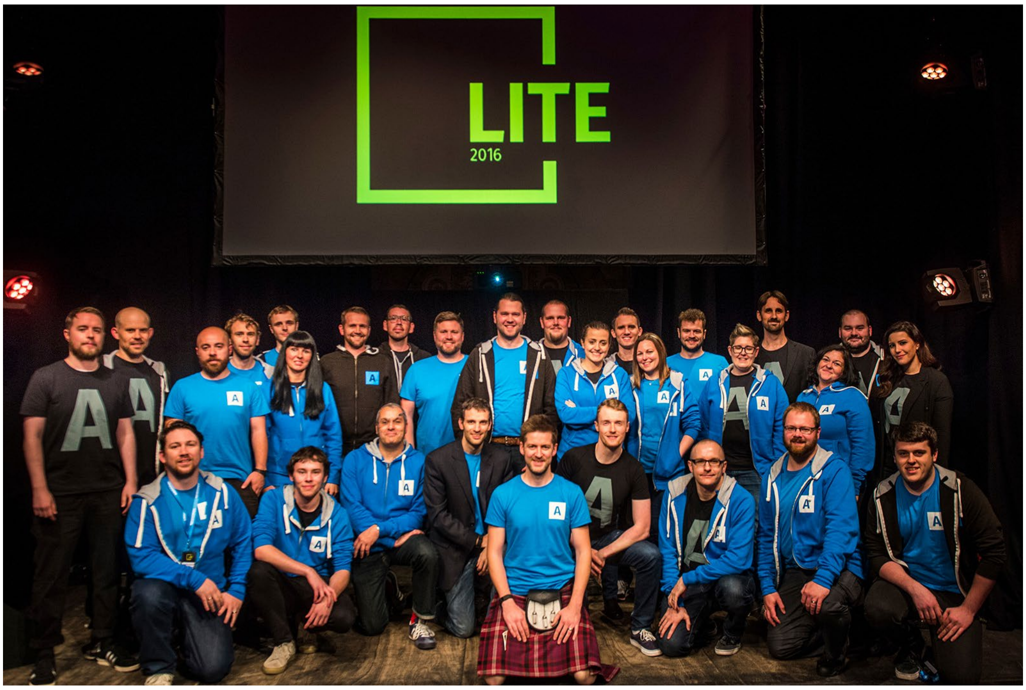
Best of the Blog 2016:

For Training Providers

Meet Administrate!

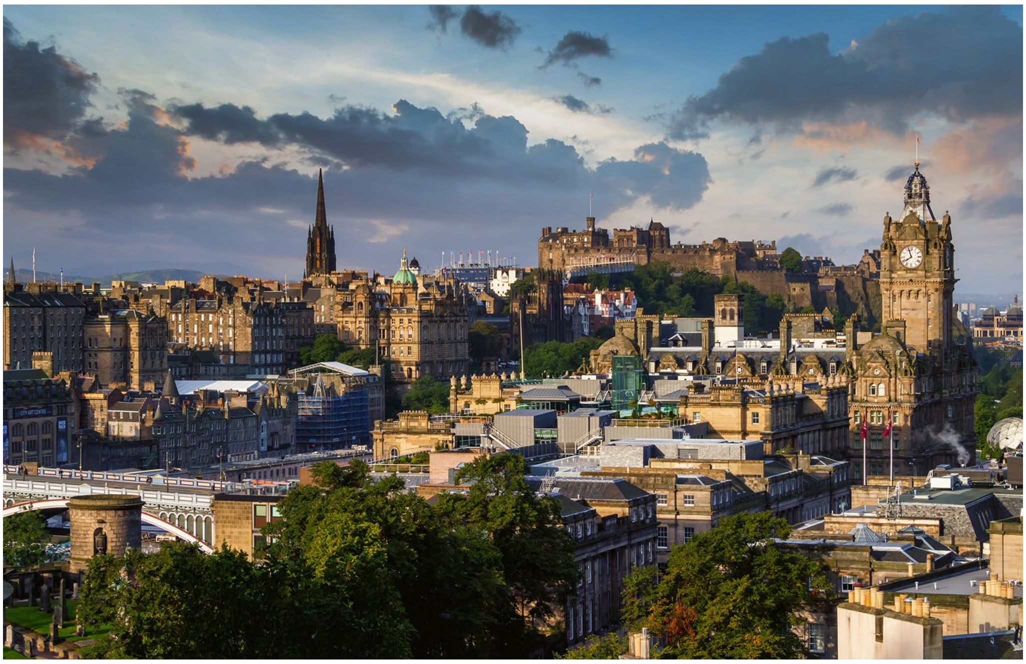
Hello from the Administrate team and welcome to our latest eBook!



Join us at LITE!

Why not come and visit us at [LITE](), our annual conference, which showcases two days of Learning, Innovation, Technology and Evolution. LITE is held every year in Edinburgh and is attended by professionals across the training industry.

Our main office is situated in the beautiful Scottish capital city, Edinburgh, with our offices sitting directly alongside the stunning Edinburgh Castle! Now that's what we call a view! Though we are expanding, and now have offices in Bozeman USA and MENA Beirut.



We're Growing All the Time!

Administrate now has over 50 members of staff, based across three countries!

The Best of the Blog - Just for Training Providers!

Over on our blog, we try to continually post content that will be useful not only to our customers, but also anyone in the training industry! From tips on training, help with marketing and handy tools to help make your life easier, we've talked about a lot of different topics over the years that will be helpful to a lot of different people.

We decided to make this eBook with training providers in mind, so we've gathered ten of our favourite posts from 2016, specifically targeted at training providers, into one handy resource!

Admin

Sales & Marketing

Success

Reporting

Evaluation

Tools

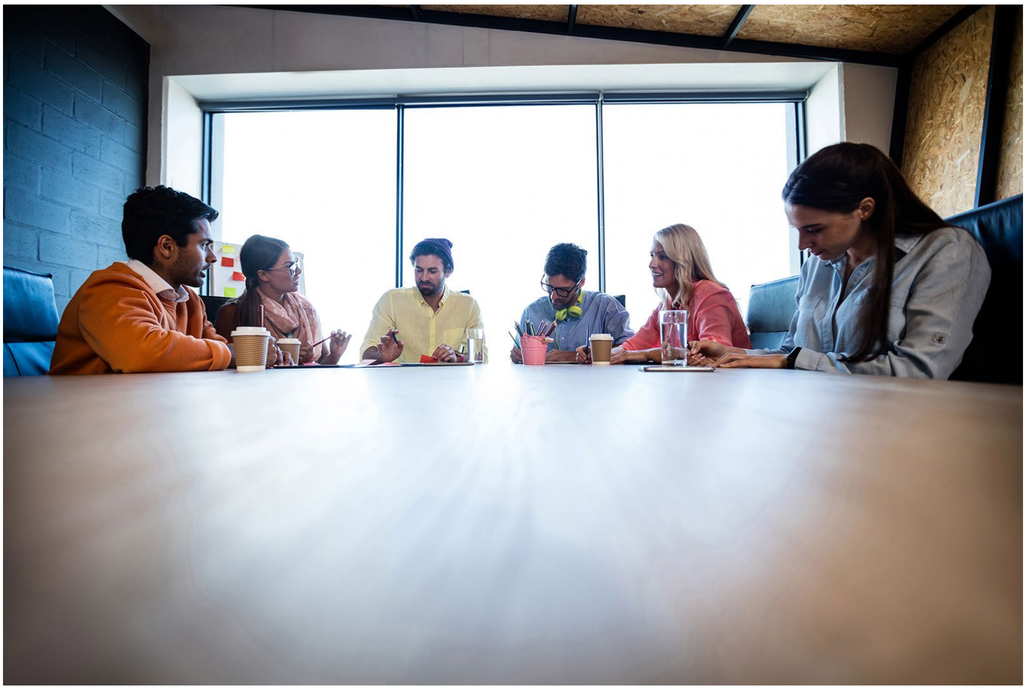
5 Top Tips for Running Successful Meetings

