WNS

Re-imagining Talent Development for the Digital-Era Enterprise

Anuradha Umalker,
Senior General Manager, Training & Development
(Shipping & Logistics)

Learning has long been the bedrock of business success. A century ago, firms such as General Motors and General Electric pioneered standardized in-house programs to build basic enterprise-wide skills. Since then, many companies have fleshed out, or subscribed to, targeted academic programs and leadership training centers.

More recently, in the face of COVID-19, businesses across the world have been forced to develop new strategies, with very little planning time, to address unforeseen challenges. The talent pool of skilled workers has shrunk, and employers are seeking ways to ensure recruits are job-ready quickly, in line with business demand. Innovative technologies, including blockchain, robotics and workplace automation, have helped streamline many logistics processes and improve workplace efficiencies. However, they have also increased the skill level needed to be successful on the job.
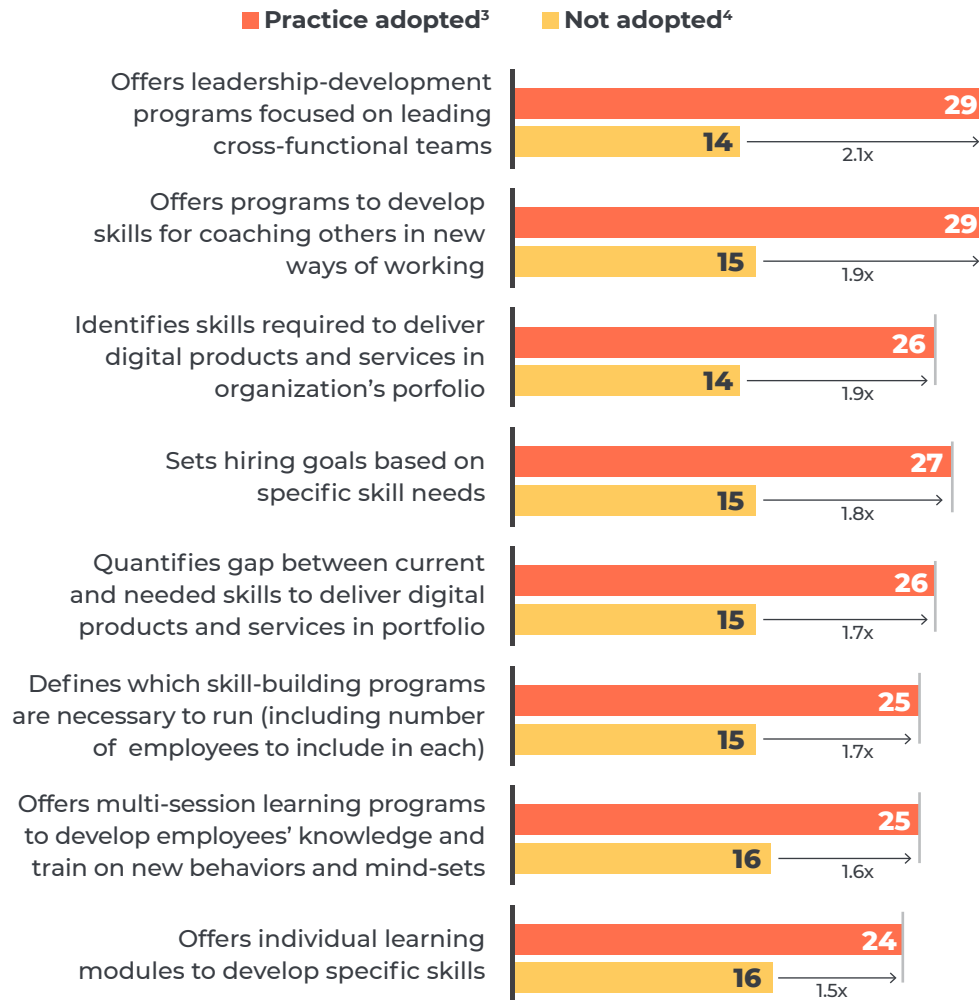
Given these conditions and the need to be future-ready, companies must strive to transform their training programs from traditional Learning Management Systems (LMS) into highly efficient, intuitive and effective learning platforms.

