Redesigning Employee Training for a Digital Workforce

DDA Drive Digital Adoption

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WHY READ THIS WHITEPAPER?

Corporate spending is increasing heavily on two fronts. One, enterprise software and two, Learning and Development (L&D). Companies realize that both of these are key to insulation from disruption and general growth.

However, many companies are heavily struggling with both. Enterprise software adoption is proving to be a rough ride for a lot of companies, who are investing in technology, not just because of employees' resistance to change but also because current employee training methods are not aligned with employee expectations and learning habits. Mistargeted training techniques can also contribute

to employee attrition. As such, L&D leaders, training managers and instructional designers are increasingly facing challenges in delivering 'valuable' training and, more specifically, driving end user adoption of enterprise software.

In this whitepaper, we'll talk about the general state of digital transformation, why training employees the right way is critical to driving adoption as well as generating business outcomes. You'll also learn about a six-step learning implementation framework that is designed to meet the learning needs of today's digital ready workforce.

The Path To Digitisation Is Not Straightforward
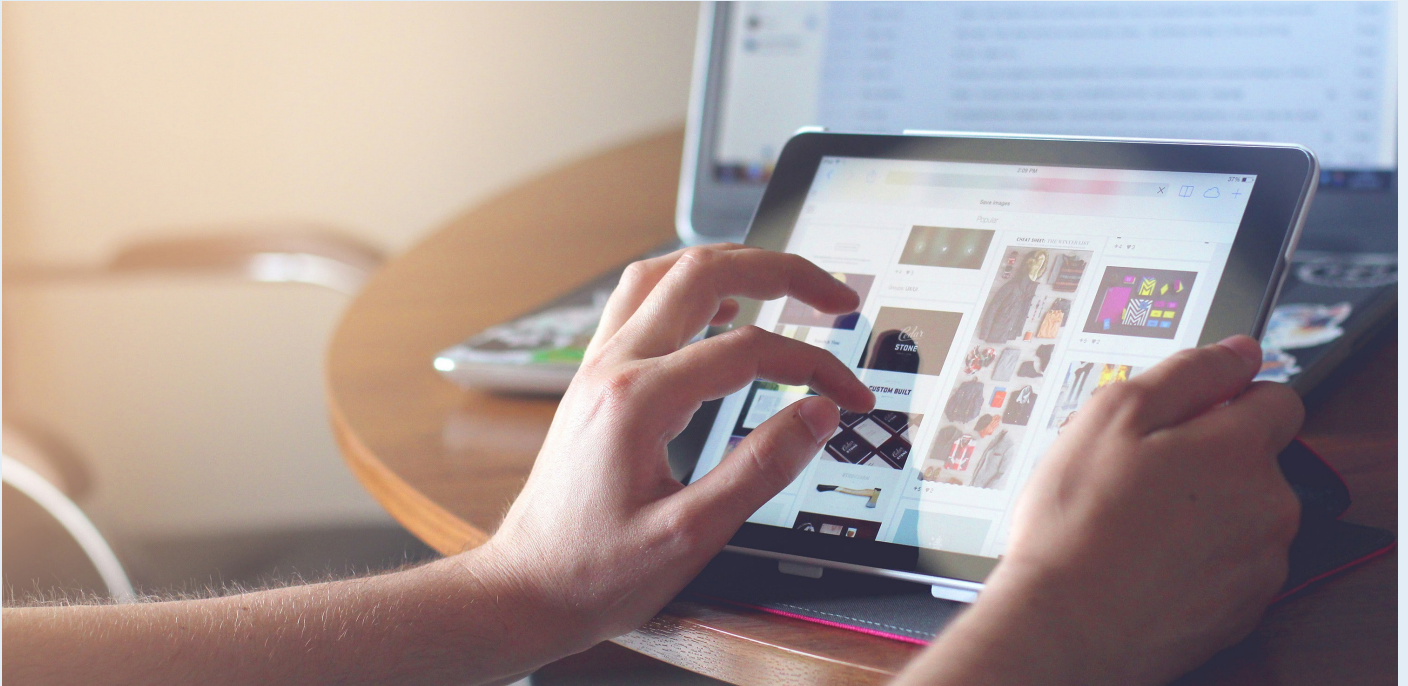
Every company may not be a technology company in the purest sense. But, every company is embracing digital to redefine their business models and drive revenues up per dollar spent. As a result, global IT spending is expected to surge to $3.784 trillion in 2019. Of this, the biggest growth is expected to be in the enterprise software segment.

