

# How to effectively leverage new technologies and approaches to engage your workforce on ethics and compliance

The challenge of helping the workforce connect with and exemplify corporate values is by no means straightforward. It is even more difficult when your technology and media-savvy employees are dispersed across office locations around the world, and already entrenched in various media channels competing for their attention. Alongside Facebook, YouTube, podcasts etc, your compliance training may need a new approach from its traditional format to inspire employees and foster behavioral change.

Often overlooked are the scientific underpinnings of learning that should dictate where we begin with educational design. Thanks to major advances in adult learning theory and cognition, we know more than ever about how the mind absorbs and retains information. There are several key principles to help you determine the most suitable approach for leveraging new-to-the-world technologies in your enterprise education.

## Draw inspiration for learning approaches from new digital media.

A host of cutting-edge technologies are rapidly emerging as powerful learning mediums, affording creativity in designing innovative programs. By harnessing the engagement principles behind new digital media such as gaming, animation and mobile delivery, companies can create learning content that captivates employees, to actively engage them with the compliance subject matter and apply it in their roles.

Legally-based subject matter wrapped in rich graphics and accessible delivery methods is proving a successful formula for developing learning experiences that are enjoyable in themselves – while increasing comprehension. It is necessary to look to the latest technologies in the public domain that are already capturing workers' hearts and minds, and leverage them appropriately in corporate education.

## Keep the learner firmly in mind when considering new approaches.

The success of any ethics program is a direct result of how the material is applied on the job – be it recalling the legislation at a key moment or representing company values where the rule of law is not clear. Novel technologies alone will not generate tangible business outcomes; they must be fully supported by an appreciation of the human learning context.

More than an extensive toolkit of new features, it is skilled instructional design that lies at the heart of an effective educational approach. Every piece of learning, online or in the classroom, should be designed with the end learner firmly in mind. Instructional designers recognize that a learner-centric approach, facilitated by the correct delivery format, is the key to inspiring, meaningful education.

## The impact of blended learning: Adults retain...

- 10% of what is read**
- 20% of what is heard**
- 80% of what is experienced**

Source: Peer Research Laboratory at the Graduate School of the City University of New York

## Deliver education in discrete segments at regular intervals.

Research demonstrates that well-rooted learning is achieved by making stronger “paths” in the brain – that is, by repeatedly activating cerebral nerve connections to establish a lasting memory trace. Attention, engagement and motivation all play a large part in how strongly brain cells are “wired” together.

Behavior cannot be fundamentally changed as result of a single intervention. Attitudes shift over time; only a coordinated ethics and compliance program, comprising a variety of learning interventions, will ensure workers not only understand the law and company values but implicitly behave in accordance with them on a daily basis.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to deliver knowledge in discrete segments, disseminated at regular intervals over time to avoid overloading the individual with too much information at once. Like all learners, employees benefit from extensive reinforcement of what they have learned in order to ultimately reflect the knowledge in their behaviors, attitudes and actions.

## Implement multi-national friendly instruction.

Reaching employees around the globe in their local language ensures a personalized user experience, and ultimately improves their comprehension and retention of the course material. Using illustrative, non-video techniques in your training modules will not only accommodate low bandwidth environments, it will allow for language translation to be more easily implemented, saving time and money.

## Consider innovative visual treatments.

The effectiveness of an ethics education program, rooted in expert instructional design, can be radically enhanced with the appropriate graphical treatment. Wrapping a course in the most compelling look and feel for the target audience helps to establish an emotional hook with learners, drawing them into a deeper connection with the subject content.

Any number of styles can be considered to achieve the greatest impact, depending on the messages or knowledge to be conveyed and the demographic of recipient workers. For example, any of the following objectives may apply:

- An inspiring, values-based on-boarding package for new employees
- Post-course reviews deployed to workers’ mobile devices
- Shaping employees’ behavior via the epistemic gaming format
- Relevant, contextual scenarios to highlight critical learning points
- A compelling Code of Conduct course featuring key business executives

The following examples demonstrate the variety of innovative visual treatments and education techniques that may be adopted to achieve the learning outcome desired.