Meetings - seen as a vital part of the workday, but do you think you could be using your time better? We show you how to hold the best meetings possible, to make sure they are always productive and ensure nobody's time is wasted!

Administrate

5 Top Tips for Running Successful Meetings

Meetings. They're unavoidable in the workplace, however they can often end up achieving very little and leaving the attendees feeling more than a little frustrated. Or asleep. One of our key aims at Administrate is to 'work smarter, not harder' and running efficient, successful meetings is a key component in making that happen. If you're dreading a meeting today, why not take control and put these tips into practice, you never know, you may even feel meeting-based chi. Maybe.



1 – Get Out of the Office

Controversial perhaps, but holding your meetings in the same room, on the same table, just adds to the drudgery. Got a park nearby? Hold your next meeting there. If your local climate doesn't suit (we're based in Edinburgh, Scotland – current temperature = 1°C), why not head to a café? If your meeting requires the creative juices to liberally flow, the fresh air or lively surroundings could go a long way to ensuring that's the case.

If you read this and then do hold a meeting outside of the office, please tweet us a pic to @GetAdministrate, we'd love to see your setting.

2 – Bring Something to the Table or Don't Come at All

Now there's a statement! Al Pittampalli is the author of *Read this Before our Next Meeting* and encourages people to "turn up in mind and spirit and contribute something". You don't want to be the person sitting staring into space, contributing the sum-total of zero! In order to combat this, Al recommends that you warn attendees that they won't be invited to future meetings if they don't add to the discussion and required outcomes of the gathering. Harsh, but fair.

3 – Never Hold a Meeting Without an Agenda

Every meeting should have a leader, and that leader should be guided by a tight agenda. I bet you've been in many meetings that meander along, jumping from point-to-point? Disastrous! You need an agenda – it doesn't have to be *War and Peace*, just ensure it has the key points and that it fits within the timescale for the meeting. If you have regular meetings that need to address the same areas, create agenda templates; this will save you time and make life a lot easier. Once you have your agenda, make sure you send it to all attendees in advance and offer them the chance to make comment/ additions - that way there won't be any curveballs thrown your way during the meeting.

4 – Watch the Clock

How long is your average meeting? Could you cut that down? Take on the challenge of cutting the duration of your regular meetings in half. Once the time is set, you need to stick to it! If you're the leader, make sure the meeting starts on time and try to make it finish even just a few minutes early. All attendees should also arrive early. Someone turned up late? Make them do a forfeit. When people are in meetings, they aren't carrying out the tasks the business relies on them for. Here's a great tool from Harvard Business Review that calculates the cost of a meeting based on time and the average salary of attendees. Run it in your next meeting. Tick-tock.

5 – Follow Up

It's important that everybody takes actions from a meeting and follows up on them. The leader should send a brief meeting summary, ideally within the same day as the meeting. The agenda, the discussion and the follow-up are key to running successful meetings. If a follow-up item is high priority, create a calendar reminder that will prompt you to check if it has been progressed. Discipline is key!

Bonus Tip – Say it in Five Words

If you use Twitter you're likely a pro at getting your point across with limited copy. This can be applied to meetings too. Before the meeting gets going, go round the table and ask all attendees to articulate in five words or less what they feel needs to be the outcome of the discussion; this will help to ensure you're all pushing in the right direction. That tip is courtesy of Christopher Frank, author of *Drinking from the Firehose*.

Our Top Productivity Tips for Training Professionals

Your time is precious, but that doesn't mean we're not all guilty of procrastinating. It's important to give yourself the best possible work environment, as well as being super organised, to make sure you use your time as wisely as possible.

Administrate

In business, productivity is on everyone's mind, yet many find it difficult to achieve on an on-going basis. Whether it's the phone, an incoming email, or a long to-do list – there are distractions aplenty! Training professionals may think this sounds too familiar – they often juggle tasks such as conducting training needs analysis, training delivery and performance management, while simultaneously thinking about business strategy and performance.

Here at Administrate, we focus on helping training professionals be on top of their game; with that in mind, we asked our team to delve into their knowledge and come up with their top tips for staying productive as a training professional. Read on for the results!

Befriend Your Flow

Achieving and maintaining focus could be the No. 1 factor in being more productive. Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi coined the term "flow" to describe this state of being so utterly immersed in an activity that time and space seem to disappear. Working at this heightened level can be miraculous for your productivity, but you have to create conditions that enable flow:

- Deactivate all alerts from your phone/computer.
- Switch off your email.
- Tell your team when you can be reached.
- Close tabs on your browser.

Setting aside clear time just for yourself and your work can really help to spike your productivity.

Organise, Organise, Organise

This might be the most common advice on how to increase productivity, and there's no lack of guidance on how to stay organised out there! From using Apps, notebooks, calendars, it's easy to be intimidated by too much choice. At Administrate, we have one book that must be read by everyone who joins the company – it's called *Getting Things Done* by David Allen.

In the book, David explains that regardless of the medium, you always need to be specific with your tasks. Create a list of everything that needs to be done, at or outside of work. This will help de-clutter your mind and make you feel more at ease. Once this is done, write down the specific steps you need to take to move each project forward. For instance, you might need to provide a senior staff member with a quarterly training outcomes report. What's the first step you need to take here? Do you need to review KPIs for each staff member? Or maybe email someone from HR? Be as specific as possible and review your list on a daily basis. Knowing where to start can save you loads of time.

Old school? Doesn't matter, you need to use what works for you!

Establish Daily Rituals

We're all creatures of habit! Even though habits come naturally to us, not all of them are good. In 2010 UCL conducted a study which showed that adopting a new habit can take anywhere between 18 to 254 days. That could be potentially disastrous to productivity if we're accumulating too many bad habits!