Gartner forecasts that worldwide enterprise software spending will increase by nearly 10% from 2017 to 2019. From sales to procurement to legal, there is no department which doesn't want to optimize for the future. And companies see digital transformation through software applications as the best way to step into a sustainable future. But, that's not all. Companies using legacy software applications also see the benefits of migrating to cloud based applications. Vendors like SAP have seen strong growth in their cloud offerings in recent years and expect cloud to be their salesdriver in the future.

But the path is not as straightforward. Complicated applications like ERP, CRM and HCM take a long to be implemented. Yet, implementation is not the only factor in success. For instance, the results of a recent study lead to the inference that sales reps' biggest cause of frustration is their CRM application, precisely because they are unable to really exploit it. More often than not, it's end user adoption that's a great determinant of long term success. And that's where a lot of companies falter, leading to an unbelievably high rate of failure among large software implementation projects.

The key to enterprise software success in the long term lies in how quickly and effectively end users are able to derive value out of them. Companies need to move quickly to close the gap between the value they expect an application to deliver and the value employees are actually realizing.

Global enterprise software spending will increase by nearly 19% between 2017 and 2019 to $421 Billion.

This gap is often referred to as the consumption gap. The smaller this gap, the higher the chances of success.

End User Adoption Is Critical To Digital Success

Driving end user adoption of enterprise applications isn't a simple task. Training and application support are two vital pillars of user adoption. End user adoption is not a big challenge in consumer applications because the usability principles are at the forefront of application design. However, that can't be said of enterprise applications. That is because enterprise applications are functionality heavy.

That said, product vendors are perpetually trying to improve the usability of their software products considering business ecosystems are also increasingly getting consumerized. However, there is always a trade off between functionality and usability and product vendors are likely to lean towards the former. This puts the onus of end user adoption on the buyer companies.

Onboarding, training and overall enablement during the go-live phase following by support to ad-hoc queries are provided by companies. But companies are still following the legacy approach that is not in tune with the evolving demands and expectations of users.

A common method of training users is to provide live in-person instructor led training sessions during the go-live phase.

According to the Training Industry report of 2017, training expenditure in the US stood at $93.6 billion rising from $70.6 billion in the previous year. Interestingly, logistical expenditures on travel, facilities and equipment alone stood at $26.1 billion. In enterprises, instructor led training (both classroom and virtual) comprised of 48.3% of all training delivery modes. It may also be noted that almost a third of all enterprises use a combination of multiple delivery methods.

- The first big disadvantage of traditional training is that knowledge imparted in a classroom setting is seldom retained. Employees run the risk of forgetting what was taught in a classroom within a short period of time.

- The second big disadvantage is that traditional training doesn't allow for a hands-on approach or experiential learning. It is easy to recognize that 'experiential approach' is the most effective way for users to learn and retain knowledge, at least, when it comes to training on software products.

Also, companies spend thousands of dollars on holding instructor led training sessions but users never really go back to those sessions as a reference point. Instead, when users have query within the application, they find it easier to raise a support request or ask a colleague. Legacy training poses additional challenges in enterprises when software deployment is at scale and users are geographically distributed. In a lot of companies, users are also work remotely making tracking of training progress a huge obstacle.

Training expenditure per employee increased steeply from $1105 to $1886 between 2015 and 2017.

- 2017 Training Industry Report

Application support is also a challenging prospect since users would want to have their queries resolved instantly but a lag in resolution from the IT Service Management team can potentially derail workflows causing losses to the company.

CHALLENGES

Key Challenges With Current Training Practices

When it comes to training and supporting users on software applications, the focus of training should be to close the 'consumption gap.' That is the most effective way to drive user adoption. But the approach to training, and hence end user adoption, in most companies is completely top-down leading to several catastrophic challenges. Some of these challenges are listed here.

1. Out of Sync with User Expectations and Demands

Employees have less than 1% of their time available for learning and training, according to the 2018 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report. Yet, traditional training methods are time consuming and pull users away from their work environment to make them learn. Worse, most of the knowledge is lost in transition when they come back to their applications environment. The result is that, even after hours of training, users are unable to productively use the software applications despite having lost valuable time away from work. Employees want to train but not in a way that keeps them away from their core job.

