7 CONSUMER REALITIES
THAT THE LEARNING INDUSTRY CAN NO LONGER IGNORE

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7 CONSUMER REALITIES

Professionals in the L&D industry, and associated human resource, talent management, and training professionals, must make a concerted effort to start bringing the learner and consumer lives into alignment. In particular, we have to open our eyes and see what consumers are asking for and then align our learning programs and initiatives to those behaviors. To facilitate this intervention I've identified 7 Consumer Realities (or behaviors) that need to be acknowledged and applied to L&D.

While none of these realities may be new to the reader, when considered in their totality alongside one another, and in context with learning and development, these 7 Realities make a strong argument for change and leave a lasting impression on all the possibilities. (As you look over these 7 Realities, please replace the word "it" in the title with - answers, information, solutions, resolutions, personal development, tools, resources, or anything that applies to the acquisition of knowledge, or desired behavior change.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. I WANT IT TO THE POINT!

Along with consumers wanting immediate access comes demand that whatever "it" is must be quick, short, and to the point or risk losing the content consumer to the next learning fragment.

Learning Fragments – Learning Fragments are the result of the Learning Explosion. They are the scattered bits of information and knowledge. Learning fragments can be found through many different sources such as social media sites, industry research sites, training workshops, videos, online communities, blogs, books, and apps.[30]

For example, organizers of TED (a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks) believe that the ideal length of a presentation is 18 minutes, "and so all presenters—including Bill Gates and Bono—are required to come in under this mark."[6] TED curator, Chris Anderson, explained the organization's thinking like this:

It [18 minutes] is long enough to be serious and short enough to hold people's attention. It turns out that this length also works incredibly well online. It's the length of a coffee break. So, you watch a great talk, and forward the link to two or three people. It can go viral, very easily. The 18-minute length also works much like the way Twitter forces people to be disciplined in what they write. By forcing speakers who are used to going on for 45 minutes to bring it down to 18, you get them to really think about what they want to say. What is the key point they want to communicate? It has a clarifying effect. It brings discipline.[7]

But watch out, TED, consumers want things even shorter than 18 minutes. According to MInimatters, a video production and marketing company, out of the top 10 most popular YouTube videos, the shortest was 42 seconds and the longest was 9 minutes and 15 seconds.[8] And, according to Comscore Video Rankings Report, the average online content video was 4.4 minutes.[9] This is significant because, according to a 2016 Wistia Video Length Study, for a video of 4-5 minutes, fewer than 60% of your viewers will stay with you through – as opposed to 75% for a 1-2 minute video.[10]

4. I DON'T WANT ALL THIS OTHER STUFF!

One of the biggest blind spots for companies operating in the L&D space is the belief that they have the "secret sauce" or perfect paradigm changing experience, and that the only way to achieve behavior change is by going through a 3-day immersive experience. While I do not disagree that immersive ILT training experiences can be very effective in changing behavior, I also know it doesn't work very well when you decide to "go digital" and throw all the ILT materials online and expect the same impact. Much has been said on this topic over the years – but has the consumer been considered?

Most consumers don't care for, or understand why, all the excess context and content is necessary for unique challenge they are seeking an answer for. They don't want a day's worth of training if an hour, or less, will do. Neither will they stand for irrelevant and unrelated information anymore. For example, a full 70% of consumers who come across unoptimized page content will leave that page in search of another resource to complete their task.[15] People don't want to waste their valuable time on pages or content that are not optimized for exactly what they want. Consumers bouncing from a page is the digital equivalent of them yelling at their computer screens - "just give me what I want!" But, surprisingly enough, 82% percent of those same employees do enjoy reading relevant content from their company blogs.[16] Herein lie the reason for this consumer sentiment - relevance. If it's not relevant to me, I am not interested.

Yes, it's true we must keep "it" simple without all the cheese and fluff, but the key to a consumer's heart is relevance. If what you provide helps the consumer meet a need, solve a problem, or answer a question, you'll have a friend for life…well, at least until the next time you fire hose them with a bunch of irrelevant information. Then they're gone. So, what are we in L&D doing about it?

