Editorial Thoughtscapes
Words Impact Business Success
www.et-writer.com

<u>B2C Technology Story</u>

Web Summary:
E-Learning and You
by Leon A. Enriquez

Reading Time:
7 minutes

Reader Benefit:
♦ E-learning is one of the new trends of the knowledge-based economy;
♦ How e-learning can benefit the individual person;
♦ E-learning is a self-paced course of study to empower you, the individual.

The emerging knowledge-based economy is a demanding continuum – where the individual person's knowledge and skill levels need to be constantly updated. The people, companies, and countries with the greatest knowledge, skills, and the ability to efficiently create and share knowledge will have the best chance at success in the Internet economy.

E-learning combines communication, education, information, and training. E-learning is a core element of a successful electronic business strategy. Not surprisingly, business and technical professionals are now seeking to better understand and deploy successful e-learning solutions.

E-Learning and You
by Leon A. Enriquez

The emerging knowledge-based economy demands that the individual person's knowledge and skill levels be constantly updated. Noticeably, the people, companies, and countries with the greatest knowledge, skills, and the ability to efficiently create and share knowledge will have the best chance at success in the Internet economy.

E-Learning combines communication, education, information, and training. E-learning is a core element of a successful electronic business strategy. Not surprisingly, business and technical professionals are now seeking to better understand and deploy successful e-learning solutions.

To achieve success when planning to implement media-rich e-learning solutions, choose the right set of business learning or communication challenges. Then engineer a pilot implementation that has a high success potential. Good news travels fast throughout an organisation. Note that your e-learning pilot implementations may become a cornerstone for future executive and organisational support.

Every enterprise has a variety of business challenges to choose from. Select a challenge where your deployment of an e-learning solution will provide high business impact. Yet, the e-learning solution should be easy to execute. The most important thing is to implement it quickly, learn about your audience, and educate your executives.

E-learning can be a compelling way to extend the reach and impact of your knowledge – if you take advantage of its capabilities. Much of e-learning is self-paced, and you'll need motivation and personal tenacity to succeed. Usually, you must organise your own training schedule, choosing when and how you navigate through modules. Although you may feel more in control of your learning, effective time-management is a must. It's up to you to start, finish, and excel.

Making E-Learning Work for You

How can you be sure that you're getting the most you can out of the e-learning experience? Consider these tips that help you take advantage of e-learning.

Allocate Quiet Time: To be successful with e-learning, it's critical to commit to a training schedule. Decide on a consistent time of day, make an appointment with yourself, and write it on your calendar just as you would any other meeting. Because it's important to avoid interruptions, and make your learning appointments fruitful. Be jealous of your time and attempt to keep it free from disruption.

Be Considerate of Others: If your course uses audio, put on headphones to minimise the sound. Just as you don't want your co-workers to disturb you while you're e-learning, similarly, they don't want to hear constant noise as they're trying to work. Be aware of co-workers' needs for a quiet environment.

Set Realistic Learning Goals: Take time to consider your goals, including specific work issues that you think could be resolved with further training. Set learning objectives that you can realistically accomplish for yourself – that will challenge you. Following the training, track your results and match them to the previously established goals. If there's an objective that hasn't been achieved, or that you feel could be improved, review the relevant portion of the training.

Be an Active Participant: There's no question that the more you put into your e-learning experience, the more you'll get out of it. Become an active "long-time learner." Be an enthusiastic participant in all that e-learning has to offer. For instance, you may return to the course regularly for reviews and refreshers, particularly as new on-the-job challenges arise. E-learning is perfect for that because, as long as you're at your computer, school is always in session.

Create a Peer E-Learning Group: Peer-to-peer learning is one of the most powerful training techniques. Many e-learning courses now include the opportunity for real-time collaboration with a community. It's well worth your time to utilise this feature. For instance, you can share ideas and learn from the experience of others. You can arrange to meet in a chat room or virtual classroom to discuss and practice the concepts you've learned. Participating in a community can maximise learning and increase your rate of retention.

Accommodate Yourself: In self-paced e-learning, there's no teacher setting the schedule. If you study for a long period of time, be sure to take frequent breaks. In fact, most effective learning takes place in 20 to 30 minute chunks.

Reflect On What You've Learned: After breaks, and when you complete the course, try to recall what you learned. Mentally apply new concepts to your work situation. Seek actively specific, real-life situations that could benefit from your new knowledge. Test how effective your newly acquired skills are, and return to the courseware for additional tips where necessary.

Use All Available Resources: E-learning relevance is enhanced through inclusion of online resources. Many courses offer a variety of tools and aids. Take advantage of suggestions for additional reading or practice that will help you maintain your new skills.

Share What You've Learned: To better retain your new knowledge and skills, share what you've learned with your co-workers. You can also participate in discussion groups on the topics you studied, and share your ideas with the community. Sharing maximises your learning experience and provides tangible benefits to those around you.

Participating in e-learning can improve your knowledge, competency and image with your present employer. Also, it will make you more marketable to prospective employers. With the dawn of e-learning, the learning process can now be more flexible, personalised, and fun.

However, to make e-learning effective, you must "see yourself as the person-in-charge of product development." Here, the product is obviously, you – yourself.

Box Story 1:
What is E-Learning?

Here are some useful ideas about E-learning:
1. E-learning is the online delivery of information, communication, education, and training.
2. E-learning provides a new set of tools that can add value to all the traditional learning modes, e.g., classroom experiences, textbook study, CD-ROM, and traditional computer-based training.
3. Old world learning models don't scale well to meet the new world learning challenge. E-learning can provide the tools to meet the challenge of new world learning.

4. E-learning will not replace the classroom setting, but enhance it by taking advantage of new content and delivery technologies to enable learning.
5. With E-learning, you can empower learners; and the learner, as well as the mentoring system, is held accountable.
6. Retention for a learner varies, based on content type and the delivery vehicle. The better the match of content and delivery vehicle to a learner's style, the greater the retention, and that means the greater the results.

Box Story 2:

E-Learning Success Factors

The key e-learning success factors include the following:

1. Partner early, and completely with your IT organisation;
2. Bring business challenges to your IT organisation early in your planning process. Involve IT experts in helping you identify and plan solutions. Early IT participation will ensure better organisational integration and network support;
3. Focus on and address business issues – not training issues. Focusing on business issues will help ensure executive and organisational support;
4. Identify and immediately involve business owners or stakeholders to determine potential e-learning opportunities;
5. Define the goals and success metrics of the project, and identify and communicate with your audience;
6. Avoid thinking e-learning equals e-training;
7. E-learning is about solving information, communication, education, and training challenges.
8. E-learning is also about offering learning choices, i.e., live, self-paced and collaborative solutions.

About the Author
Leon A. Enriquez is managing editor and business manager of Editorial Thoughtscapes – a professional writing firm. Leon can be reached at leonenriquez@et-writer.com.

<ENDS>