Wherever you are, stop for a second and think about the habits that are killing your productivity, and which ones support it? Devise a plan on how to replace the bad habits with the good ones. If part of your job as a training manager is to monitor trainers' performance, make a habit of keeping the log up-to-date, rather than updating it at the end of the month. Or, if you always have a backlog of 50 emails, make sure you reply to emails that won't require more than 2-3 minutes of your time.

Be Protective of Your Time

Time management is often the hardest practice to implement. Life can be too complicated for us to be able to account for each minute of our day, and it only takes one unpredicted event to throw us off-track.

Sound time management could be the single biggest contributor to increased productivity in the long-term. Look at your calendar and see what's your biggest time-consumer. Do you spend most of your time in training? Do you have too many meetings to attend? Think carefully about what your key goals are and what activities will bring you closer to achieving them. Here are a few pointers to help you extract a few extra hours from your day:

- **Set strict time limits on meetings** – recognise digressions and ineffective discussions and cut them short.
- **Delegate** – delegating tasks will free up a lot of time and energy, and can be a great way of giving more responsibility to other team members.
- **Group interruptions** – do you always have people stopping by to ask you something? Too many interruptions can prevent you from ever achieving flow. To avoid this, let your team members know when and how you can be reached.

Avoid Perfectionism

Today, perfectionism is romanticised as the holy grail of professionalism. While perfection is crucial during heart surgery or a space mission launch, in most of our everyday lives it can do more harm than good.

Striving for perfection can drastically reduce your productivity as you expend more time and more energy trying to improve something that is often already good enough. Look at the task at hand and be practical about it. If you need to prepare a workshop for a training session next week, trust your expertise and stop working on it once you've finalised the content and structure. Over-analysing and changing it will not only make you feel exhausted, but it will undermine your confidence in delivering it to your students. Instead, do your best with the time you have and then learn from that experience, applying incremental changes as you go.

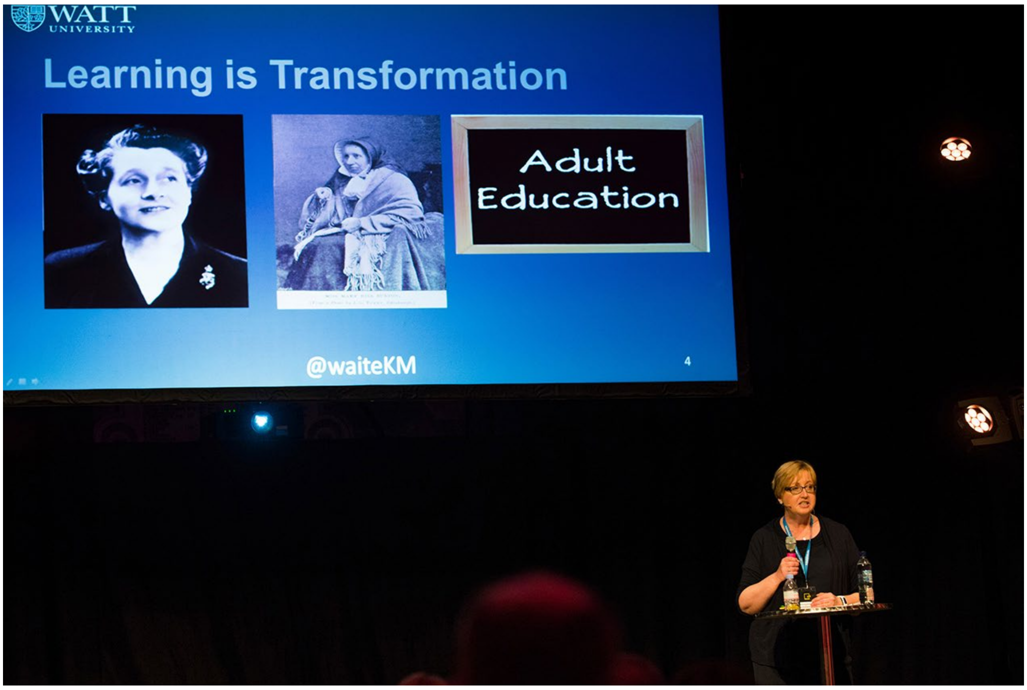
Hopefully our advice proves to be helpful in your quest for maximum productivity!

The How and Why of Attending Conferences

Attending conferences may seem like something you have to do as a business, but it's really important to make sure you're going to get the most out of them if you do decide to attend. They can be really expensive, so you want to ensure you're getting an adequate return on your investment. Our hints and tips will help you decide when to attend conferences, and how to make the most of your time while you're there!

The conference ticket alone costs £100. The flights are coming in at £150 and the hotel's going to be another £120 on top. Don't forget expenses and, of course, the cost of your time in attending.

Justifying going to conferences, both in time and money, is a common corporate challenge. With the wealth of information now available online, through blogs, videos and podcasts etc., some may argue that you can learn most of what you need to know digitally. However, as advocates of a blended learning approach will attest, eLearning alone isn't a substitute for traditional face-to-face time. In just reading content on a screen you're not really opening yourself up for debate or discussion.



In this post, we want to illustrate the true value of going to conferences and how you and your company can get the most from attending. Full disclosure; we've been thinking a lot about this lately as we've been planning our annual EdTech conference LITE, so our motives are, in part, to encourage you to come along to LITE (and other) conferences in the future.

For now, we discuss 6 reasons why you should attend conferences.

1. To Expand Your Network

The obvious one – conferences remain one of the best ways for you to meet like-minded professionals and 'talk shop'. If you're passionate about what you do, then the discussions you have at conferences can often be the catalyst to your next business breakthrough. Or perhaps you're suffering with a particularly challenging problem that nobody within your company has been able to solve? Canvas it at a conference and see if someone's already thought up the answer. Conferences breed knowledge-share.

Remember that while conferences are about you meeting new people, they're also about new people getting the chance to meet you too. Make sure you meet the 'rock star' within your industry, the one whose blog you regularly pour over, those you're avidly retweeting. Take a moment to realise that they're actually just normal human beings who were once in your shoes. Get inspired – you can be the new rock star!

How can you get the most out of meeting new people? The key is preparation. Ask to see the attendee list in advance and drop those you're particularly interested in speaking with an email to introduce yourself and exchange ideas. That way, when you arrive at the conference, you're not stood in front of 100 nameless faces. Prepare those introductions too. While it shouldn't sound scripted, you should be able to competently introduce yourself, your role and your company in a quick 30-second 'elevator pitch'. This is especially tough if you're new to an industry, or working-life, so it might be worth consulting with colleagues on what language to use and how to pitch yourself.

2. To Spread the Word

You've created a slick web presence – your website is responsive, social profiles are nicely branded and sharing your content with the world. However, you're still struggling to get traction and engagement. New leads tend to come from word-of-mouth referral and you've reached the bottom of your LinkedIn contact list. Where's the new business going to come from? How are people going to find out about you? Sound familiar?