2. Expensive to Create and Maintain Training Inventory

Irrespective of the training mode, creating and delivering training materials is an expensive affair, not just with instructor-led training but also with elearning courses. According to Karl Kapp and Robyn Defelice, it takes about 90-240 hours on average to create just one hour of elearning content. Costs are also rising. According to the Training Industry Report 2017, training expenditure per employee steeply rose from $1105 in 2015 to $1886 in 2017. Maintenance of training inventory is another additional expense since content has to be updated continuously.

3. Lack of Personalization and Context

Legacy technologies continue to generalize training going as far as role based segregation. However, in today's environment, it's important to take users' proficiency levels, learning pace and other such parameters into considering during training. Internal application support is also highly fragmented and context-less forcing users to spend lots of time figuring out software by themselves. The lack of personalization and context also reduces engagement levels with the software. This can cause waning adoption levels in the short term and project failure in the long term.

4. Inability of Track and Measure Progress

Companies truly lack the ability to understand how users are responding to training and if it's having a positive effect. As we step into a data and analytics driven world, Learning and Development (L&D) teams need the capability to see the positive effects of training methods, how users are coping with software and the corrective action that needs to be taken in order to drive adoption. The inability to measure success is a huge disadvantage that traditional methods carry with them.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Focusing On learning Habits And Expectations

To address concerns around training employees on software, companies need to develop a training and support framework that aligns with employee expectations. At the same time, it should be focused on helping users easily adopt new software products and drive business results.

The training framework needs to be a good blend of strategic vision, user focused technology, the right learning delivery model and apt communication. Such an approach will also help companies signifi-
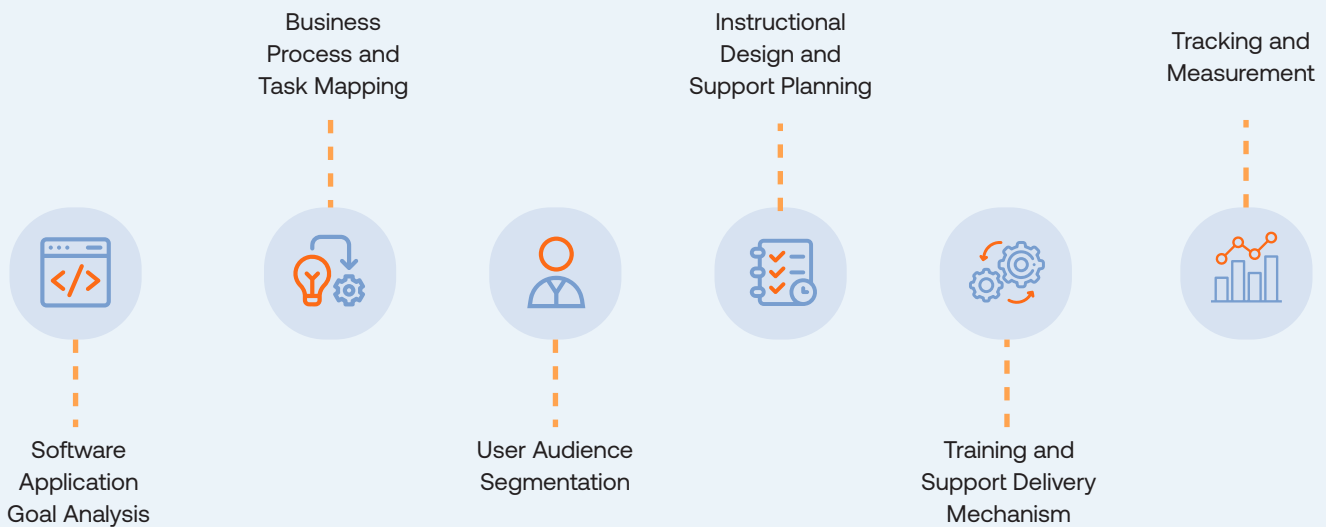
cantly reducing training and support costs. A practical example of this framework has already been established by Whatfix helping companies deliver training and support on their enterprise applications.

