

# E-Learning Program Management: *What Works*<sup>TM</sup>

*How do avoid e-learning programs that fail?  
What drives successful, high utilization e-learning  
programs?*

*Version 1.0*

© *Bersin & Associates*

In 2002 and 2003 we interviewed dozens of program managers, developers, and training executives about the factors which led to success in their programs. The results of these interviews are enlightening: the biggest issue in success is not “content” itself, but overall program management. This paper describes the findings of this research and details a five-step methodology which makes e-learning programs effective.

<b>Why E-Learning Programs Fail</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction: E-Learning: Will they come?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Utilization: The Key to High Impact .....	5
You must capture the audience’s attention.....	5
<b>The E-Learning Process: An Overview</b> .....	<b>7</b>
The Five Step E-Learning Process .....	7
<b>Phase 1: Program Strategy and Content Development</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Identify Specific and Measurable Business Goals</i> .....	9
<i>Prepare an ROI Analysis</i> .....	10
<i>Develop Executive Sponsorship</i> .....	12
<i>Content Development</i> .....	12
<b>Phase 2: Learning Technology and Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<i>Courseware Architecture</i> .....	15
<i>Courseware Delivery Architecture</i> .....	15
<i>Learning Administration (LMS)</i> .....	18
<i>Should you Host Externally or Run Systems In-House?</i> .....	18
<i>Hybrid Solution: Internal LMS, Hosted Content</i> .....	20
<i>Multi-language Support</i> .....	20
<i>The Help Desk</i> .....	20
<b>Phase 3: Program Launch, Marketing and Operations</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<i>Marketing Budgets &amp; Plans</i> .....	22
<i>Certifications</i> .....	23
<i>Newsletters</i> .....	24
<i>The Training Site or Portal</i> .....	26
<i>Drawings &amp; Giveaways</i> .....	28
<i>On-site Events</i> .....	29
<i>Surveys</i> .....	29
<i>Kiosks and Public Computers</i> .....	29
<i>Tent Cards on Computers “Learning in Process”</i> .....	29
<i>Resource Centers or Learning Labs</i> .....	29
<i>Ongoing Operational Support</i> .....	30
<b>Phase 4: Measurement, Reporting, and Analysis</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<i>What is really going on?</i> .....	32
<i>Basics of Measurement and Reporting</i> .....	32
<i>Creating Actionable Information</i> .....	34
<i>Creating the Right Behavior Depends on Your Goals</i> .....	34
<i>Examples of Measurement Systems</i> .....	34
<b>Phase 5: Business Process Integration</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<i>What is Business Process Integration?</i> .....	37
<i>What usually does not work: Voluntary Catalogs</i> .....	37
<i>Link Training to Corporate Goals</i> .....	38
<i>Make Some Programs Mandatory</i> .....	38

<i>Create Job and Role-based Learning Plans</i> .....	39
<i>Link E-Learning to Employee Performance Plans</i> .....	39
<i>Link E-Learning to New Hire Programs</i> .....	39
<i>Linking other Business Processes with E-Learning: Support</i> .....	40
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>Companies Interviewed for this Study</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>About Bersin &amp; Associates</b> .....	<b>42</b>
Figure 1: The challenge to driving utilization .....	6
Figure 2: The Five Step E-Learning Deployment Process .....	7
Figure 3: Measurable Business Goals .....	10
Figure 4: Typical Cost-Justifications for E-Learning .....	11
Figure 5: Typical Costs of E-Learning Programs .....	11
Figure 6: E-Learning Content Delivery and LMS Options .....	17
Figure 7: LMS Vendor Options .....	18
Figure 8: An Innovative Marketing to Drive Awareness .....	22
Figure 9: Little Mendelson uses Certificates to Drive Excitement and Completion .....	24
Figure 10: Email Newsletter with Tips and Techniques (Siemens Energy Automation) .....	25
Figure 11: Email Newsletter to Entice Registration (Siemens Energy and Automation) .....	26
Figure 12: British Airways Learning Portal .....	27
Figure 13: Sabre Learning Portal .....	27
Figure 14: Ceridian uses Contests via Email to drive utilization .....	28
Figure 15: UK manufacturer measures registrations by business unit .....	35
Figure 16: Measurement of utilization and response times .....	35
Figure 17: Total Utilization by hours - Rockwell Automation .....	36
Figure 18: Measuring Level 2: scores by course, Rockwell Automation .....	36