**Photo animation** is a graphical style that combines photos of real people within a graphical environment. The use of photo illustration is particularly popular with younger learners and in organizations with key figures who are willing to participate as characters within the modules.



Photo animation is used to effectively re-create a realistic office environment that brings a relevant learning scenario to life.



Sales personnel are trained on retail procedures by photo animation characters that place them in various situations they may actually encounter with customers on the store floor.

**Poser 3D technology** as a design environment for online learning has been driven by the need to present contemporary and visually appealing education that can be easily updated and changed. This is in response to the growing requirement for realistic non-video experiences that are not too much like a cartoon.

Where the learning objective is to influence employee behavior, Poser's true-to-life scenarios – customizable to any relevant backdrop – resonate with the learner, helping them fully comprehend how the regulation could be applied in their work.



Poser graphics used to represent multiple characters in a fraud action sequence to engage the learner.

### Leverage emerging innovative technologies.

**Serious (or epistemic) gaming** has proven a compelling and effective medium to encourage employees to reflect on ethical issues and test the validity of their decision-making around values and compliance. Well-crafted games create an emotional commitment in the learner by offering choice and the sense that they are in control of the process. Vicariously experiencing ethical dilemmas can help employees better understand the impact of their business conduct in light of the company's goals and mission.

One organization leading the way in educational practice is the UK Ministry of Defence. Military training techniques must continually break new ground to stay one step ahead, and epistemic games are often used to deploy task-focused, simulated exercises that help learners activate their knowledge correctly in their real working lives.



Enhanced photo-realistic animation with user interactivity in this climate change game engages the user by drawing them into the experience rather than simply watching it.

In the private sector, serious games can also be used to similar effect. Adopting a “contemporary cartoon” style game, a major telecommunications company developed an animated story based around a code-breaking theme, for employees and customers alike. Intelligent use of sound effects, a narrator, and all-important interactive elements appeal to a diverse target audience.

**Second Life**, a virtual world “inhabited” by over 8 million users worldwide, presents opportunities for employees to solidify their knowledge by enacting scenarios within pre-built environments. A large food manufacturer, for instance, has created a virtual supermarket where employees can interact with suppliers to learn about the regulation and processes involved. The example illustrates how Second Life might be harnessed to immerse corporate workers in challenging subject matter and emphasize how the legislation impacts them directly.

Technically, there are no barriers to developing ready-made avatars in Second Life that employees can easily manipulate to explore a series of scripted ethical scenarios, testing decisions and their consequences in a safe setting. Interactive exercises strengthen the compliance message and give workers a way to think creatively about ethical responses.



Avatar from Second Life in real-world environment can interact with scripted scenarios personalizing the user experience.

**Mobile learning** can reinforce key learning messages, delivered in discrete segments at regular intervals over time. Succinct reminders or refreshers deployed to workers' mobile devices help underline the essential topic points and layer the material into a solid comprehension. Moreover, time-pressured workers are able to access their education away from the desktop for bite-sized, self-paced learning.

Such benefits to the learner make mobile content delivery one of the most effective ways of teaching; indeed, it facilitates the key learning elements of attention, engagement and motivation. As technology advances and rich games are deployed to mobile devices, the two formats combined – with their respective advantages – will support maximal retention of knowledge.



Visual scenario represented clearly on the screen of a mobile communication device allows user to connect anytime, anywhere which is most convenient for them.

**Ethics and compliance education** is evolving to meet the changing nature of today's workers, the business environments they inhabit and new ways of interacting with information. It is an exciting time to be in the midst of the ongoing educational evolution, scanning the horizon for future technological advancements and an ever deeper understanding of learning principles.

More companies are pushing the boundaries to communicate their corporate values with an optimal blend of cutting edge technology platforms that uniquely compliment their education programs.

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