Capture, Convert and Communicate: The Future of Corporate Knowledge Management

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Introduction

Imagine extracting your organization's corporate knowledge from its subject-matter experts straight into a training template that could be rolled out immediately across the organization.

Your people learn it; they remember it and they quickly and easily access it when the project needs arise. No need to spend thousands on trainers to travel from office to office to deliver the same training at every site, or invest time in one-way videos, webinars and emails, only for the knowledge to be forgotten when it's needed.

This is the future of corporate knowledge management.

This white paper investigates the challenges facing modern organizations when it comes to capturing and disseminating specialised corporate information across increasingly globally-dispersed workforces. It also highlights the opportunities available to forward-thinking leaders who are ready to take their training into the 21st Century, including:

- Knowledge capture
- Converting knowledge into training
- Knowledge sharing and communication

Capturing, converting and communicating proprietary corporate knowledge can be painful: accessing your SMEs juggling stakeholders, requirements, processes, communications, experts, developers, implementation and engagement takes time and resources away from other business imperatives.

In today's business environment, knowledge management is crucial to overcome the costs involved with employee turnover and skilled workforce shortages. And it's not difficult any more.

What is Knowledge Management?

"Today knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement" – Peter F Drucker

The "knowledge economy" may be one of the most widely adopted buzzwords of the last decade or so, but recognizing what this means for an organization's workforce management is equally widely underestimated. In today's society, knowledge is power and the knowledge your competitors don't have is your organization's competitive advantage.

Knowledge Management (KM) – capturing, harnessing, disseminating and exploiting – your organization's unique corporate intelligence should thus be of prime consideration by organizational leaders.

By capturing and systematizing this knowledge you can minimise loss of expertise when staff depart, onboard new hires more efficiently and, most importantly, have a structured knowledge database that supports consistent, methodical business approaches. These provide a strong foundation for identifying efficiencies and opportunities for innovation, maintaining your competitive advantage. Client and stakeholder relations also benefit through efficient, leading-edge service and consistency of experience.

More than Content Management

KM is often mistaken for Content Management – systems for documenting, storing and retrieving corporate information. But really, knowledge management is more than just capture – it's dissemination as well. Deloitte defines it as being "about increasing people skills and expertise thanks to sharing."[1]

Many organizations encourage the collection of knowledge in databases, files of text documents and through 'handover' sessions when Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) move from their current roles. But once this information is captured and stored in static documents, how do you ensure that the information is then retrieved, learned and retained by others in the organization?

The Society for Human Resource Management found that direct replacement costs can reach as high as 50% to 60% of an employee's annual salary. The total costs of replacement, including training and the loss of productivity, can range from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary.[2]

So there are significant benefits to be had by maximising the knowledge shared amongst employees through efficient knowledge capture, processing and sharing processes, but how do you:

- Capture corporate knowledge accurately and efficiently?
- Convert the raw information into an effective format?
- Communicate the knowledge across your workforce?
- Keep the knowledge current?
- Ensure that it's achieving the desired outcomes?

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[1] Deloitte, *Knowledge Management*

[2] Society for Human Resource Management, *Retaining Talent: A Guide to Analyzing and Managing Employee Turnover* (accessed via ManpowerGroup Solutions, *Knowledge Retention and Transfer in the World of Work*)
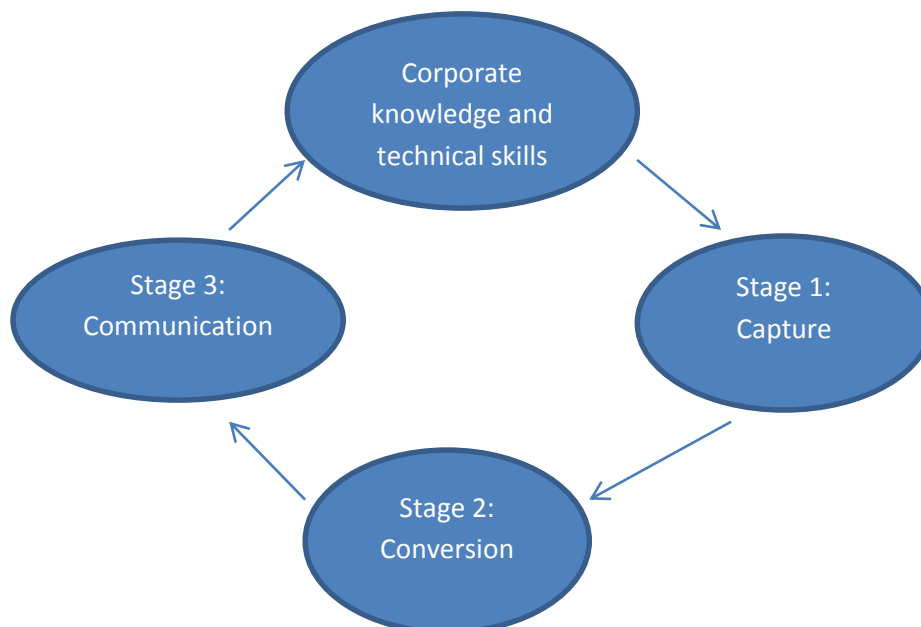
The 3-Step Knowledge Management Process

