor-led classes and hands-on training. It's also expensive and time-consuming. As an alternative, training can be delivered via online modules that can be accessed at the convenience of employees via a device of their choosing. This also makes the training more accessible to those with special needs, as they can use adaptive technology and aids to participate in the

training. Remote employees can access training in the cloud, making it ideal for an increasingly expanding work world.

Is There a Current Training Process to Modify? Need Custom Content?

Management and human resources can work together to determine what training already exists within the organization and what new training needs to be created. Many times, there are silos of training information scattered around the organization that need to be brought together, organized, updated, and customized so that all employees can benefit. Custom content can blend with standardized training to build a library of learning content for employees.

What About Onboarding New Hires? Streamlined Training an Option?

One of the areas that all companies should focus on for long-term success is the onboarding of new hires. This is a process that starts on day one of employment and can continue well into the first year of employment. Company leaders need to ask if they plan to create career paths for employees and how onboarding can be part of this program. Anytime training can be centralized in an online platform, the more streamlined and efficient it becomes.

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How Do You Measure the Training Completion Rates of Employees?

Each employer needs to determine how it will measure the training completion rates of employees and if it's doing enough to encourage this. Is there an average completion rate for certain types of training? Some statistics show a dismal completion rate for adult learners. However, companies can look to key performance indicators to determine how successful their training programs are. Examples of [KPIs for training](#) can include how many courses were accessed, how many employees have passed assessments, and if productivity rates have improved in certain training areas.

How Do You Currently Communicate With and Encourage Employees in Training?

It's essential to determine how your organization currently communicates with employees and how it will continue to do so in the future. Are employees receiving immediate feedback on their progress? Do they understand the connection between their training and the results they get in terms of work performance? HR and management can work out a system for communicating and updating employees so that they feel supported and encouraged to complete their training.

A group of diverse professionals are gathered around a wooden table in a modern office setting, engaged in a collaborative meeting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Selecting the Right Employee Training Provider for Improved Completion Rates" is centered over the image in a large, white, sans-serif font. The background shows a brick wall and a whiteboard with some diagrams.

Selecting the Right Employee Training Provider for Improved Completion Rates

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Reviewing a List of Features Your Company Needs with Reputable Employee Training Solutions

When evaluating any training provider, it's essential to review the list of features that your company needs. Focus on training technology firms that have strong industry reputations. Treat this as an interview to ensure that the company finds a good match for its employee training goals. Look for a company that is continually updating and improving its features and benefits.

Evaluating the Price vs. Features - What Provides the Best Value to Your Company? What's Sustainable as Your Company Grows?

It can be easy to focus on pricing instead of features, which is only being budget sensitive. However, be willing to look at all the features offered and compare them to those provided by other employee training solutions. Consider the cost of building your internal training center, which would be astronomical by the time an entire L&D team is compiled. Cloud-based training providers can offer many premium features while being cost-effective. That's not all. This model is also sustainable as your company training needs change and you add more employees.

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Improving the Quality of Training Courses with Built-in Features

The employee experience when engaging in training is essential. That's why certain built-in features such as content interactivity, custom courses, and internal communication systems are vital to your success. When maintaining employee engagement, one must [think like an email marketer](#), sending out personalized and strategic emails to employees when a new course is available to encourage enrollments and to promote completion of these courses. This alone can add a great deal of value to an existing employee training program.

Data-driven Administrative Tools for Ensuring Employees Complete Training in a Timely Manner

L&D administrators need to have a way to ensure employees complete their training in a reasonable amount of time. They also need to be able to track progress, report on this with management, and design career-driven training plans for employees. None of this happens by chance. Information-rich learning platforms provide insight from many different data points, creating insightful reports that can support actionable results.

Completion Certificates/Recerts and Performance Incentives for Completing Training

According to an article in [Workforce magazine](#), one of the factors that can increase the completion rates of employee learning is incentives in the form of cash bonuses and promotions. Other rewards can include individual benefits of learning, such as personal fulfillment, more career

prospects, and increased marketability on the job scene. When evaluating an employee training provider, learn how it integrates certificates, recerts, and performance incentives.

Branding and Integration for a Seamless Experience for all Employees

A preferred employee training provider needs to include the ability to brand all experiences so that they match with the corporate culture. This is especially the case when new hires come on board and have already encountered the HRIS. Get clear examples of how the branding is managed and if it's easy to maintain and update internally.

Cloud-Based for Accessibility and Flexible Time to Complete Training

Most employees will appreciate a learning platform that will allow them flexible time to complete training, around other responsibilities. The choice to stop a training session and then pick back up at that point, later on, is vital to completion. At the same time, having accessibility to a cloud-based training system enables employees to use whatever web-enabled device they have to participate in training for a seamless experience. They can learn on-the-go, and as they need to learn new skills, which is the preferred way that many adults learn today.

Get free access to an easy-to-use and fully customizable LMS to help you improve employee training, increase employee retention, and growth.

Start for free!

WestNet Learning is an all-in-one LMS solution to easily train employees, increase employee productivity, and address safety needs. Customized eCourses, analytics, reporting, and certification tracking to help manage staff and stay on top of what matters most.

If you want to learn more about your next steps in planning an effective employee training course, feel free to reach out to WestNet and [schedule a 1-on-1 strategy session](#) with one of our specialists today!