An adoption focused framework consists of a six step process. Whatfix Digital Guidance Platform helps companies drive most of the steps defined here.
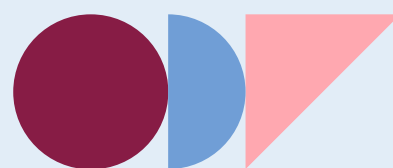
SIX STEP TRAINING FRAMEWORK TO DRIVE SOFTWARE USER ADOPTION

Business Process and Task Mapping

Instructional Design and Support Planning

Tracking and Measurement

Software Application Goal Analysis

User Audience Segmentation

Training and Support Delivery Mechanism

1. Software Application Goal Analysis

Companies must first define the objectives and outcomes they expect a new software application to fulfil. User adoption has to be measured against the objectives defined for that product. It is also a good practice to stagger objectives over a period of time so as to start with a smaller set of objectives and expand on them with time. Of course, such a tactic must be in sync with the overall strategic vision and payback timeline for the application.

2. Business Process and Task Mapping

Branching out from the objectives would be the specific business processes that companies want employees to drive with the application's aid. This would further map to specific tasks that users have perform within the application in order to complete workflows.

3. User Audience Segmentation

The complete user base of the application must also be segmented since different user groups would have different business outcomes to drive. For instance, users at the Manager level would have more outcomes to drive and, so, use more functionalities in a HCM application than staff level users. Training must always be specific and relevant to user segments and their KRAs.

4. Instructional Design and Support Planning

Based on the specific sets of application tasks, companies can plan their instructional design. Emphasis must be placed on a training design framework that is task based and delivers bursts of learning. The learning bursts help users understand their tasks in addition to why and how they can perform them within the application. Companies can also factor in the existing training resources they have and how that can be integrated into the overall framework so as to avoid a 'walled garden' approach. Training content must also be developed from an overall Knowledge Management perspective so that it can be effectively reused to automate the resolution of support queries.

5. Training and Support Delivery Mechanism

Training mechanism is one of the critical areas of consideration. Companies must choose a delivery mechanism that aligns with user expectations. Ondemand training and precise support at the moment of need are foremost among user demands. Almost 49% users prefer to learn exactly at the point of need, according to the LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2018. In this case, the application which users are learning to use itself would be the point of need. And so, for best results, companies need to move away from the traditionally used disjointed method of training and use pragmatic mechanisms that are asynchronous and more consumerized in approach.

6. Tracking and Measurement

The last step is to progressively track user performance and measure results from the training framework. Gaps can be easily identified based on users' engagement with the application and their process requirement. Eventually, companies would be able to easily measure the overall user adoption level when they observe product usage against the objectives that were set in the first step.

Whatfix has helped companies implement agile framework of user adoption helping them become more agile and flexible. Whatfix customers have achieved incredibly high rates of user adoption within short periods of time. As a result, they manage to significantly shorten their software application payback period. At the same time, they also realize value on their software investments which then directly impacts topline revenue.
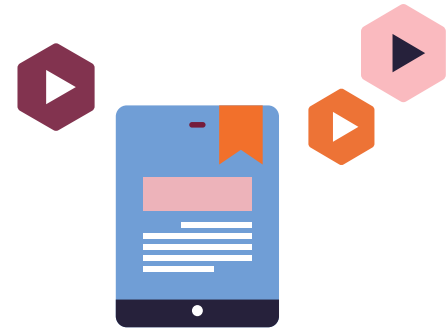
Setting aside an entire day, or even half a day, for regular learning often isn't practical. People learn best when they get snackable and bitesize learning frequently.

- Leena Nair, Chief HR Officer, Unilever

Training Must Align With Changed Learning Habits

A significant aspect of a successful user adoption plan is the training design and delivery mechanism. The LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report for 2018 serves as a good reference point for employees' learning preferences. Digital learning is a no-brainer in today's workplace environment where users are always running short on time. In fact, getting users to make time for learning is the biggest challenge for L&D teams across companies. The best way to overcome this challenge is to align training practices with user expectations.

1. Training Must Be Workplace Oriented

It might sound contradictory but employees want to learn when they are at work even though they can't find the time to do it. A lot of elearning applications and LMS platforms expect users to learn when they are not actually working and that is highly unrealistic in today's environment. The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that users actually learn but without spending a lot of time away from work. So, the solution is to have learning integrated within the work environment

so as to provide a more experiential learning ecosystem. This also reduces the friction in learning. Such an approach will help allay employee fears about learning in itself since they are not going fall off the pace. At the same time, they continue learning and improving proficiency levels in efficiently using software applications.