In order to have teams truly project-ready on demand, their technical skills needed to be supported by understanding of company-specific workflows and processes. How do you liberate valuable corporate knowledge from your subject-matter experts, package it into something comprehensive and digestible, and then share it across your dispersed employee population?

Companies can't afford to have their most knowledgeable subject-matter experts unavailable for projects due to training commitments. Nor can they afford to not have staff trained and project-ready on demand. Clients need new employees to be up-to-speed rapidly in order for them to be project-ready on-demand.

Traditional in-person training frequently results in delays as new hires need to wait until the next scheduled training day, and other standard training options are not structured in a manner to allow learners access to knowledge as and when it is needed, so they can commence working while still learning.

But up until now, companies have lacked a viable alternative to capture and disseminate proprietary information effectively. The industry-standard online course development tools require training to use, and then a minimum combination of subject matter expert, developer and educational designer to create the course. That's not even including the platform, technical and Learning Management System (LMS) integration issues.

Knowledge Management Cycle

Capture

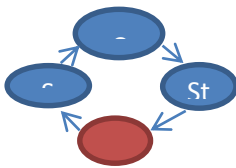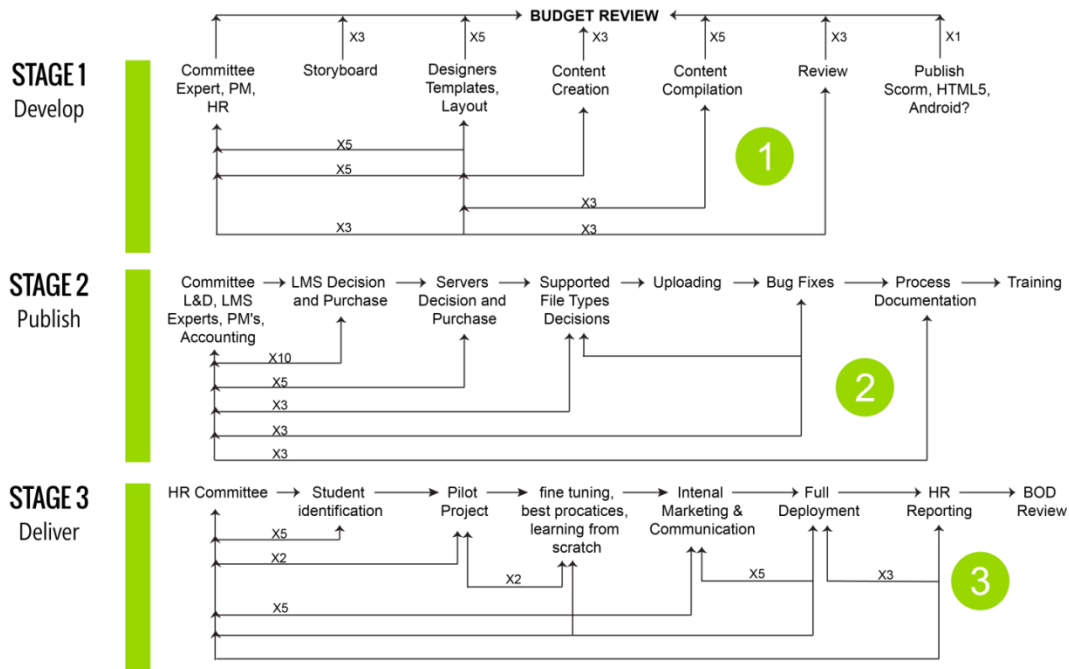Efficiently capturing specialized corporate knowledge and disseminating it across the organization is a common challenge. Internal subject-matter experts are relied upon as internal resources, frequently taking them away from the responsibilities of their primary, revenue-generating role to answer technical questions, teach new hires and mentor developing staff.

