

E-Learning Success Strategies

Sales and Marketing Management Magazine
November 2002

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If your company needs to develop an entire e-learning curriculum from scratch, follow these tips from Marc Rosenberg, senior director of DiamondCluster International and author of *E-Learning: Strategies for Delivering Knowledge in the Digital Age*.

Tip #1 Consider strategy before technology

"The purchase of technology and tools should be one of the last things you do. Often people buy courseware before they have a strategy," Rosenberg says. Don't shop for an e-learning platform until you have a grip on your goals and how they align with your business strategy.

Tip #2 Seek support from senior executives

For online learning to be embraced company-wide, managers need to encourage their employees to set aside time to use the technology during the workday. If senior management doesn't take online learning seriously, the attitude will trickle down to frontline employees, and they won't devote their attention to the program.

Tip #3 Resolve IT issues beforehand

Online learning places demands on Internet connections far greater than typical e-mail and Web browsing. Consult with your IT staff to make sure all employees have appropriate bandwidth, video, and audio capabilities on the computers they'll be using to access the e-learning. Also, when purchasing technology make sure that the IT department understands the maintenance load it will need to support the program.

Tip #4 Involve frontline salespeople

"Only people out there in the field can tell what the gaps in knowledge are and what they need in training," Rosenberg says. The courses that the human resources department recommends may be different from those desired by the sales force. Trust the latter.

Tip #5 Link e-learning to other sales tools

To make sure that salespeople make use of online learning tools regularly, integrate them with other indispensable online resources, such as sales force automation software, electronic proposal generators, cost calculators, and online incentive programs.

—M.M.