2. Training Must Be On-Demand

We live in an on-demand economy which is highly consumerized. Enterprise or consumer, software applications are increasingly turning on-demand with cloud offerings. Training can't be different. It needs to be provided at the point users need it which is within the software application. This again means that training needs to be integrated into the live application. With the integration, training has to be available to users when they summon it. So, training content needs to easily searchable and on-demand. And that it can be accessed quickly without having to go through the rigours of searching for information within a knowledge base or a elearning course.

3. Training Must Be Task Based

At least when it comes to enterprise software applications, training has to be task based. Training must be micro sized and very specific to tasks within the application. The idea should always to be ensure that users are able to consume the application without being overwhelmed. Also, training that is task based helps build that task completion memory since it is highly experiential.

> *If employees can't find the time to learn, reduce the friction. Meet them on platforms they're already using with messages that align to their on-the-job needs and professional aspirations.*
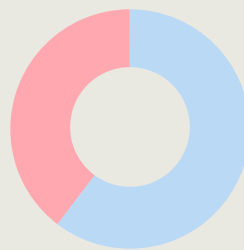>
> *- 2018 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report*

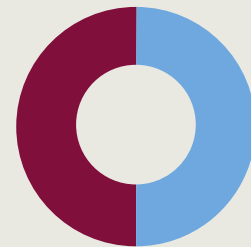## EMPLOYEE LEARNING HABITS HAVE CHANGED DRASTICALLY
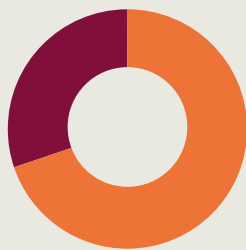
68%
Employees Prefer to Learn at their Place of Work

58%
Employees Prefer to Learn at Their Own Pace

49%
Employees Prefer to Learn at the Point of Need

The Need For Next-Gen Training is Now

Every company may not be a technology company. But every company needs to be a learning company. Employees need to learn everyday and constantly build on their skillsets. A business centric approach to software training must be applied in order to achieve a high level of end user adoption.

At the same time, a robust platform for successful training content development and delivery is also an imperative for companies today. Modern training and support technologies like the one provided by Whatfix empower companies to redefine the way their employees and application users learn. These are also designed in such a way that there is perfect

alignment with software end user expectations. The way users want to learn tomorrow may be different from how they are learning today. As it stands, most companies are not even prepared for today's user learning demands.

Companies have to move quickly to not just sync with their employee expectations but also to future proof their training practices.

As companies continue to invest in technology and software applications generally, there is a definitely increased need for investing in next-gen training technologies.

Some of the immediate benefits companies can realize are:

- Faster time-to-value for software applications helping companies get higher returns.

- Reduced expenditure on training inventory development and delivery as well as support query resolution.

- Improved employee engagement and productivity resulting in higher per capita revenue generation.

- Increased compliance and business process accuracy.

⬤⬤◖ CONCLUSION

Companies today have to spend lesser than they ever did and yet drive more revenues. No matter which industry it is, disruption is just around the corner. For every company that has been successful over the last century, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of technologists successfully trying to change the fundamental business models. With 15 years of existence, Tesla has achieved the status of the most valuable car company in the United States, ahead of General Motors, which was founded 110 years ago. Tesla is a car company at the basic level, but is fundamentally so different from GM. Amazon has about half of the entire ecommerce market share in the United States when Walmart has single digit percentage share in the same market.

In such a situation, people are the most valuable assets they have today and it's going to be an appreciating asset, only if companies invest in their employees and help them become better. But companies must take care to invest the right way so as to improve employee skills progressively or risk losing to competitors and disruptors who are already digitally native. If they are to excel, companies must do the same internally because consumer and employee behavior is increasingly converging.

Transforming digitally is the best way forward for companies, yet, while doing so, many of them forget their own human resources. Many times, companies forget that software alone cannot propel them to success. Software can only aid in that process. It is the employees who can lead companies to newer heights. And training and learning is critical to this process.

Whatfix is a leading Digital Guidance and Engagement Platform which empowers organizations to efficiently manage the end-to-end enterprise software adoption lifecycle of their end users. Whatfix helps companies onboard, train and s upport end users on software applications without any external intervention delivering a seamless product experience.

For this, the platform allows companies to create and embed interactive walkthroughs, within any web application, guiding users through every step of a workflow in real-time. By addressing the critical product adoption challenge, Whatfix helps reduce end users' time-to-competence thereby improving their productivity and performance.

The Whatfix platform seamlessly fits into the application stack of an organization allowing for rapid deployment on any one or multiple software applications at enterprise scale.

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