## Why E-Learning Programs Fail

---

Over the last 3 years we have studied dozens of e-learning programs in a wide variety of industries and organizations. What we found is that program success, measured by utilization and business impact, is sometimes elusive. Many programs are developed, launched, and then fail to deliver utilization and business results. Why is this?

What we have found is that E-Learning program success is rarely driven by content alone. Although content development, instructional design, and blended learning strategies are all important, we found that change management, program management, marketing, infrastructure, and business process integration are far more important. This study describes our research in this important area:

*How do you deploy e-learning programs in a way that drives high utilization and results?*

*What causes e-learning programs to fail?*

*What are the important steps, resources, and budget items you need to drive a high-impact e-learning program?*

Our findings: there is a clear and step by step methodology which does work. This research paper documents our findings and will leave you with a checklist and step-by-step methodology which you can apply to your programs – whether they are built from custom content, catalog content, simulations, or any other technology-based training program.

## Introduction: E-Learning: Will they come?

---

E-learning has become a buzzword. In the year 2000, John Chambers, CEO of Cisco Corporation, claimed that “e-Learning would be the next killer application – bigger than email.” People believed that the days of “bricks and mortar” training and education were rapidly coming to an end.

While employees do want to learn, the e-learning program must create an environment that encourages and demands utilization in the face of these factors. Some programs can be made "mandatory," and we discuss these in the study. However usually e-learning is optional (recommended), so it is up to you as a program manager to put in place the processes that drive utilization.

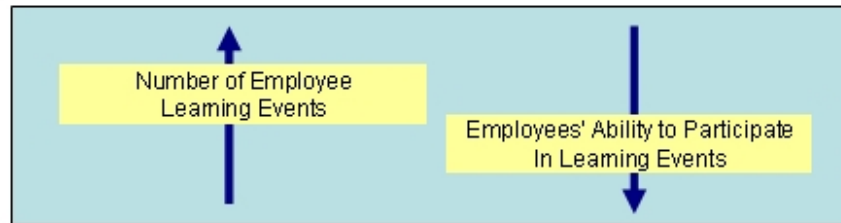


Figure 1: The challenge to driving utilization

We have found that there are five major components to an e-learning program which are needed to effectively deploy a high-utilization (and therefore high-impact) program. Let's examine these five steps in detail.

## The E-Learning Process: An Overview

### The Five Step E-Learning Process



Figure 2: The Five Step E-Learning Deployment Process

This diagram illustrates the five step "High Impact" e-Learning deployment process, which was developed through detailed research and work with hundreds of clients.