In the digital era, corporate learning platforms must enable:

- A reduced learning curve, allowing the rate of learning new skills to translate into cost savings for the company

- 'Anytime, Anywhere' learning to minimize workflow disruptions and enhanced scalability

- Experiential and situational learning that can be applied from day one

- Repeatable, reliable and contextual training across geographies

- Efficient delivery and management of training over different stages of the employee's tenure, with quantifiable measures for assessing success

- Personalization for increased learner engagement and output

- Smarter, performance-oriented decision-making capabilities

A McKinsey study showed how firms undertaking digital transformation must invest in developing relevant organization-wide skills. Transformation success was over three times more likely where respondents indicated that their organizations had invested correctly in digital talent.[1]

Success rate of digital trasformations,[1] by adoption of organization-wide workforce and talent practices,[2] % of respondents

■ Practice adopted[3]　　■ Not adopted[4]

Practice	Adopted	Not adopted	Multiplier
Offers leadership-development programs focused on leading cross-functional teams	29	14	2.1x
Offers programs to develop skills for coaching others in new ways of working	29	15	1.9x
Identifies skills required to deliver digital products and services in organization's porfolio	26	14	1.9x
Sets hiring goals based on specific skill needs	27	15	1.8x
Quantifies gap between current and needed skills to deliver digital products and services in portfolio	26	15	1.7x
Defines which skill-building programs are necessary to run (including number of employees to include in each)	25	15	1.7x
Offers multi-session learning programs to develop employees' knowledge and train on new behaviors and mind-sets	25	16	1.6x
Offers individual learning modules to develop specific skills	24	16	1.5x

