

A NEW WAY TO LEARN

Digital learning needs help from deep analytics



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CORPORATIONS HAVE BEEN relying on Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate learning and address the challenges of distance, time and cost factors. LMS implemented in most organisations have been facilitating in hosting content, providing content access to the learners, conducting assessments and keeping track of their progress. The expectation of training managers in the '90s was for technology to deliver static e-learning built around the digital libraries. LMS transitioned to becoming a platform for talent management in the next decade.

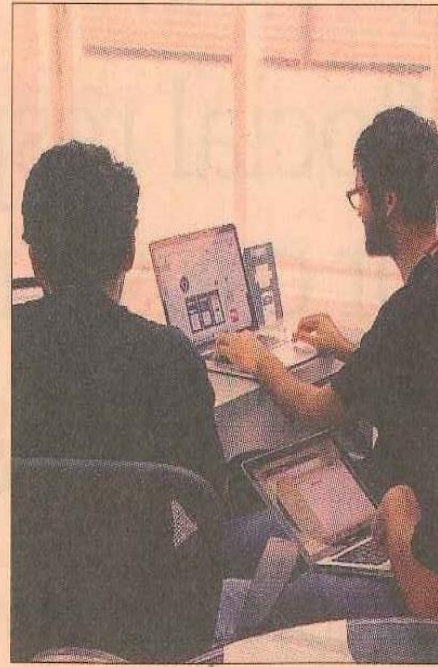
Today the requirement is for continuous learning. It is expected to be data driven and mobile friendly. With the arrival of Industry 4.0 and digital functioning, traditional LMS is no longer equipped to cope with the transformational business landscape and the emerging needs of the employees as an aid to their performance. In the new era, analytics will lead and drive every function in the organisation. Learning is also expected to be influenced by data, to become machine driven, more intelligent and develop the ability to anticipate learning needs.

Businesses are therefore evaluating the

question of whether to retain the LMS and upgrade them or replace them with digital learning platforms. The survey findings of most organisations have been highlighting that the static content with the boundaries of learning pre fixed for all individuals which is typically the case with most LMS. Therefore need of the hour is 'just in time content' rather than just 'in case content' and alignment of learning outcomes with the business outcomes.

Digital learning platforms differ from the traditional LMS fundamentally on account of their design around key principles namely, the importance of personalisation, the recognition of the individual's identity in the context of highly networked environment and the necessity to support this persona and the significance of the overall learner experience which is the key to retaining the attention and the interest of the learners. Just as in the consumer buying process where personalisation and customisation are essential for successful business models, it is important to recognise that the learner experience is critical to sustaining interest in the learning process. For this, the learner profiles and their learning requirements have to be understood—the needs could be preparatory for a role, some would be just in time and some others could be remedial.

Apart from organisation-designed content, digital learning platforms such as Skills Alpha provide access to numerous external channels of learning and also nurture networked learning and user generated content. Courseera, YouTube, Udemy, to name a few, are frequented by all and by integrating these channels into the platform, it becomes feasible to



appeal to varying learning patterns and styles of the employees and thus add a significant depth and dynamic edge to the content. Further, byte sized and video based content are preferred increasingly as learners have short span of time and this trend has to be addressed by the digital platform. Coaching and feedback from on the job training are other useful dimensions of learning thus providing a seamless experience for the employees. As a result, training managers need to focus on content curation instead of original content creation.

Often we come across an incremental approach to 'digital learning'. In other words, some managers would consider digital learning as a proposition that takes place with the access to intranet, social media, LMS and as-

sessments and employees are able to move from one medium to another for their learning needs on their own, supplemented by offline initiatives such as performance management or competency matrix. This approach fails to deliver the optimal learning experience as seamless navigation and data capture at every stage, personalisation and collaboration with custom views for different stakeholders are not feasible with this approach.

One significant factor which is impacting most performers in organisations is the urgent necessity to embed analytics driven approaches to their functioning as the roles are becoming more complex. Digital learning platforms provide analytics support to business managers and L&D managers. Deep analytics could help teams develop personalised plans and monitor their progress. Investments in technology can be justified only if the correlation can be established between learning outcomes and business outcomes such as sales growth, employee engagement, customer satisfaction index, attrition rates and employee engagement score. Just as customer engagement parameter has become morescientific and data driven, it is also expected that the measurement of learning effectiveness becomes more accurate and reliable. Digital learning platforms with their built-in analytics and the capability to bring together multitudes of relevant content in a dynamic fashion could be the game changer for businesses working on the transformation agenda.

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