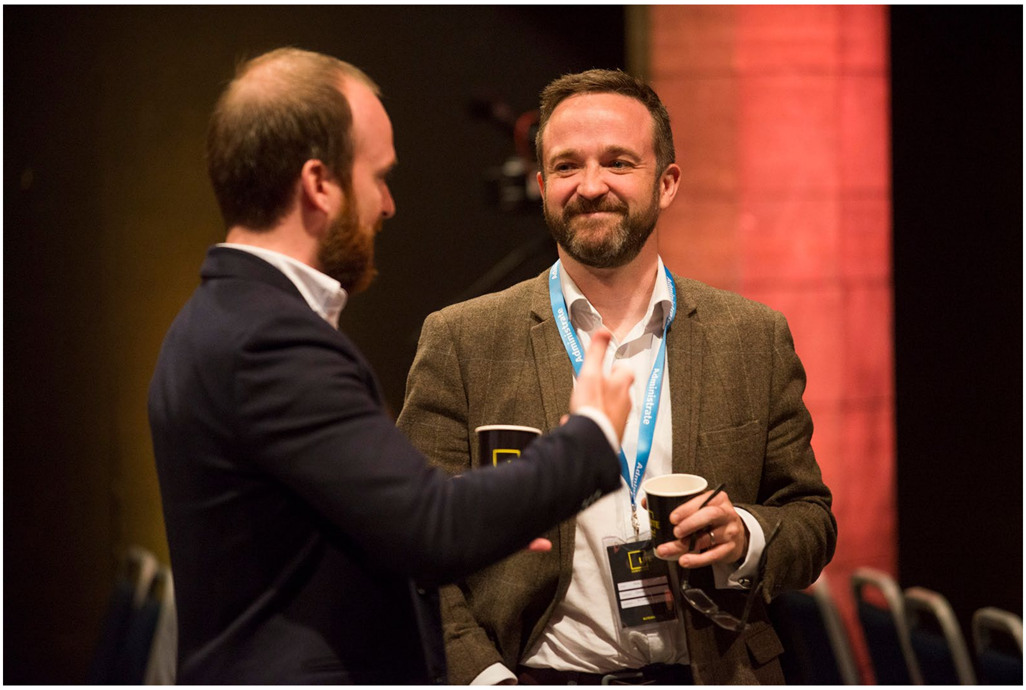
Conferences offer a fantastic opportunity to introduce your company to the world. Especially useful for new businesses and those without bottomless marketing budgets, it gives you an opportunity to pitch your value to others within your industry, including potential partners or customers of the future. Of course, not every conference is going to result in you winning big new contracts, but if you plant the seed in someone's mind, then hopefully it'll come to fruition down the line.

3. To Learn

Conferences are learning hubs, offering a huge knowledge sharing opportunity – not just between speaker and attendee, but also between attendees themselves. With so many brains in a single place, you can't help but pick up new ideas.

We're all guilty of evaluating our industry competitor sets, pouring over their websites and what they're doing to see how we compare. Conferences open our minds, helping us see beyond the confines of the industries we work in day-to-day. Some of the most innovative ideas to take your company forward may well come from a presentation discussing a totally different industry.

How can you learn as much as possible during your time at a conference? The subject matter of talks are usually published in advance, so why not prepare questions for the speakers in advance too? If you ask a lot of regular public speakers, they don't fear receiving lots of tricky questions at the end of their presentation – it's not receiving a single question that keeps them awake at night.



4. To Socialise

The stresses and demands of day-to-day working life mean that office environments aren't often synonymous with building great relationships between employees. Conferences offer an opportunity to step outside the daily routine and socialise in more relaxed surroundings. Even the process of travelling to the conference itself can help with employee bonding and morale. These shared experiences are a fantastic way to break down the barriers between senior and junior employees, or on-board new employees and graduates who may be struggling to find opportunities to expand their network beyond their own company.

How do you increase the social value of attending a conference? If budgets allow and the conference is hotel based, try to stay at the venue itself, or at least in one of the conference recommended hotels. Organisers will usually have negotiated preferential rates for you, but the real value is the additional social interaction from after conference drinks, shared taxis, elevator banter, chats at breakfast etc. You also have the added benefit of being able to conveniently retreat to your room for some downtime (and to catch up on emails if you must!).

5. For Job Enrichment

Embracing continued learning, including attending conferences, as part of your company culture can lead to job enrichment and help lower staff attrition rates.

It's important that attending conferences should be seen as a perk, not a chore, within your company. Equally they shouldn't be seen as something only the senior team attends, else they become elitist. A good way to achieve balance here is to send a mixed team (a senior and junior employee) to conferences and, provided it's applicable, rotate this so that everyone gets their turn.

6. For Content Fodder

A widely overlooked benefit of attending conferences is the inspiration they provide for new content production. While it may not be within your remit to write content (e.g. for a blog) for your company, ensure you take notes and pass them on to whoever is responsible. Conference subjects tend to be on-trend with what's important within your industry, meaning any follow up content your company produces should be well received.

You could even try to get the business card of a speaker for your content marketer so that they can follow up for a valuable quote from an industry leading professional. Or why not suggest a collaboration, a co-authored blog post or whitepaper, between a speaker and your company.

Post Conference and a Bonus Tip!

Are you guilty of going to conferences, absorbing lots of great information, then returning to the office and immediately diving back into the daily routine – giving no further thought to what you just learned? We've all done it, but it's obviously not conducive to the knowledge-share we all champion within the business world. We ask employees to present their conference learning highlights upon their return to the office at our weekly company meetings. That way everyone gets to benefit!

And for our bonus tip, tag team it! Travelling alone to a large conference with multiple presentations, workshops and exhibitions can often be frustrating. How do you choose between that really interesting speaker and that super-useful workshop? Simple, don't! Travel with a colleague and you can 'tag team' your way around the conference, seeing everything, taking notes and updating each other (and the wider team) afterwards. We're big champions of the tag team idea, hence we created a 3-for-2 offer for LITE 2016.

A final point, we'd caveat that the familiarity of chatting with 'your own' during the conference itself isn't necessarily the best idea. Although we've already mentioned that being sociable with your colleagues is to be encouraged, try to do this during downtime or travel time. When you're at the conference itself, surrounded by lots of exciting new brains, you should take the opportunity to spread your social wings and chat to new faces. Of course, if you see your colleague floundering or nose-down in a smartphone then jump in and introduce them to the conversation!

The 7 Ingredients of Successful Training Companies

Staying successful in a competitive market is always going to be challenging, but what if you had the insider scoop on what the most successful companies were up to? Here at Administrate we come across a lot of training companies, and we begin to see common themes among those who are the most successful. Our 7 Ingredients of Successful Training Companies post is here to show you what we think are the key things you should be doing to mirror this level of success for yourself!