[1]Respondents who report success say their organizations' transformations were very or completely successful at both improving performance and equipping the organizations to sustain improvements over time; n = 263.
[2]Question was not asked of respondents who say their organizations significantly underinvested in digital talent during their transformations.
[3]Includes respondents who said that a given practice has been adopted in more than 1 function or business unit, or organization-wide, since the transformation began.
[4]Includes respondents who said that a given practice has not been adopted in more than 1 function or business unit, or organization-wide, since the transformation began.
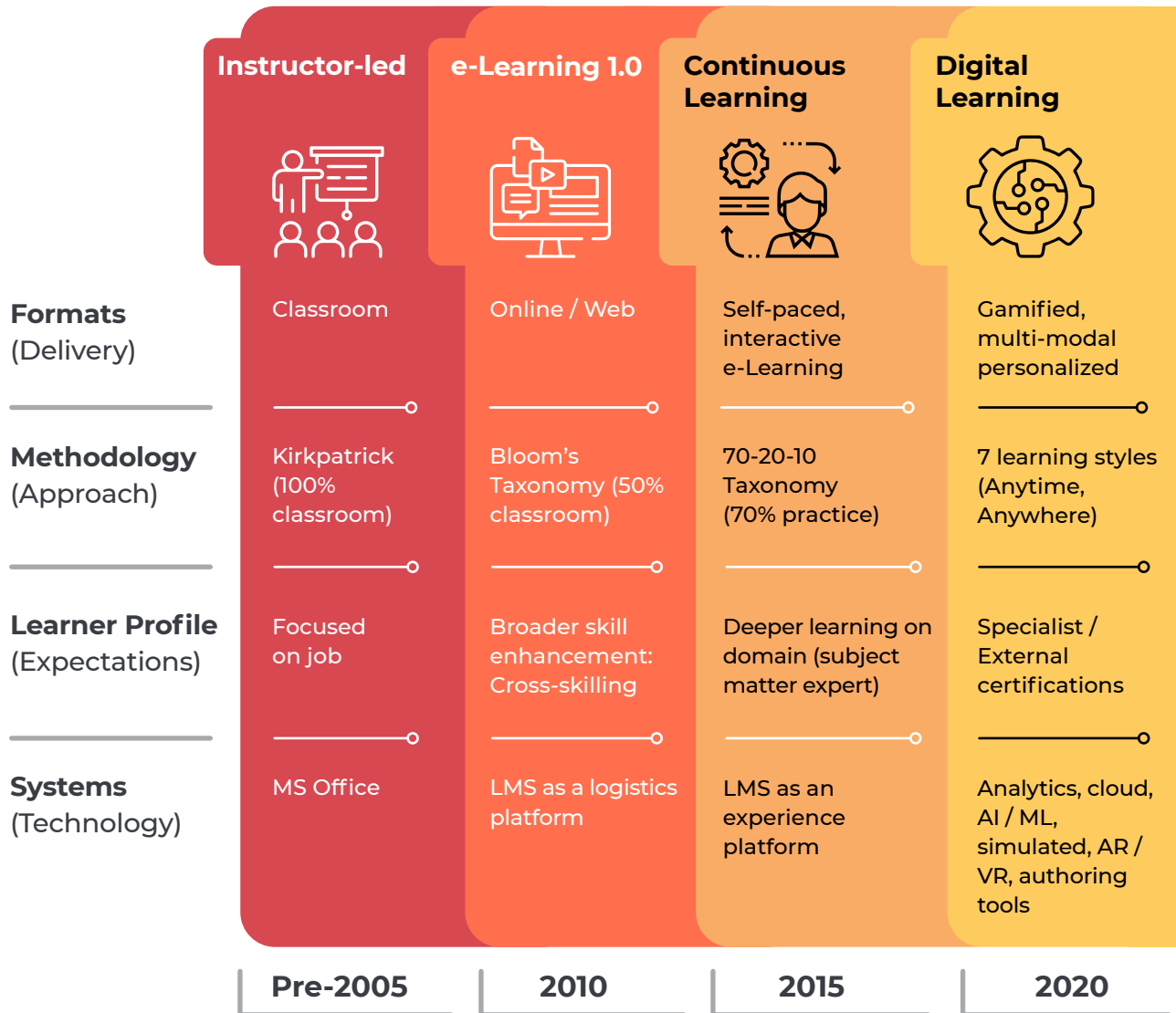
Source: McKinsey

Digital evolution, in turn, has unfolded tremendous opportunities in the manner and format of delivering such learning. COVID-19 added urgency and gave organizations a strong impetus to invest in digital learning systems and methodologies. However, content and event-driven models are yet to make the big leap to performance and competency-led learning journeys that synchronize business and learner needs. This is well reflected in companies' struggles to create learning environments that enable rapid skilling.

[1] The keys to a successful digital transformation | McKinsey

The Evolution of Learning Technologies

Digital learning is revolutionary. Since the advent of modern internet-user experiences and Artificial Intelligence (AI), it has been constantly evolving to better leverage technological advances. Understanding and adopting the right types of digital learning is essential if we want to fully capitalize on the digital learning revolution.

	Instructor-led	e-Learning 1.0	Continuous Learning	Digital Learning
Formats (Delivery)	Classroom	Online / Web	Self-paced, interactive e-Learning	Gamified, multi-modal personalized
Methodology (Approach)	Kirkpatrick (100% classroom)	Bloom's Taxonomy (50% classroom)	70-20-10 Taxonomy (70% practice)	7 learning styles (Anytime, Anywhere)
Learner Profile (Expectations)	Focused on job	Broader skill enhancement: Cross-skilling	Deeper learning on domain (subject matter expert)	Specialist / External certifications
Systems (Technology)	MS Office	LMS as a logistics platform	LMS as an experience platform	Analytics, cloud, AI / ML, simulated, AR / VR, authoring tools
	Pre-2005	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**

Effective Learning: Customized Courses to Improve Learning Proficiency

The digital transformation of learning is far more than the extension of e-Learning. It requires a new and re-imagined mindset that enables robust business continuity with strategies and tools for sustaining future-relevant knowledge. This includes leveraging AI and Machine Learning (ML) to simulate on-the-job situations and support the learning process.

