



e-Learning Strategy Packet

a sampling of source materials

compiled by Red Pepper Consulting from industry best practices and research

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Analysis Plan for e-Learning

Purpose. The purpose of this plan is to outline an approach for performance analysis data gathering. The goal of this performance analysis is to determine the ideal implementation approaches for e-Learning and to define what it will take to successfully shift the organization and its people to using e-Learning approaches in training.

Stages. Following are sources of data, questions to ask, and strategies for data gathering.

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Sources</u>	<u>Questions to Ask</u>
One	Sponsors & Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are you interested in exploring e-Learning options? • What will this do for the organization? • What prompted you to go in this direction? • Are employees eager for the change? • What business drivers align with a move to e-Learning? • What problems or opportunities will be addressed by e-Learning? • What kinds of training effectiveness results would reflect to you that e-Learning is successful? • Under what timeframe would you like to launch e-Learning? What priority does it have for CBC? • How much are you comfortable investing in terms of funds, time, and people resources to an initial launch of e-Learning?
Two	Internal experts: Technology experts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about a move to e-Learning is most promising? • What can it do for the organization? • What problems will it solve? • What opportunities will it create? • How do you want people to use it? • What kinds of reporting and tracking are needed? • What kinds of e-Learning would you consider for CBC? • Who will champion and maintain the e-Learning initiative technically? • Who will support users of e-Learning at CBC? • Who will administrate the user database at CBC? • How will you market and communicate the launch? • Which platforms would you consider using: intranet, extranet, internet, LMS, LCMS? • With which systems should user database interface?
Three	e-Learning Committee members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about e-Learning appeals to you? • What is new about this initiative compared to other company-wide initiatives? • What is familiar? • What will it take for a successful rollout? • Will CBC employees be enthusiastic about e-Learning? • Will your colleagues be enthusiastic?

Stage	Sources	Questions to Ask
Four	Vendors / Vendor Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it work? • How do effective users think about this? • What examples do you have of it at work on critical opportunities and issues? • When other companies began using it, what helped make a successful rollout? • What are the stages of implementation for this product? • What does it cost? • Where does the technology reside?
Five	Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does literature and research say about this? • What are the most typical barriers to a successful rollout?
Six	Job Incumbents: e-Learning project leads Users at all levels of the organization Supporters of users and the technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon describing the rollout to you, what is your reaction? • Can you see why the organization is going this way? • Do you see benefits for your work? • For the organization as a whole? • What will it help you do? • Do you think you have the skills needed to make the shift?

The above table was developed based on Rossett's First Things Fast approach, published in:

Rossett, A. (1999). *First Things Fast: A Handbook for Performance Analysis*. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer: San Francisco, CA..

Brandon-Hall's Six Steps to e-Learning

This plan presents a process for implementing e-Learning projects.

Reasons to Invest in e-Learning

While e-Learning can cost more upfront than traditional classroom training, the gains in training efficiency, implementation cost savings, and employee productivity generally outweigh these costs. e-Learning can provide the following benefits:

- Reduced travel for training.
- Training schedules not driven by geographic concerns.
- More students able to view presentations at once.
- Faster delivery of audience-appropriate training.
- Able to be changed and accessible on demand.
- Reduced internal training costs.
- Reduced time away from work for participants.

A Process for Implementing e-Learning

1. Prepare for e-Learning

- What do we need to consider to utilize e-Learning? Business drivers, stakeholders, content, technology, learners, and tracking.
- What business problems and opportunities will be addressed by this solution?
- Who supports an e-Learning approach at CBC, and who is resistant to it?
- Does documented content exist at CBC for the training program?
- How much time do you have to put technologies into place and work out IT issues before program launch?
- How will learners perceive e-Learning opportunities?
- What metrics have been defined for measuring participant progress and understanding?
- What kind of e-Learning are you considering? Web meetings, synchronous web-based, asynchronous web-based, online self study, blended learning, combination of custom online content and off-the-shelf.
- How will you ensure that e-Learning is aligned to business needs?
- Who will champion and maintain the initiative?
- How will you communicate and market your program(s) internally?
- What kinds of training effectiveness measurements can we take, and what is considered impactful by executives?