You need your subject-matter experts (SMEs) in the office or in the field, doing what they do best, not locked away running training sessions or being distracted by helping out less-experienced staff. But you need their knowledge to be shared amongst your employees too.
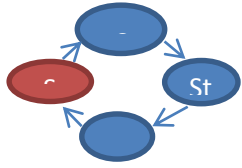
Conversion

Once you've captured the knowledge of your SMEs, how do you turn it into something that's sharable? This is more than just a technical question: What departments and committees are involved in your knowledge management processes? The process in between knowledge capture and sharing is often underestimated and can have a disproportionate impact on financial and personnel resources, timelines and currency. In fact, it often looks a lot like this:

				→ BUDGET REVIEW ←			
	X3	X5	X3	X5	X3	X1	

STAGE 1 — Develop
Committee Expert, PM, HR | Storyboard | Designers Templates, Layout | Content Creation | Content Compilation | Review | Publish Scorm, HTML5, Android?
X5
X5
X3
X3
X3
1

STAGE 2 — Publish
Committee L&D, LMS Experts, PM's, Accounting → LMS Decision and Purchase → Servers Decision and Purchase → Supported File Types Decisions → Uploading → Bug Fixes → Process Documentation → Training
X10
X5
X3
X3
X3
2

STAGE 3 — Deliver
HR Committee → Student identification → Pilot Project → fine tuning, best procatices, learning from scratch → Intenal Marketing & Communication → Full Deployment → HR Reporting → BOD Review
X5
X2
X2
X5
X5
X3
3

Then, of course, there *is* the technical aspect. Which technical development tools will keep all the departments and committees happy, as well as doing the job effectively and efficiently?

Communication

The core challenge is ensuring that a diverse, geographically dispersed workforce has the required software and professional skills alongside proprietary workflow knowledge to be project-ready on demand. Client companies often have a combination of employees in offices, on-site, and internationally, all with differing levels of access to the internet, different devices, different time zones and different schedules.

Traditional, in-person comprehensive training options are expensive, requiring significant financial and time investment in instructors, curriculum development, travel and facility expenses, and employee downtime where they are unable to conduct revenue-generating activities. Online learning options can be similarly expensive, especially when technical development, support and implementation expenses are incorporated into costing.

And

Knowledge retention is also a significant challenge for client companies as, with traditional training options, the learned skills may not be used immediately in real-world situations, and the learning resources may not be available to revisit when the requirement arises.

The passive nature of most standard online learning packages – usually a combination of video and text – also fail to engage learners sufficiently for effective knowledge retention. [3] Also, how do you maintain engagement across a diverse, modern workforce with a short attention span and jaded experience of ineffective corporate change programs?

 "Examine the critical business objectives knowledge transfer makes possible. Keeping the critical business objectives visible and knowledge sharing as one of the how-tos will help to maintain stakeholder buy in." – Joy Kosta, Senior Director of the Talent Development and Leadership communities at the Human Capital Institute [4]

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[3] Dongsong Zhang et al., *Instructional video in e-learning: Assessing the impact of interactive video on learning effectiveness*
[4] ManpowerGroup Solutions, *Knowledge Retention and Transfer in the World of Work*

Step-By-Step Solutions

Not surprisingly, it has been demonstrated to be nearly impossible and extremely costly to develop effective custom solutions in this space.

There are a number of knowledge management solutions and workarounds available in the market, each with differing strengths and weaknesses. Key to a successful solution is balancing the three key knowledge management components: capture, conversion and communication.

In their ten-step guide[5], Greenes Consulting provide an excellent breakdown of knowledge capture requirements, of which steps four to seven are key when evaluating any knowledge management tools:

1. Identify a customer for the knowledge
2. Identify a community of practice on the subject
3. Identify scope
4. Collate Existing Material
5. Elicit knowledge from individuals, teams and groups with relevant experience.
6. Distil the knowledge
7. Organize and package the knowledge with the customer in mind.
8. Validate the guidelines
9. Publish the knowledge
10. Initiate a feedback and ownership process

Capture Solutions

Most eLearning authoring tools skip the capture step and start at conversion, as they are built on one of two assumptions:

1. That the developers have access to existing information on which to base the training, or
2. That the developers are the subject matter experts.