5. I WANT TO PAINT THE PICTURE!

You may be asking yourself why? Why are consumers so obsessed with wanting to be in the picture? Simply put, they have been conditioned to believe that if they aren't connected they'll miss out on something important...like whoever the latest celebrity couple is and when and if they'll be tying the knot.. This is one of the byproducts of being so connected. We are constantly being bombarded with the sometimes-subtle vibration and sometimes obnoxious ding of our phones, and most often for the most unimportant reasons. A Deloitte study in 2016 found that people look at their phones 47 times a day on average; for young people, it's closer to 82 times a day.[17] And, in 2013, Apple proudly announced that 7.4 trillion push notifications had been pushed through its servers - a trend that has only continued to grow.

Yes, today's consumers are the most connected and looped in generation we've ever seen. And, as a result consumers have allowed their digital sidekicks to inform their behavior and often rule over them. Whether it's an incessant desire to belong or the adrenaline rush of generating likes, retweets, or follows, we have become a reactive society ruled by our technologies. Again, I ask, how are we in L&D engaging with this new reality?

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The Author

Treion has spent the past two decades helping some of the largest Learning & Development companies in the world with their behavior change and digital transformation initiatives, including serving in the following roles: Solutions Architect, ELB Learning; CEO & Founder, The Modern Learning Architect; Chief Product Officer, Korn Ferry; Chief Product Officer, Strategy Execution (Formerly ESI); Chief Product Officer, TwentyEighty (Private Equity holding company made up of some of the largest L&D companies—Miller Heiman Group, ViltalSmarts, Strategy Execution and Achieve Forum); Chief eLearning Architect, FranklinCovey (Key contributor through digital transformation phase).

Treion is also a go-to expert, author, and problem-solver, who can align market and customer demand with successful product creation, CX, and go-to-market initiatives. He knows what your learners want, how they want it, and what to do about it. Treion has a master's degree in Instructional Technology and Learning Science and is currently a Ph.D. student in the same field. Treion is the author of several books and publications, including:

- The Getting Things Done Workbook: 10 Moves to Stress-Free Productivity, with David Allen (Ghostwriter)
- The Power of Small Things and Baby Steps: 7 Reasons Microlearning Works Today!
- The Learning Explosion: 9 Rules to Ignite Your Virtual Classrooms
- The Webinar Manifesto: Never Design, Deliver, or Sell Lousy Webinars Again!
- 7 Consumer Realities That the Learning Industry Can No Longer Ignore
- Mutant Learning: How to Develop a Social Learning Lab

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ELB Learning Learning Solutions Process

Did you know that less than 10% of all learning and development solutions today deliver on the promised behavior changes and business results? While research has shown how technology can improve the way adults learn, retain, and apply information, many organizations choose not to apply modern learning best practices to their instructional design and solutions. In today's economy, your business can't afford to provide training that doesn't work. You need effective learning solutions and technologies that change behaviors, reduce costs, and deliver results.

ELB Learning can help! We can help you design, develop, and launch effective learning strategies, technologies, and solutions for the modern learner using our 3-Step Learning Solutions Process.

If you need to address one or more of the following L&D needs, challenges, or opportunities, let's talk!

- Short-term training emergencies & deadlines
- Long-term learning strategy & roadmap
- Transform your learning solutions for the modern learner & digital native
- To show ROI and business impact on your L&D initiatives
- Help getting senior management buy-in
- Assistance launching your L&D initiatives internally & externally
- A quarterly or annual review

Learn more and schedule an appointment with Treion and his team:

LET'S TALK

3-STEP LEARNING SOLUTIONS PROCESS

1. **ASSESS:** We start with a FREE assessment of your existing training plan, offerings, and technologies and identify training needs, objectives, and behavioral change gaps.

2. **ARCHITECT:** We design a custom learning plan for your specific training needs and objectives based on what is discovered. This includes selecting the right solutions, technologies, partnerships, and modern learning approach.

3. **ACTIVATE:** We launch your modern learning training solutions, accountability processes, and success tracking system to assure your goals are achieved.