A Process for Implementing e-Learning -

2. **Develop a strategy** – Make a plan and get funding. There are three basic approaches:
 - (a) Use a narrow problem-based approach to tackle a single problem or set of problems;
 - (b) Build a case for problem-base approaches, customized content, and practice opportunities;
 - (c) Present an enterprise-wide plan for virtual workspaces, informal learning, and knowledge sharing.

The first approach is the best fit for your organization due to the need to build buy-in, internal skill sets, and processes needed to support e-Learning. To do this, we will need to:

- Secure executive sponsorship.
- Procure funding.
- What business drivers will be addressed by this initiative?
- How will we align e-Learning with business goals? If training is aligned with the needs of the business bottom line, then it will play a role in organizational strategy.
- What is your vision of learning, knowledge, and performance, and how can e-Learning technology activate the vision?
- What key messages will gain executive and company support for e-Learning?
- Who will pay for the development, technologies, and maintenance of solutions?

3. **Select technology and content** – This is where we'll decide whether to build or buy the courses and how much internal and external sources will be utilized to build, if that's the way to go.
 - **Off-the-shelf:** low to mid cost; low risk in design; may be easier to implement.
 - **Developed internally:** mid-cost level; potential high risk per credibility; requires a lot of effort and new skills by internal staff.
 - **External development:** high cost; low risk in design; low internal effort as staff does not need to learn development or instructional processes and skills.

You can decrease some of the content costs by:

- Getting your courseware from a variety of places.
- Using learning objects and templates (SCORM).
- Use self-paced courses to allow anytime, anywhere instruction.
- Using blended solutions with some online and some classroom.
- Use a combination of off-the-shelf primers and custom wrap-arounds for the course.

This is also where you'll decide how to host the solutions (Intranet, Internet, Extranet, LMS, LCMS) Much of this will be determined by how much functionality you want, the bandwidth you anticipate needing on the server, and your ability to support various options internally.

4. **Sell e-Learning to the Organization** – In this step, you'll designate an e-Learning champion or several at CBC. You'll define a communications strategy, gain buy-in, assemble a staff, and work with IT to establish partnership and service support.

In assembling a staff, keep these strategies in mind:

- Involve instructors early on and throughout the process.
- Start small and build confidence in the organization.
- Evaluate and select skill sets and solutions that complement your own.
- Find early adopters, and make training and trial projects available to them,

A team will be heavily involved in order to integrate strategies, design, technology, and product skills. Involvement will decrease in general after e-Learning is operational.

A Process for Implementing e-Learning -

5. **Implement the solution** – Whether you go enterprise-wide or towards a single audience at first, you'll need to announce, promote, enroll, assist, and support learners and the organization during launch. Which of the following benefits will be realized by company-wide e-Learning?
 - Access to more training
 - Reduced training costs
 - Increased course availability
 - Increased relevance of training
 - Easier to respond to change and needs for rapid communication
 - Efficiency in scheduling
 - Learner empowerment so learners invest in their own learning
 - Purposing training to meet the business competitive needs
 - Increased convenience
 - Learning data linked to other company systems.

6. **Measure the benefit / sustain momentum** – Focus measurement parameters on performance, competencies, and intellectual capital. Develop a strategy for monitoring and reporting results to senior team. Report on learning gains associated with e-Learning. Address performance gains associated with e-Learning. Illustrate how e-Learning is helping to build or maintain a competitive position. If you can, calculate and present real cost savings or gained opportunities.

We'll use information gathered through the first three steps to devise a strategy, put numbers behind a proposal, and complete a business case for approval. Once decisions have been made about how to proceed, we will work through design, development, and preparations to communicate and implement the solution. We'll need to think about measurement very early on. We'll incorporate measurement strategies in our development plan, and then measure those things before, during, and after implementation.

