

A New Paradigm For Corporate Training: Learning In The Flow of Work - Josh Bersin

Source: gnews-learning-development | **Published:** June 03, 2018 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Opinion/Commentary | **Geography:** Global

Source URL: <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMinwFBVV95cUxPNnBjbVFSS19kZy1NOEdPeWltcE5>

Executive Summary

The article examines the evolution of corporate training from classroom-based instruction to modern digital paradigms, tracking four major technological shifts from the 1970s to present. Bersin argues that traditional e-learning approaches, despite a \$200 billion global market, have become misaligned with employee needs and consumption patterns. The author proposes 'Learning in the Flow of Work' as a new paradigm that integrates learning directly into work platforms rather than separate learning management systems. Key evidence includes research showing employees have only 24 minutes weekly for formal learning and O'Reilly data indicating 50% of learning interactions are 'in the moment of need.' The article traces how consumer technologies like Google, YouTube, and mobile devices transformed user expectations while corporate learning vendors focused on talent management integration instead of user experience. Bersin concludes that effective learning must be embedded within existing work systems like Salesforce, using micro-learning, spaced repetition, and AI-driven recommendations to deliver contextual support when employees need it most.

Key Insights

1. Corporate training has evolved through four distinct technology-driven phases: classroom (1970s-80s), PC-based (1980s), e-learning/LMS (1990s), and current micro-learning/experience platforms
2. The average employee has only 24 minutes per week for formal learning, making traditional course-based models ineffective
3. Consumer technologies like Google, YouTube, and mobile devices changed user expectations for learning experiences, but corporate learning vendors focused on talent management integration instead of modernizing user experience

Practical Takeaways

- Embed learning directly into work platforms (like Salesforce) rather than requiring separate learning systems
- Design learning interventions using micro-content (2-3 minutes), spaced repetition, and contextual delivery based on immediate work needs

Frameworks Mentioned

70-20-10 model — Learning model indicating that most learning occurs on the job rather than through formal training

Critical Analysis

Strengths include comprehensive historical analysis backed by industry data and concrete examples from real organizations. The 24-minute weekly learning statistic provides compelling evidence for the paradigm shift argument. However, the article lacks critical examination of implementation challenges, cost-benefit analysis of embedded learning solutions, or discussion of potential downsides to the proposed approach. The vendor landscape analysis is thorough but may reflect the author's consulting relationships. The emphasis on technology solutions could understate the importance of instructional design principles in effective learning outcomes.

Organizational Practice

British Telecom provided employees with video recorders to document customer problem-solving processes. The Cheesecake Factory implemented similar user-generated video content programs. A large distributor uses Salesforce.com integration for contextual sales training delivery. Medical institutions use collaboration platforms like Jive for learning delivery within existing workflow systems.

Strategic Implications

The findings suggest corporate learning is shifting from standalone systems toward workflow-integrated delivery models. Organizations may need to reconsider LMS-centric strategies in favor of embedding learning capabilities within existing work platforms. The 24-minute constraint implies learning design must prioritize immediate applicability over comprehensive coverage.

Validation Status: passed