We encounter a lot of different training companies within a variety of industries at Administrate. Despite the wide range of training on offer, we often notice commonality in how successful training companies deliver quality training. These tried and tested methodologies, well-refined processes and approaches to business form a definite recipe for success. So what are the key components that make a training company exceptional?

In this post we discuss the seven ingredients common to most successful training companies.

1. They Innovate

Successful training organisations are leaders within their industry. Not content with following the pack, they'll take calculated risks and test the waters by trying new things. Change isn't feared within these companies, it's embraced. They also have their fingers firmly on the pulse of the learning industry, closely monitoring the latest trends and contributing to industry discussion. Adopting a 'big picture thinking' approach to their business, they're not afraid of failing on their road to success, provided failure breeds learning for next time.

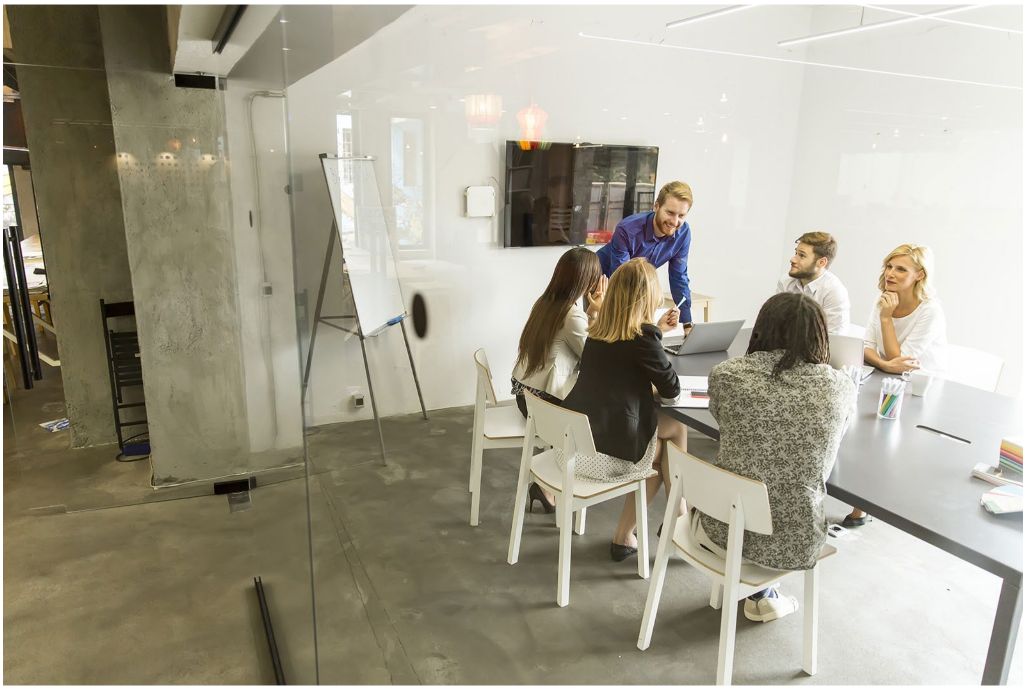
2. They Don't Procrastinate

Time. Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a little more of it? However, until *Back to the Future* becomes a reality, we're constrained to the familiar 24 hours in a day. Thus our only option is to become more efficient in how we use the time we have, and that's where successful training companies excel. They don't know the meaning of procrastination, they just get things done.

When tasks appear to be taking too long, when there are too many manual processes or when frustration creeps in – they'll evaluate the options, find process improvements, consolidate systems and find ways to automate. They won't accept that there's no better way and throw out the age-old mantra "but that's how we've always done it".

They might not always be right in the decisions they make, but they'll score the goal quicker the more shots they have on target.

3. They Challenge Themselves (and Ask to be Challenged)



Oscar Wilde famously said, "When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong". A successful training organisation isn't complacent, they won't surround themselves with 'yes men and women'. They want to be challenged. Rather than accepting generic positive feedback as translating to 'no room for improvement' they'll push for more detail and get to the crux of useful feedback quickly – always striving for continual improvement. Ingrained within their company culture will be the ideology that every scheduled course is an opportunity to deliver it better than last time.

Wary of being blinded by their comfort zone, a successful training organisation will have frank and honest conversations both internally and externally, regularly reviewing business performance. Rather than wait for customers to ask awkward questions, they'll ask them of themselves so they're better prepared for the inevitable.

4. They Communicate

Successful training organisations are well-versed in the language of the learning industry. Adept at communicating with customers, prospects and industry peers, they know how and when to pitch their value, understanding that communication is an essential ingredient in being seen as experts in their field.

They maintain this strong customer dialogue through a regularly updated online presence. Blogging regularly themselves, they'll also comment on the industry blogs they read, and communicate with their customers and prospects via email marketing. Instead of a one-directional stream of corporate social media updates they'll ask questions within their networks, contribute to social discussion and share industry insight regularly. They might even go one step further and run monthly Twitter hashtag chats or networking meetups to quiz and communicate with customers, prospects and peers.

5. They're Accredited

Astute training organisations seek to become accredited within their industry, understanding that trust is a key component of the purchasing decision for those seeking training providers. Providing that all-important seal of approval, market exposure and networking opportunities with like-minded professionals, accreditation can also often mean more valuable CV fodder for those completing the training.

6. They Push Suppliers and Partners

Smart training companies know that great learning and development often comes through collaboration. That collaboration should extend to suppliers and partners to help collectively drive the training industry forward. Leaning on your system and software partners to find a solution when you've a problem that can't be solved internally is a common strategy. At Administrate, we welcome feedback and requests for new software features – it tends to correlate with more active users, meaning we're closer to achieving our vision of becoming the must-have tech within the training sector.

7. They Invest in Their People

Any training company worth its salt will eat their own dog food. That's to say, they'll understand the value of continual learning and development, investing in improving the skills of their own employees.

Employees within successful training companies are on the cutting edge; the very forefront of their industry. They're well-known, respected and hugely passionate about what they do. While the usual success metrics are important to them, they 'look beyond pass rates' and care about their learners.

Be Trailblazers

If you work within the training industry, you'll almost undoubtedly be familiar with many of the above. However, perhaps there's an opportunity to add another ingredient or two as you strive for better performance. Ultimately, we believe the most successful companies are trailblazers, be that in the training industry or otherwise.

Dictionary.com defines a trailblazer as;

> *"a pioneer in any field of endeavour"*

Our simple takeaway from this post? Be that pioneer.

