

## Eric Brocious

Manager, Interactive Media, Visual Communications Design, P&G  
In Conversation with TIS

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How does your organization define and detect the key training needs at various levels? Is there a needs-assessment program, driven by structured assessments?

The Global Training & Development primarily focuses on cultural trends and key success drivers. Within each separate unit, individual training managers define training needs for their organization. Global Training & Development looks at development issues at an organizational level.

The procedure at P&G is not that formal. Global Training & Development looks into corporate communications at a global level, with an emphasis on corporate content. For example, soft skills, what do you need to do to be successful at P&G, what are the cultural issues faced, and so on. At the Business Unit and department level, the various departments identify their own needs, whether it's Systems Training, or Soft Skills, as the case may be.

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How does your organization define and detect the key training needs at various levels?

Training development with P&G has been decentralized. In the past the focus has been on managers giving one-on-one training to their team members. There is however a gradual shift to a more streamlined training process. Today we have the Global Training & Development department focusing and leading training programs at an organizational level. Individual business units have training managers who are responsible for defining training needs for their target audiences. There is no predefined and specific tool or methodology followed to conduct training needs assessment.

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What are the trends in the areas of training development? What advantages do you see in e-learning?

Use of WBT as a delivery mechanism is more now than in the past, when we mainly relied on PPTs and classroom training. In recent years, the number of WBT courses has skyrocketed.

WBT offers us a lot of flexibility. Cost savings. Avoids downtime and travel cost. A lot of our courses focus on plant processes, there are major costs involved in pulling everybody off the line, sending them off to a classroom for a day. With e-learning, deployment of these trainings is much easier.

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Do you use rapid development tools to develop training programs? What are some of the tools that you have used and found useful?

We have Lectora, which is used by internal training managers to create their own training programs. Other tools, which have been used extensively for training development, are Dreamweaver and Flash.

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WBT plays a role in this approach by delivering some training to learners prior to a classroom session. This ensures everybody is grounded to the same level. This minimizes the need to go back and bring everyone up to speed.

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People will move to WBT but I don't see a time when it will completely eliminate classroom training. They complement each other—there's a right tool for the job, depending on what the context is.

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Do you use any LMS to deploy training programs? What key features would you look for in an LMS? Have you used any mobile delivery tools like PDAs or Mobile Phones or Tablets PCs?

SABA is the LMS we use internally. From P&G's perspective, what we look for is an easy to understand 'learning portal.' An easy way of 'searching & selecting' the appropriate training courses and a simple user interface.

We would like to be able to easily group content according to user job roles. We want to provide the right amount of training, to the right people, at the right location, at the right time. The ability to chunk training content into nuggets, and then pull these nuggets together to develop courses is something we are moving towards in our organization.

We haven't yet identified a need to develop and deploy trainings on PDAs, Mobile Phones, or Tablet PCs. Training at P&G is still evolving and we may deliver WBT onto tablets or PDAs in the future. Perhaps some of these could be used for training our sales force. As technology evolves, we would continue to evaluate our deployment strategy.

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How do you decide on the right training mechanism (e-learning, blended, or class-room) for your learning and training needs?

It's up to the needs and goals of the training program and the respective training managers. We have successfully used a 'blended approach.' We have many tools in the toolbox—classroom, WBT, and so forth—and can use a combination of these depending on what's right for the job.

In a blended approach we have seen that classroom helps with interaction and experiential sharing. WBT plays a role in this approach by delivering some training to learners prior to a classroom session. This ensures everybody is grounded to the same level. This minimizes the need to go back and bring everyone up to speed.

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So all training mechanisms are complementary?

Absolutely.

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What do you see as the biggest challenges in adopting e-learning in the organization?

It's basically back to culture and experiential learning. People want to spend time getting to know each other, so they want face time. It's more of a cultural thing—human interaction at work. People appreciate the opportunity to meet, and look forward to face-to-face interaction.

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Do you see that changing? Will we see more WBT in future?

Yes. I think it will, as people get comfortable and we get more sophisticated in our delivery. People will move to WBT but I don't see a time when it will completely eliminate classroom training. They complement each other—there's a right tool for the job, depending on what the context is.

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What are the performance metrics that you use to evaluate the success of the e-learning programs?

The goals of every training program are set well before the training starts. The Business Units send out a survey as a way to evaluate if the learners were satisfied with the training and if it achieved its instructional goals.

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We follow the SMILE methodology in P&G—**Short Memorable Intense Learning Experience.**

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How do you specifically look at the ROI delivered by e-learning programs?

We have not yet reached a stage to effectively measure ROI and impact on job.

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How has e-learning helped your organization in addressing business issues? E.g., leadership, or sales force effectiveness, or product knowledge, or compliance and regulatory issues (SOX).

With regard to Sarbanes-Oxley, there has been a great focus on it. Our Finance & Accounting (F&A) department has developed an Accounting Qualification Program (AQP) that was hugely successful. We had to ensure that all from the F&A community came to the AQP site (TIS had developed an e-learning portal for F&A to provide a single-window approach for all AQP courses), took the AQP course and passed the assessment. We even provided online certificates. This helped us maintain records of F&A community members who had taken the course (a legal requirement).

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Is there a unique or challenging training need that has been addressed through classroom training? Do you think that e-learning would have been a superior solution?

Not much of the training needs I get involved are classroom, it's mostly WBT.

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Are there any training areas in your organization where SimBLs™ (Simulation based learning objects) or StoBLs™ (Story Based Learning Objects) could be used effectively?

We have begun our first simulative training course with TIS. A simulation workshop was conducted for P&G managers where we communicated the value of deploying training simulations. This workshop has generated a lot of interest in this training approach.

We have not worked in the story-based learning area as of now.

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Are the programs you create easily accepted by learners? Do you have to overcome any resistance?

The biggest challenge is to make our programs engaging and interesting to keep the learners' attention. Keeping the learning objects short helps us to ensure that we utilize the learners' time effectively. We follow the SMILE methodology in P&G—**Short Memorable Intense Learning Experience.**

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Are adoption rates automatically higher for a good program?

Given that the training is engaging, interesting, and short, the only other limiting factor is the infrastructure. In low bandwidth areas if we use heavy files, people tend to drop out more quickly because they just get tired of waiting for the screen to load. Hence any program, which follows the SMILE methodology and operates within the constraints of our infrastructure, should have a higher adoption rate.

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*Tata Interactive Systems (TIS) has been a strategic service provider in various training initiatives across diverse functional areas at P&G for more than three years. A dual shore development model is being followed, which is backed up by a dedicated onsite team member based out of the P&G headquarters in Cincinnati.*

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