Such organizational learning must also be institutionalized in the workflow instead of merely engaging the employee with isolated events. It must be structured around a series of activities (such as teamwork, face-to-face courses and e-Learning courses) and be woven into a customized and experiential learning journey, leveraging digital training tools.

For increased efficacy, the learning curve can be reduced, and the courses made flexible and aligned to specific business and personal needs. Employees can thus continuously improve their knowledge and skills without hindering business continuity or affecting productivity.

A bouquet of highly effective and engaging digital training tools and platforms, sequentially and logically woven across the employee's tenure, would achieve this goal. A look at some of the key aspects of a best-in-class training framework illustrates this point:

Blended Learning	Personalized Learning
Gamification	Simulations
Learning Analytics	Open Education Resources
Microlearning	Classroom Technologies
Augmented & Virtual Reality	e-Learning

Digital Methodologies – Hire to Retire

A bouquet of tools and platforms that drive learning efficiency across the employee lifecycle:

e-Learning on LXP

- Domain / Industry-specific e-Learning content
- Assessments and tollgates on the LMS

Authoring Tool for Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

- Standardized SOPs with detailed key-stroke level screen captures in video output
- Engaging and simple reference material for employees
- Effective knowledge transfer

Gamification

- An engaging system of earning points & badges to reward progress in learning
- Leaderboards to bring in a healthy competitive spirit among teams

Virtual SME

- The chatbot solution for 24/7 and instant query resolution
- Dashboard and analysis of queries raised

Process Training Simulation platform

- AI / ML-based simulation training
- Anytime, Anywhere (WFO / WFH) process training
- Replacing instructor with a personalized virtual coach
- Repeatable, reliable & objective dissemination of knowledge
- Experiential and situational learning based on the job
- Application of learning from day one and instant feedback
- Real time & continuous data tracking