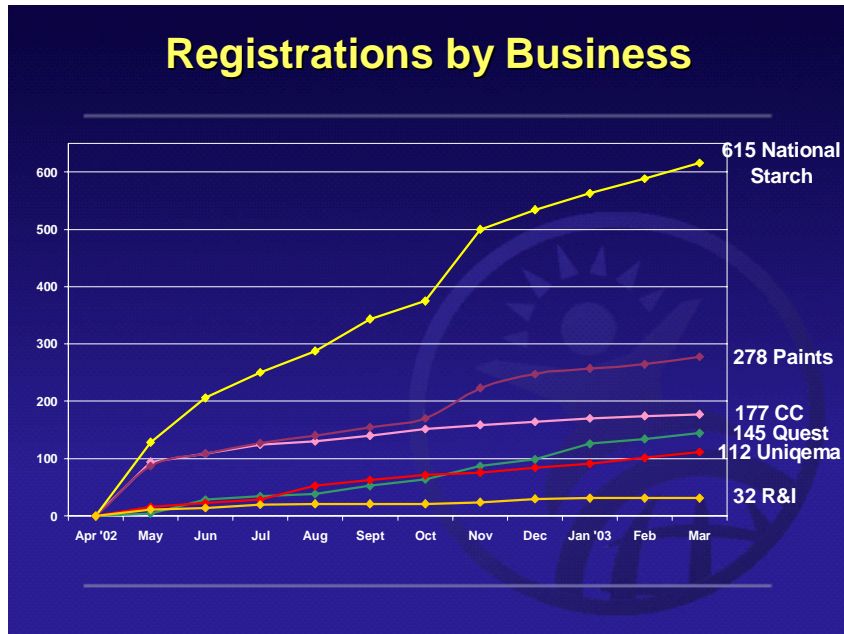


Figure 15: UK manufacturer measures registrations by business unit.

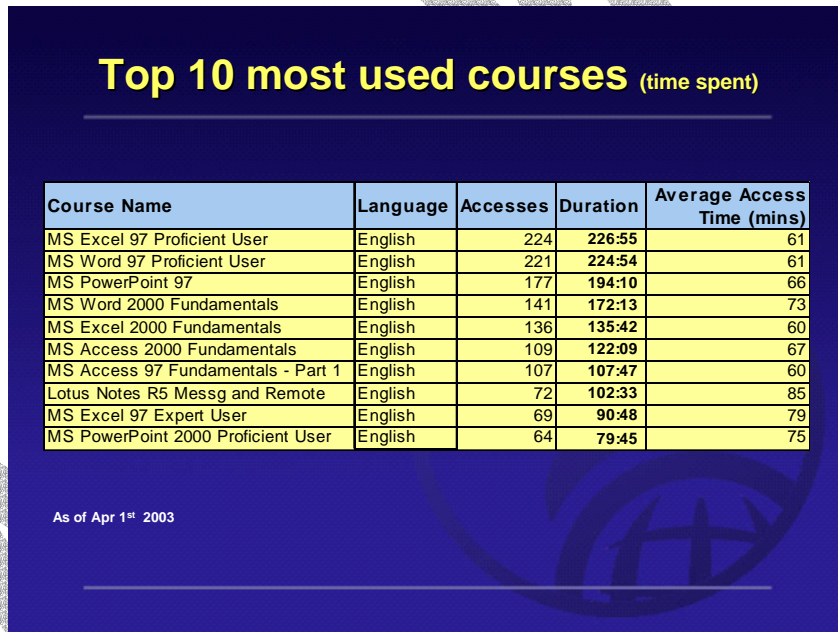


Figure 16: Measurement of utilization and response times

## Phase 5: Business Process Integration



### *What is Business Process Integration?*

The term "Business Process Integration" refers to linking an e-learning program directly into a line-of-business initiative or corporate goal. For example, rather than "providing courses in IT training to improve productivity," you can "deliver Microsoft Certification Programs as part of a corporate-wide initiative to achieve 80% compliance in Microsoft WindowsXP administration."

Every organization has dozens of business goals – some set at an individual workgroup level, some set at a corporate level. For your e-learning to be strategic and of high value, you should be developing and focusing on programs which fit into these strategic goals.

### *What usually does not work: Voluntary Catalogs*

## Companies Interviewed for this Study

---

Baxter Healthcare
Bell Canada
British Air
British Telecom
Ceridian
Circuit City
Cisco
CT Communications
Dell Computer
DigitalThink
Giant Eagle Foods
IBM
Intel
KPMG - BearingPoint
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
National Starch
Pearson Performance Solutions
Siemens
Siemens Energy and Communications
Sysco Foods
Tellabs
Verizon
Wells Fargo
WW Grainger