Both of these assumptions underestimate the complexity of the process. If the developers are not subject matter experts, then significant preparatory work needs to be done, executing steps four, five and six into a format that the developers can then work with, costing your organization more in terms of resources and time.

If it is expected that the subject matter experts will also work as developers, as per the second assumption and effectively rolling steps 4 to 7 together, they will generally require training in how to develop eTraining programs alongside the support of instructional designers and programmers. This again costs your organization through additional training, and your experts spending longer away from the field.

Conversion and Development Solutions

This second stage is generally spent in technical development: how do you turn the captured knowledge into a learning format accessible by your staff? Look for tools that:

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[5] Greenes Consulting, *10-Step Guide to Knowledge Capture*

- Are cloud-based (preferably HTML5 for access on all web-enabled devices).
- Provide templates proven to maximise learning effectiveness.
- Allow for different types of content, such as text, audio, video, exercises, interactivity etc.
- Enable multiple contributors anywhere in the world, any time.
- Support robust version control.

Adobe Captivate has been the industry leader in this area for a number of years; however, it requires trained developers with software packages to be downloaded to a desktop computer, limiting the number of contributors who can work concurrently on the material. And by the time you have purchased the entire Adobe eLearning suite and provided the training to the development team, it can be quite an expensive exercise.

Cloud-based tools such as the enterprise-focused Articulate, Lectora and Docebo tend to be more cost-effective, and are polished, easy-to-use development tools. But in providing a broad and unstructured range of content options, most of these tools require development teams to include instructional designers as well, to provide guidance and structure for the learning processes. Not only does this additional expertise add to the development costs; by using unproven templates to develop online learning courses, there is a significant risk of failing to meet the desired learning outcomes.

Communication and Sharing Solutions

Perhaps the most fundamental step in the Knowledge Management cycle, sharing is sometimes the hardest to get right. It's one thing to capture what your subject matter experts know, another to turn it into training, but another challenge completely to ensure that it is accessible, usable and employed by the people who need it – your staff, stakeholders and/or clients.

Issues to consider include:

- How will hosting, administrator and learner access be facilitated?
- Will the course be available to learners anytime and anywhere?
- Will the learning be available on-demand, Just-In-Time through mobile devices?
- How will you implement the program and ensure engagement?
- How will you monitor learning effectiveness?
- Is there a proven learning methodology to support learning effectiveness and knowledge retention?

90% of full-time American workers use their personal smartphones for work purposes[6], and 43% of learners find accessing learning from their mobile device 'essential' or 'very useful'.[7] For this reason, look closely at tools that support development for mobile learning (also known as 'mLearning'). Content authoring tools are increasingly supporting developing and publishing courses as HTML5[8], which is important as it greatly reduces the risk of compatibility issues across devices.[9]

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[6] Cisco mConcierge, *BYOD Insights 2013:A Cisco Partner Network Study*
[7] Towards Maturity, *Mobile Learning in the Workplace*
[8] Ryan Moore, *What BYOD Means for eLearning*
[9] Dan Keckan, *Mobile Learning War Heating Up – eLearning Authoring Tool Review*

Using standalone development tools such as Adobe Captivate in the development phase may enable your team to develop high-quality training, but without native learning management system (LMS) integration, hosting and measurement need to be managed and implemented separately. And since it's just a software program, there's no customized rollout and implementation support – all communications and engagement work needs to be developed standalone in-house.

Look for products that provide robust implementation and rollout support. As an open-source eLearning development tool, Moodle has a great community behind it that openly shares expertise; however, the product has a more technical interface and lacks the personalized support available through most corporate solutions.

The Comprehensive Solution

Companies can't afford to have their most knowledgeable subject-matter experts unavailable for projects due to training commitments; nor can they afford to not have staff trained and project-ready on demand. So combining capture, conversion and sharing into one tool is an extremely efficient approach for managing your corporate processes, workflows and skills.

At the time of writing, there is only one solution available on the market: Global eTraining's "The Generator" is patent-pending, cloud-based software that connects subject matter experts to a collaborative course building process for capturing and disseminating unique corporate knowledge just as easily to a staff of 10 as to 10,000.

The Generator was developed in response to the high levels of customization required by Global eTraining's corporate clients. They were successfully implementing Global eTraining's existing technical training courses across their organizations to support their skilled workforce, but found that in order to have their teams truly project-ready on demand, their technical skills needed to be supported by understanding of company-specific workflows and processes. As requests were received for custom development, the team at Global eTraining worked on a tool that would allow clients to benefit from the proven characteristics of GeT Interactive while providing capability to capture, convert and communicate custom content to meet their unique corporate needs.