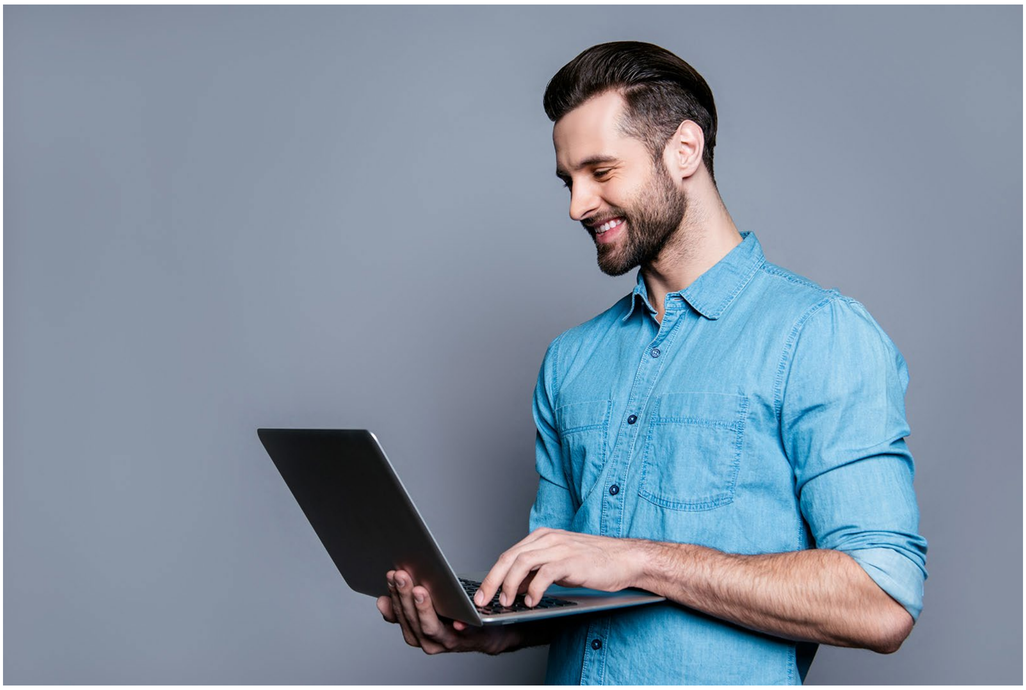
A Cautionary Tale of Putting All Your Training Eggs in One Basket

It can be easy to fall into the trap of letting one person organise all of your training administration, but what happens when that person is no longer part of your company? Do you have a plan in place, or will everything fall apart quite quickly? Our cautionary tale of Phil jetting off on his travels should help to show you why it's so important to have a system in place so your whole training business doesn't fall apart because it relied too heavily on one person.

A Cautionary Tale of Putting All Your Training Eggs in One Basket

Meet Phil. Phil is 26 and since graduating from University, he's been working as the sole Training Coordinator for 'Worksite Safety Success', a medium-sized health and safety training company, providing Instructor-Led Training to construction workers. Phil is currently picturing himself scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef. Why is this the case? Well, Philip has always harboured ambitions to travel the globe, and one month from now, he'll make that ambition a reality. This is disastrous for Worksite Safety Success (WSS). Why?

Phil Holds the Keys to All of Their Training Coordination and Administration



The phone rings in the WSS office. Jenny, the Booking Agent answers and takes a training booking from a regular customer. She adds the detail to an email and sends it over to Phil. Jenny's job here is done. Phil will take it from here. Phil takes the booking details and enters them into the same spreadsheet he created five years ago, it's a quirky number, with some crazy macros, but that doesn't matter as he's the only one that needs to use it.

From there, Phil will email all the attendees manually with joining instructions. He's got a bunch of templates stored in Word and just throws them into his email software of choice as and when needed. He then needs to send a report to the Sales team to inform them that the 'Using a Buzzsaw Safely' course on September 28 is now full. Oh, and that's another spreadsheet. He'll also allocate a trainer to this course and email them to let them know where to be and when. Phil has to do this numerous times per day.

Phil does his job well, but he's the only person that knows how to do all of this; he does it his way, and albeit it's far from efficient, it works. There may be trouble ahead...

Goodbye Phil!

Friday. Drinks in the office, a fond look-back at Phil's time at WSS and tears from Amy in Accounts. Phil is about to sling his backpack over his shoulder and get on that flight that offers much adventure. Farewell Phil.

Life at WSS Post-Phil

Debbie is the owner of Worksite Safety Success. She's got a lot on her plate and has always been happy enough with the way their courses were coordinated. She trusted Phil to do his job and avoided getting bogged-down in the detail. It's the Monday after Phil's departure and WSS is in chaos. The new Phil (Rebecca) sits down at her desk, Debbie gives her an overview of the role and sets her to work. Very quickly, questions start flying around the office. How does this spreadsheet work? Is there any space left on the buzzsaw course next week? In fact, who's even delivering it? Nobody knows how everything works! They thought they had a strong enough handover from Phil, but clearly not. Debbie is no longer happy. She needs to ensure that this scenario never unfolds again as far too much time is being wasted trying to fix the problem.

You Can't Put All of Your Training Eggs in One Basket!

Let's forget about Phil's travel ambitions, the fact is there's many reasons a person may be no longer be present in your company:

- Moving on to a new role
- Paternity/maternity leave
- Long-term illness
- Career breaks

In an ideal world, you'd never put the power for all your training coordination in the hands of one person, but that goes without saying. That scenario isn't always avoidable though, and if that is the case, then you need to ensure you protect your company from future chaos. How can you do that?

1. Include Your 'Phil' in the On-Boarding Process

Bringing Rebecca into the company before Phil left would've have allowed him to show her how he does things, the quirks of his spreadsheets and so on. It's rare that an email handover with some pointers is enough when a so-called 'system' is so reliant on one person. Making that transition between people as smooth as possible is vital.

2. Have a Centralised Point for Knowledge Sharing

This lends itself nicely to point 1 – you need to have a knowledge base within the company that can be accessed by one-and-all. Keeping vital information in people's brains is not the solution! Gone are the days when you had to store files locally, in a system that nobody keeps up to date or can easily navigate. The 'cloud' allows us to store and share vital documentation, access it from any device and in most cases, everything is automatically backed up. A training company should be centrally storing not only vital operational information, but other important items such as course templates, resource lists and so on. An example of this exists within our Training Management System (TMS), which has a built-in cloud-based document storage and management solution.

3. Automate Manual Tasks

Phil and the WSS team operate in far too manual a fashion. From adding bookings to a spreadsheet, updating course availability and even the sales process (why not allow people to book online?), they're too reliant on one person carrying out multiple slow-moving tasks. Imagine how that time could be used more wisely? Improving the actual training product the company sells would be a rather attractive action for a start. Using a TMS to automate learner communications, the sales process and beyond, immediately reduces the reliance on team members. When the person with all the wisdom is no longer around, the transition is a whole lot slicker. Automating tasks can also result in a smoother experience for the customer, especially around communication, and we all want that!