Microlearning Platform

- Monthly process knowledge tests
- Update dissemination
- Refreshers & remediation trainings
- Dashboard & leaderboards
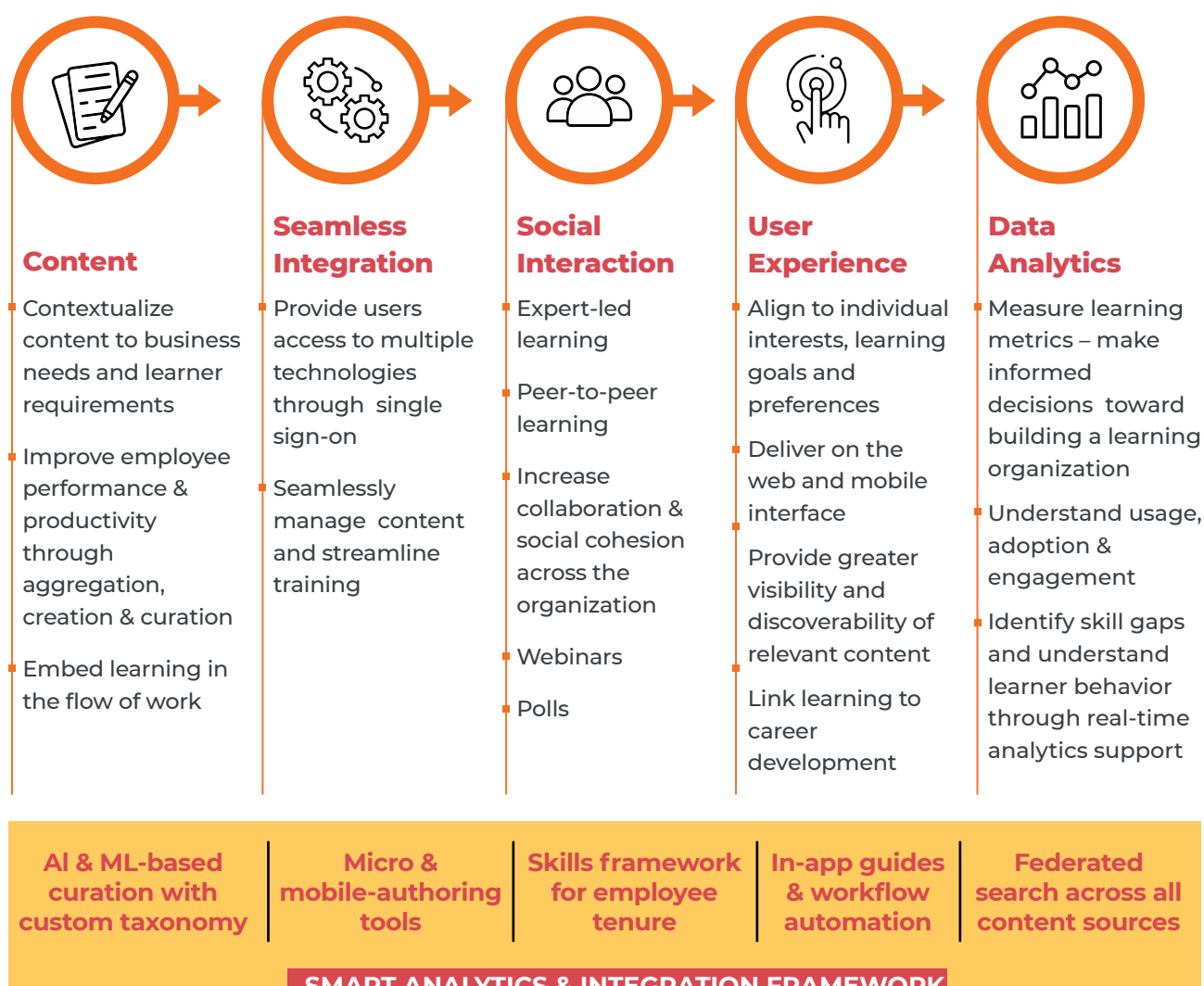- Coaching & feedback effectiveness
- Polls & surveys
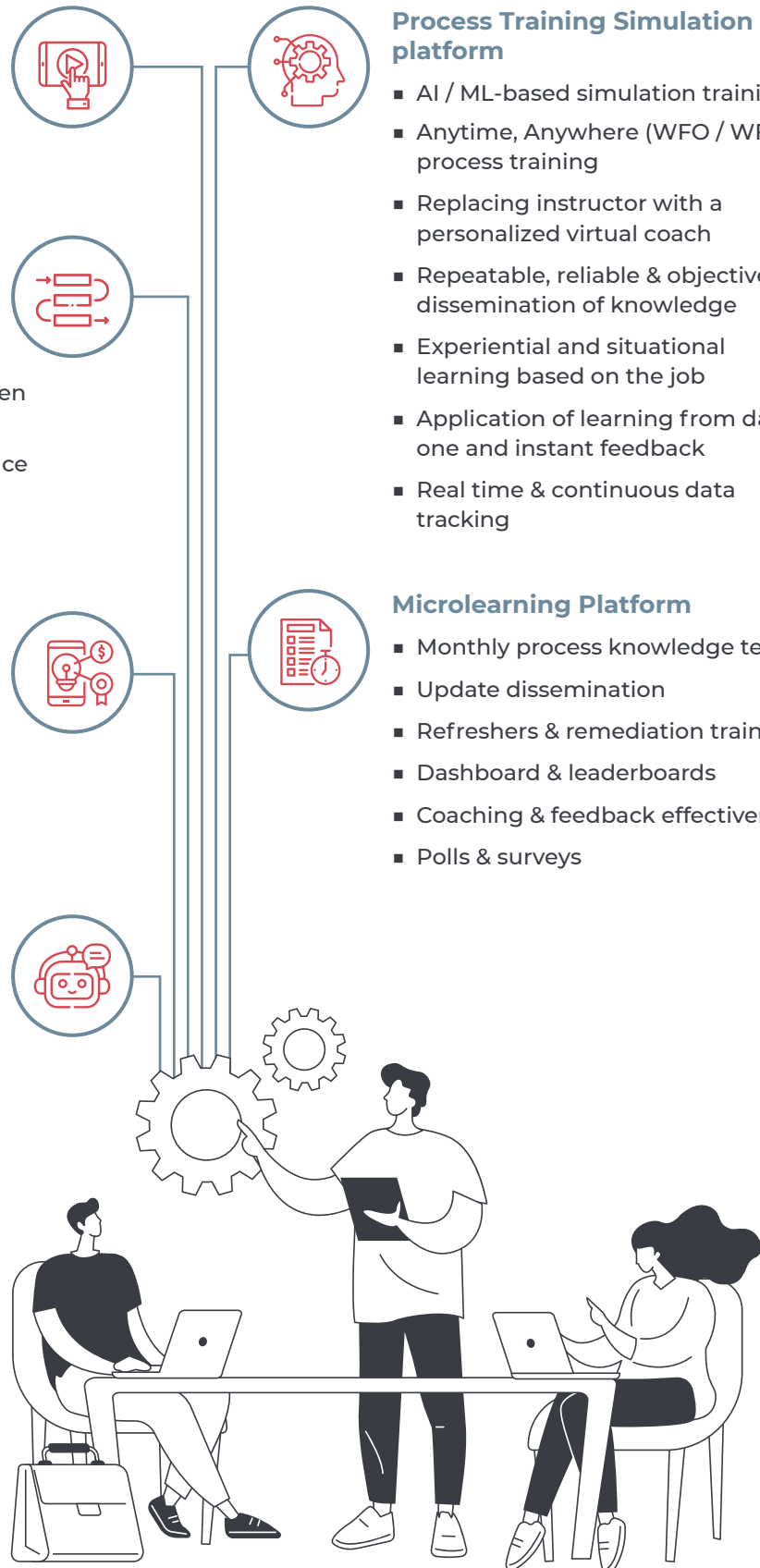
1. The Learning Experience Platform