Capture and Convert in One Step

By capturing knowledge directly into a proven template, experts can create robust, multi-modal courses themselves, making it far faster and easier for businesses to quickly create and distribute standardized training across the organization or around the globe.

The intuitive drag-and-drop user interface is so easy to use that courses on how to use the software simply aren't needed, and the proven development templates ensure that published GeT Interactive courses demonstrate the best in instructional design and educational psychology.

- o Capture corporate knowledge directly within the tool.
- o Cloud-based HTML5 platform allows for collaboration and version control during development

- o Intuitive drag-and-drop development interface allows for easy knowledge capture from your subject-matter experts.
- o Maximize engagement with content for all learning styles: video, audio, text, images, hands-on exercises and quizzes

Communicate with One Click

With just one click a custom training course can be published to the Global eTraining technical training platform for your learners to access. Courses are SCORM-compliant and mobile optimized, ready to access from any device.

Global eTraining's extensive experience in training rollouts means that you can benefit from access to user adoption and reporting templates to engage and monitor learners. And robust reporting tools are built in to make monitoring and evaluating easy.
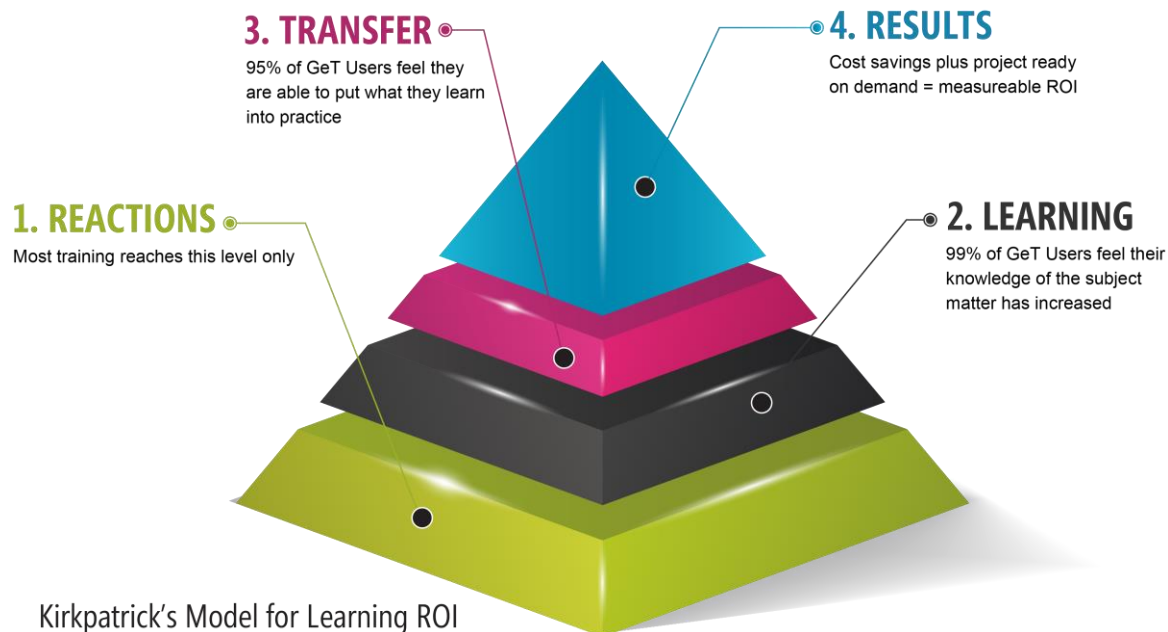
The flexibility and accessibility of The Generator, and the courses created, allows for experts to minimise their time off-project, and for staff to access learning when and where they need it – a Just-In-Time training solution.

Closed-loop learning methodology involves segmenting information into bite-sized topics and then leading the learner through each topic using each learning style, before moving onto the next topic. Not only does this maximise engagement and retention, but provides a just-in-time solution for learning on a project when there is little downtime for traditional training options.