4. Rotate Job Function

Cast your mind back to Jenny, the Booking Agent that supplied Phil with the detail around a new sale. Imagine Jenny could've stepped up to mark when the post-Phil chaos reigned? If Phil and Jenny had spent time learning about each other's role, even experiencing it first-hand by actually doing it, the transition would have most likely been smoother. This type of job-sharing also offers employees the chance to develop new skills while learning more about key functions within the business. Taking a 'Learn One, Teach One' approach to internal learning can be an excellent way of educating across the business.

To summarise, you must make sure that when the day comes that your Phil leaves (sniff), your company isn't going to grind to a halt. Future-proof via incorporating the right blend of technology, knowledge sharing and role responsibility. Please note, the people, characters and organisations named in the production are all fictitious and any resemblance to real life is purely coincidental.

Why a Lack of Reporting Makes Staff Quit

If you want to have the best business out there, it's important to make sure you're attracting and retaining the best staff possible. It can be tricky knowing how to tackle keeping your staff happy, but a key aspect is making sure they have the skills and knowledge required to make them happy and comfortable in their jobs. We show you how reporting on employee skills can help you ensure your staff are satisfied in their jobs.

Why a Lack of Reporting Makes Staff Quit

There are many factors in play when it comes to maintaining a successful and competitive business, perhaps none more so than retaining your best staff. Great people who feel valued and content in their jobs are essential, yet creating a happy workforce is no mean feat. If you look at the 'Human Givens' model below, you'll see a list of all of the aspects that psychologists believe we need in order to feel fulfilled:

- The need for privacy
- A sense of autonomy and control
- Safe space to develop and unfold
- Being part of a wider community
- Giving and receiving attention
- Friendship, fun, love and intimacy
- Emotional connection to others
- A sense of status in society
- A sense of achievement
- The need for meaning - being stretched

We spend more time at work than we do out of it, which of course means that our happiness can be directly effected by the experiences generated as we go about our day-to-day jobs. Looking at the list above, there are a number of the segments that apply directly to this:

- A sense of autonomy and control
- Safe space to develop and unfold
- The need for meaning – being stretched
- A sense of achievement

The fact is that if staff don't feel these areas are a reality in their working lives, then they may well look elsewhere for satisfaction. Let's look at some issues that could clash with the Human Givings structure:

- If a worker feels they don't have the skills to effectively deliver their work to a high standard, they may struggle to feel a sense of achievement.
- A lack of the required skills or understanding of future personal development could counteract a feeling of meaning and being stretched.
- Not feeling competent due to a lack of training can very quickly foster a sense of lack of control.

Wider Business Impact

If the issues above are prevalent and not addressed, the impact won't remain at personnel level but will fan out and effect the health of the business. Take the Sales force as an example – if they don't have the required skills or at least access to the relevant training, their ability to sell will suffer – potentially disastrous for revenue generation. Many roles require staff to give advice to customers; if their product/service knowledge isn't up to date, that advice may well be inaccurate. This not only negatively effects customer relations but also the reputation of the business. This list could go on and on!

What Can Employers do to Create Satisfied Staff and Protect the Business?

Employee satisfaction and wellbeing is a vast area and one that receives a lot of attention within industry. An often overlooked aspect of this is the need for businesses to have a very clear view of employees' skills and capabilities (remember the potential issues from above!). A key factor in this is the ability to accurately generate a picture of this – that's where reporting comes in to play. It's absolutely essential that you have the required data in-hand that allows you to assess the skill levels within your teams. That data should be easily accessible, customisable and digestible. There's no lack of data in this world, however, activating it can be tricky – the first step is identifying what's truly meaningful and working from there.

Help is at Hand!

There are a number of reporting solutions on the market, however, we're very proud of the reporting capabilities of Administrate, and our customers see true value from the data it allows them to access and report on. In order for you to be able to assess employee needs and make the right decisions, your reporting should be:

Automated – generate the required report and schedule delivery as and when you want it.

Holistic – you need access to all of the key data within your business – not just across the training function.

Accessible – data never stops flowing and you should be able to access it when you need it – this includes across any device and at any given time.

Shareable – it's unlikely that you're the only person that needs visibility of this data – you need to be able to share via email (and automate that process) and view the information in graphs, charts etc.

Administrate's reporting engine covers all of this and much more. Once a skills gap or other issue is identified from this data, our Training Management System can help you to address the problem and manage the solution. Take this approach, and you'll be on the right path to creating satisfied employees and a healthy business! Find out more about our reporting engine here.

I hope you found this article helpful and it offered some food for thought.

5 Essential Training Management Metrics

In order to make sure your training offering is successful, you need to know what sort of data you should be studying and when. Kevin Streater at ForgeRock helps us pick out the 5 Essential Training Management Metrics every training business should be reporting on, from how many students are in each class you run to trends in class cancellations.

It's a familiar problem – data. Lots and lots of data. A spreadsheet for one customer, another for a group of students/learners, one for that project and so on. The wealth of data that a modern training operation generates can be quite overwhelming and data overload is rapidly becoming one of the principal productivity barriers for training managers. It's a problem that isn't going away – as Business Data Expert Bernard Marr highlights, experts are predicting a 4,300 percent increase in annual data production by 2020:

"If a company is already struggling to store and analyze its own data now, it will be drowning in data in the next few years."

Cutting through the high volume of data and determining the vital metrics that can make a tangible difference to your business has never been more important. We recently sat down with one of our customers, ForgeRock, to discuss how they use our reporting engine to do just that on a daily basis. It's worth noting that before they started using Administrate, reporting was a significant business challenge. As Kevin Streater, Director of Global Training Sales at ForgeRock laments:

"We had mountains of spreadsheets to go through, so we didn't do it."

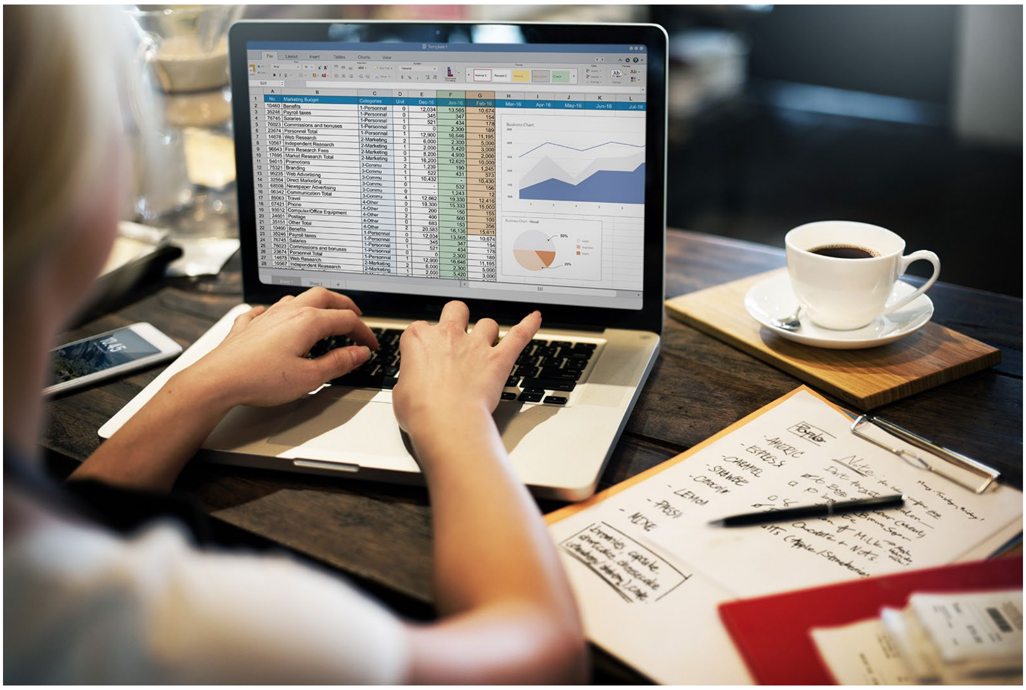
To stop you drowning in data, here's 5 essential metrics to help evaluate the success of your training.