Located at the core of an effective digital learning ecosystem, the Learning Experience Platform (LXP) should help users discover curated learning opportunities aligned with their professional goals. Combining learning content from different sources, it should leverage AI to create personalized recommendations and deliver them across digital touchpoints. All industry-based learning resources would be hosted on the LXP, with a clear progression from entry levels to specialized mastery within a discipline.

LXP – Core Capabilities

Content

- Contextualize content to business needs and learner requirements
- Improve employee performance & productivity through aggregation, creation & curation
- Embed learning in the flow of work

Seamless Integration

- Provide users access to multiple technologies through single sign-on
- Seamlessly manage content and streamline training

Social Interaction

- Expert-led learning
- Peer-to-peer learning
- Increase collaboration & social cohesion across the organization
- Webinars
- Polls

User Experience

- Align to individual interests, learning goals and preferences
- Deliver on the web and mobile interface
- Provide greater visibility and discoverability of relevant content
- Link learning to career development

Data Analytics

- Measure learning metrics – make informed decisions toward building a learning organization
- Understand usage, adoption & engagement
- Identify skill gaps and understand learner behavior through real-time analytics support

AI & ML-based curation with custom taxonomy	Micro & mobile-authoring tools	Skills framework for employee tenure	In-app guides & workflow automation	Federated search across all content sources