Impact of Effective Knowledge Management

Improved Learning Outcomes

Benchmarking against Kirkpatrick's Model for Learning ROI shows that instructor-led and video-only trainings typically only realize ROI on Level 1 - students show up or are willing to watch videos - but GeT Interactive courses show measurable ROI at levels 3 and 4. Through the integrated assessment tools, companies can concretely demonstrate their learners gain needed skills, actively use what they learned, and apply that learning to real-world project work. And that all makes the company more competitive in future project bids.

3. TRANSFER
95% of GeT Users feel they are able to put what they learn into practice

4. RESULTS
Cost savings plus project ready on demand = measureable ROI

1. REACTIONS
Most training reaches this level only

2. LEARNING
99% of GeT Users feel their knowledge of the subject matter has increased

Kirkpatrick's Model for Learning ROI

Students in the e-learning environment that provided interactive video achieved significantly better learning performance and a higher level of learner satisfaction than those in other settings. However, students who used the e-learning environment that provided non-interactive video did not improve either.[10]

Accessibility

In 2014, developing eTraining for publication in HTML5 is pivotal. When compared with Towards Maturity's 2013 Benchmark average values, organizations that specifically enable their content for mobile devices have gained:

- 43% improvement in productivity
- 73% improvement in revenue
- 44% improvement in time to competency
- 75% improvement in the number noticing positive changes in staff behaviour[11]

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[10] Dongsong Zhang et al., *Instructional video in e-learning: Assessing the impact of interactive video on learning effectiveness*

[11] Towards Maturity, *Mobile Learning in the Workplace,*

Reduced Costs

A comprehensive knowledge management solution, such as The Generator, can reduce custom training development costs by up to 50% in direct costs such as platform access fees, implementation plans, and reduced time spent in development. Using standard course development tools and processes, it takes on average 490 hours to develop one hour of average, interactive eLearning.[12] Using the Generator, this time reduces to almost 1/20th of that, with only 25 hours required for one hour of training.

The costs reduce again when indirect savings are included, such as quicker onboarding of new staff, minimising workforce turnover, improved staff engagement and higher organizational performance through improved responsiveness, flexibility and preparedness.

Collaborative Knowledge Capture

With a cloud-based collaborative interface, file sharing and version control issues are resolved. Multiple subject-matter experts can work seamlessly on common documents, and project management can have visibility of the content, maximising the effectiveness of project management as well as the training implementation.

Just-In-Time Efficiency

In the professional technical training arena in particular, just-in-time knowledge capture, course development and learning enables high-billable rate professionals – both subject-matter experts and their staff – to be project-ready on demand. Tools such as The Generator not only reduce corporate training costs, but by maximising active time on the job, it increases a company's ability to generate income through a skilled, efficient workforce. Training is no longer an overhead: it's a toolkit that can be included in billable hours as a tool required to service client, similar to software.

Return on Investment

Through integrated assessment tools, companies can concretely demonstrate their learners gain needed skills, actively use what they learned, and apply that learning to real-world project work. And that all makes the company more competitive in future project bids.

Timeliness

By combining capture, conversion and communication into one tool, a comprehensive solution facilitates extremely rapid rollout for when learning is urgent. Trainers and instructors can develop their own easily-updatable and easily-accessible eTraining courses rather than using books and photocopied binders in training sessions.

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[12] Chapman Alliance, *How Long Does it Take to Create Learning?*

Summary

Client added a mandatory process to your project at the last minute? Develop, publish and deliver the required knowledge from your subject-matter experts to your workforce within hours. This is your competitive advantage.

In an age of corporate cost-cutting and a highly mobile workforce, a comprehensive knowledge management solution is a fundamental competitive advantage: not only does it reduce training costs and the cost of lost knowledge, it maximises organizational agility and efficiency. All of which makes your organization more productive and competitive in future bids.

About Global eTraining

Global eTraining is an award-winning Canadian-based provider of comprehensive, integrated online learning solutions with over 25 years of experience in developing and delivering exceptional computer-based learning. We are a strategic training partner to some of the world's largest and most diverse multinational design, construction and software organizations, government bodies and educational institutions, and the global leader in developing and designing training for the 21st Century.

GeT Interactive courses are currently being delivered in 139 countries around the world, and the foundational learning methodology was named Best Corporate Learning/Workforce Development Solution in the 2014 SIIA CODiE Awards.

Learn skills faster. Retain knowledge longer. Apply to real-world projects better.
Contact us today to talk with an eTraining expert about how the Generator can help you meet your custom training objectives efficiently, effectively and easily.
Call today for an obligation-free demonstration and demo login.

Further Reading

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