The above table is a compilation of the e-Learning implementation model published by Brandon Hall:

Hall, B. (2003). *e-Learning Guidebook: Six Steps to Implementing E Learning*. Sunnyvale, CA: Brandon-Hall.

e-Learning Implementation Models

Lance Dublin's Approach	Brandon Hall's Six Steps to Implementing e-Learning	Implementation Description
Prepare	Step 1	Prepare for e-Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Consider drivers, stakeholders, content, technology, learners, and tracking o Identify assets and barriers o Consider implementation strategies
	Step 2	Develop a Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-focused approach that focuses on access to information • Problem-focused approach that is customized and includes simulations • Enterprise-wide solution that encourages collaboration through virtual group workspaces o Determine who pays
Launch	Step 3	Select Technology and Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify features the company needs o Write a Request for Proposal o Question LMS vendors about details o Decide whether to build or buy
	Step 4	Sell e-Learning to Everyone in Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Line managers o Supervisors o Assemble a team to lead the way
Sustain	Step 5	Implement Enterprise-Wide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Benefits that impact the business: Access, costs, content, relevance, speed, empowerment, globalization, convenience
	Step 6	Measure the Business Effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report the results of: • Learning gains • Performance gains o Maintain Current e-Learning Offerings

The above table is a compilation of e-Learning implementation models by Lance Dublin & Brandon Hall:

Hall, B. (2003). *e-Learning Guidebook: Six Steps to Implementing E Learning*. Sunnyvale, CA: Brandon-Hall.

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Learncentrix Community, a practitioner's online community www.learncentrix.com

Best Practices

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Typical e-Learning Development Costs

e-Learning Costs compared with traditional training. Traditional training costs tend to be administration-intensive, where most of the cost of training occurs over time, on the back end, in implementation. e-Learning cuts down these costs considerably by using technology to deliver and administrate tasks like evaluation, data entry, registration, and performance tracking. e-Learning also eliminates much of the paper, printing, and shipping costs associated with traditional learning.

Front end costs for e-Learning. e-Learning is similar to traditional training in terms of front-end costs, most of which are focused around the analysis required to design and develop effective training. In addition, there are certain upfront costs that are additional to using technology, costs associated with Learning Management Systems (LMS) or Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS), servers, and software. Due to the popular use of multimedia and classroom-like simulations, e-Learning can also take more time to build than traditional training. What you receive in return is consistent, repeatable training.

Development time ratios. Development times vary all over the industry, and they hinge on the complexity of the learning solution, the extent to which multimedia is used, and the software and skill sets of developers. The industry standard for development is generally between 150 and 250 hours per completed hour of instruction. Again, about half of this cost is associated with the analysis required to specify the right solutions and design effective courseware.

Selecting e-Learning Solutions. Choosing the right solution, and the right amount of investment, depends on several factors. Across the board, there is no single best solution. Rather, the solution should be commensurate with the need for the solution, the problems and drivers that make e-Learning the right choice, and the cost of the problem versus the over-all investment and intent of the solution.

For example, if the need is to communicate data to virtual offices in a timely, well organized, easily-revised format, then posting PowerPoints as a navigable WBT may be the right solution at the right costs. If transfer of learning and skills to a specific group of learners is the need, then a more robust instructional solution is needed, and this may mean a much larger investment, depending on the levels of customization, practice, and feedback included. On the other extreme, if you need to impact the culture of a group or organization in a way that's easy to remember and internalize, engaging in presentation, and able to reach a large group experiencing high turn-over, then investing in a rich online multimedia presentation that is short and propagates a specific message may be the right choice (see Little Planet solutions). This last example can be as expensive as producing a television commercial.

Remember the intent; conduct a performance analysis that gauges priority and drivers; and assign an appropriate content solution.

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- Hall, B. (2003). *e-Learning Guidebook: Six Steps to Implementing E Learning*. Sunnyvale, CA: Brandon-Hall.
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