SMART ANALYTICS & INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

Security | Productivity | Performance | Future-ready Workforce | Innovation

Micro-authoring Tools – Smartcards, Pathways, Journey, Badges

Learning Events – Webinars, Virtual ILT, e-Learning Courses, Videos, Podcasts, Quizzes, Polls, Knowledge Tests, Digital Documents

Mobile-authoring Tools – Livestream, Ask Me Anything

Additional Features – Manager Dashboard, Skills Passport, Bookmark the Content, Follow a Channel, Like & Comment, Follow a Leader / SME

2. Simulation and Adaptive Learning Platform

An adaptive learning system involves designing an intelligent digital training methodology with a powerful practice engine and built-in assessments and dashboards to measure and analyze a learner's comprehension and growth through the learning journey. The latest AI advances can be leveraged to design robust simulations to deliver superior learning and provide hands-on experience right from day one of training. This will enable the application of knowledge early on in a safe and remediation-driven environment. Data from learners can be used to gauge their strengths, adjust content delivery and promote development in a personalized, 'Anytime, Anywhere' ecosystem to bring out their maximum potential. A global shipping and logistics player achieved a staggering 37 percent reduction in the learning curve and close to 15 percent productivity improvement through such a digital transformation of their learning system.

3. Microlearning and Gamification

A mobile-first microlearning methodology is a must in the digital era. It can deliver short bursts of content targeting the specific needs of learners based on their performance on key business quality metrics. Content can take many forms, from text to full-blown interactive multimedia, making it an engaging medium. Proactive knowledge checks — assessments, quizzes, etc. — can be designed at desired frequencies. It can also disseminate real-time process updates and critical announcements.

Gamification is an acknowledged methodology when it comes to increasing learning engagement. Embedding game elements and augmented / virtual reality into the learning environment can positively change learning behaviors, offer inspiration, enhance certain abilities and foster peer learning.

A multi-national business process management company experienced tremendous success in its adoption of microlearning, with its employees in the shipping and logistics arm rating the program 8.5 (on a scale of 10) for effectiveness.

4. Virtual Support Bot

A virtual subject matter expert (bot), customized for specific processes, can simulate user conversations and make information available 24/7, instantly and accurately. This is especially useful for new learners and remote workers as it eliminates wait times to resolve queries, thereby enhancing the productivity and accuracy of transactions. Advanced AI, ML and natural language processing would enable such bots to learn as they go and deliver increasingly personalized and conversational experiences. Analyzing user history, preferences, and other information, digital assistants can answer complex questions, provide recommendations, make predictions, and even provide insights and analysis on user behavior.

5. Learning Analytics

Learning analytics introduces data mining to the learning experience by tracking big data patterns across the users' universe. The analytics process involves the collection, measurement and analysis of that data, which could lead to effective skill mapping and performance-based business decisions. Analytics on individuals and user groups further provides inputs for new methods, structures and designs that can be implemented within the training framework.

In Conclusion

Given that learning has evolved by leaps and bounds in the last two years, designing digital learning is a massive opportunity that takes time and commitment. Vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plans must harmonize perfectly and with minimal workflow disruption. Therefore, it is ideal for companies to leverage tested and proven digital learning journeys that maximize personalization, engagement, scalability and consistency.

Know how the digital training framework WNS iLearn can help you pivot to a digital-first learning ecosystem.

About WNS

WNS (Holdings) Limited (NYSE: WNS) is a leading Business Process Management (BPM) company. WNS combines deep industry knowledge with technology, analytics, and process expertise to co-create innovative, digitally led transformational solutions with over 400 clients across various industries. WNS delivers an entire spectrum of BPM solutions including industry-specific offerings, customer experience services, finance and accounting, human resources, procurement, and research and analytics to re-imagine the digital future of businesses. As of December 31, 2022, WNS had 57,994 professionals across 64 delivery centers worldwide including facilities in Canada, China, Costa Rica, India, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

To know more, write to us at marketing@wns.com or visit us at www.wns.com

CO-CREATE TO OUTPERFORM WITH WNS™ | WNS