

PERSPECTIVES

Is Blended Learning a Part of Your Training Mix? Here's Why it Should Be.

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For any organization that invests time and money on training efforts, introducing blended learning can pay big dividends. While it sounds like smoothies are heavily involved, blended learning is a structured learning program that consists of two or more media types with instructor-led time mixed with eLearning. It ultimately provides something for all types of learners: auditory, kinetic and visual. PSCU began implementing blended learning several years ago and recently realized substantial success from our efforts.

Last year, the Learning Solutions team at PSCU designed an award-winning new hire program for the Member Services arm of our call center operations. As a Credit Union Service Organization (CUSO), the improvements we make to internal training directly benefit our Member-Owners. The dividends from this program were three-fold.

1. First, we were able to halve the length of the program to two weeks, allowing us to onboard new employees much faster and get them working for our members sooner.



Gina Lensky
Master Learning Architect

Gina Lensky, Master Learning Architect, has more than a decade of experience in the learning industry, having started her career as a facilitator. She then found her true love, instructional design. For the last five years, Gina has enjoyed building impactful learning programs that balance the needs of the learner with the business.

2. Second, we saw a 15 percent increase in quality scores and a 100 percent decrease in class attrition, which means that new employees are better prepared and more engaged, providing a better member experience to the credit union members they serve.
3. Third, since we were able to reduce overall training time, PSCU will save several hundred thousand training dollars annually, and allow our trainers to use that time for valuable upskilling training.

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The PSCU Member Services new hire program was awarded a silver medal for 'Best Use of Blended Learning' from the Brandon Hall Group, a leader in the field of Human Capital Management. The blended learning design was judged on the following criteria: fit the need, design of the program, functionality, innovation, and overall measureable benefits. PSCU joins other industry-leading winners MasterCard, Ernst and Young, and Emirates NBD Bank.

The success of the program developed at PSCU is largely due to the methodology used to create it. Designing blended learning begins with uncovering the goals of the business. Within the framework of the stated business goals, you then analyze the content to be presented along with the needs of the learners. All of this leads to selecting the media blend best suited to the content type, the business goals and the learners' needs. If the learning is linked to the goals of the business in this way, success is easily won.

When designing the new hire program, the PSCU team was tasked with creating an effective and agile training program

with components that could be reused for refresher training or remediation. We needed to address current knowledge gaps, including gaps in member service skills. It was also a requirement that learners complete assessments to evaluate knowledge transfer. Using the business goals as the guide, we created a blend of instructor-led training, eLearning and interactive learning exercises. Scenario-based practice and assessments simulated the job environment to help ease the learners' transition from the classroom to the job. Activities allowed the learners to practice technical skills in conjunction with their member service skills. Throughout the training, results of knowledge checks, activities and assessments were tracked and used for coaching.

So pull out the mixer: implementing blended learning can help your organization achieve its goals.