1. Student Days

Keep a close eye on the amount of learning days you're delivering to students each month. Evaluate your current resources and set yourself a target so that you have a realistic goal for your team to aim for. Measuring the number of 'Student Days' on a monthly basis gives you a clear understanding of your training departments output, allowing you to quantify the organisational impact of a training department or capacity gaps and the opportunity to increase sales within a training company. An important metric, Kevin of ForgeRock notes:

"The Student Days report runs the business."

2. Average Fill Rate



Do you know how full your classes are? Are courses consistently under capacity? Monitoring your Average Fill Rate helps you understand the answers to these questions and quickly establish whether your courses are over or under subscribed.

Make qualified decisions on whether you need to run additional courses based on high existing course fill rates, or cancel courses that have low attendance. Give informed quick decisions when asked for a discounted or free course placement by partners. Reporting on your Average Fill Rate also helps establish if courses aren't profitable – perhaps they're running below minimum break-even thresholds (see point 5).

3. Average Course Duration

While some courses you run may well have a defined start and end date, others may be more open-ended – for example when making use of a self-paced eLearning approach. In these instances, understanding the Average Course Duration can help you determine any stumbling blocks for your learners. Are some learners stalling? Can you help get them moving again? Perhaps some students are completing your course ahead of schedule and would benefit from the provision of additional eLearning material so that they can '[go beyond the course](#)'.

Understanding Average Course Duration helps keep track of learner progression and optimising the delivery of your training courses.

4. Class Cancellations

Are you noticing a high rate of students withdrawing from their courses? Monitor trends in Class Cancellations to help establish whether you've built enough flexibility into your courses. For learners with particularly busy or erratic workloads, consider offering self-paced courses or training delivered through eLearning to help fit around their schedules.

5. Break-Even Reporting

Not strictly a metric in itself, but vitally important in running a profitable training company – evaluating your weekly, monthly or quarterly break-even points will ensure you maintain high level of profitability across all the courses you're running. Get a clear handle on resource allocation and outgoing costs alongside incoming fees to understand the true cost of running a course and whether cost recovery strategies need to be in place. Establish your break-even points and quickly understand which courses are your most profitable.

The Value Of Reporting

Access to this business-critical data helps training companies understand resource allocation, costs and ultimately the profitability and productivity of their training operation. It can help accelerate company growth and, properly disseminated, it ensures that everyone in the business has a clear understanding of their role and impact on performance.

In addition to the above, this level of reporting is especially useful at improving a training department's visibility and transparency within the wider organisation.

Training company or training department, reliable reporting is essential in order to make informed business decisions. Use these metrics to get a better understanding of seasonal training trends to help with forecasting/staffing, but remember that increasing head count isn't always the right solution when the strains start to show with a growing training operation. As Kevin of ForgeRock notes:

"One of the most common problems when you're running things manually from spreadsheets is scaling your operation. The standard response is to expand the team and hire new staff. Actually the answer should be to invest in your system infrastructure.

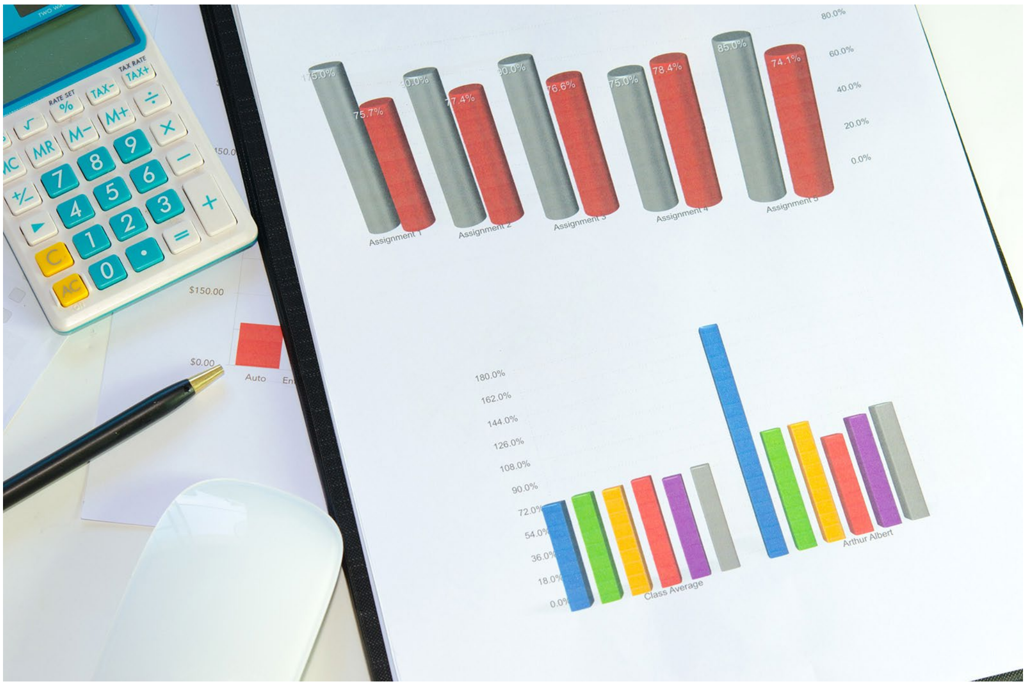
Essential Reports for Training Company Success

Following on from our previous post, now we delve a little deeper and give you three examples of essential reports you should be creating to help ensure your training company success. Not only do we tell you what these reports aim to show, and who they can help when they are created, we also tell you exactly the data you need to include to get the best results possible.

Essential Reports for Training Company Success

Effective reporting is an essential function within any business, however, knowing what to do with the abundance of data available and how to transfer it into actionable information can be difficult. While the solution naturally varies from case to case, we've focused this post on Training Companies and the types of reports that can really help paint a clear picture of performance, course popularity and more.

Read on to discover the reports we've selected.



Wait! Stop for a Minute and Think

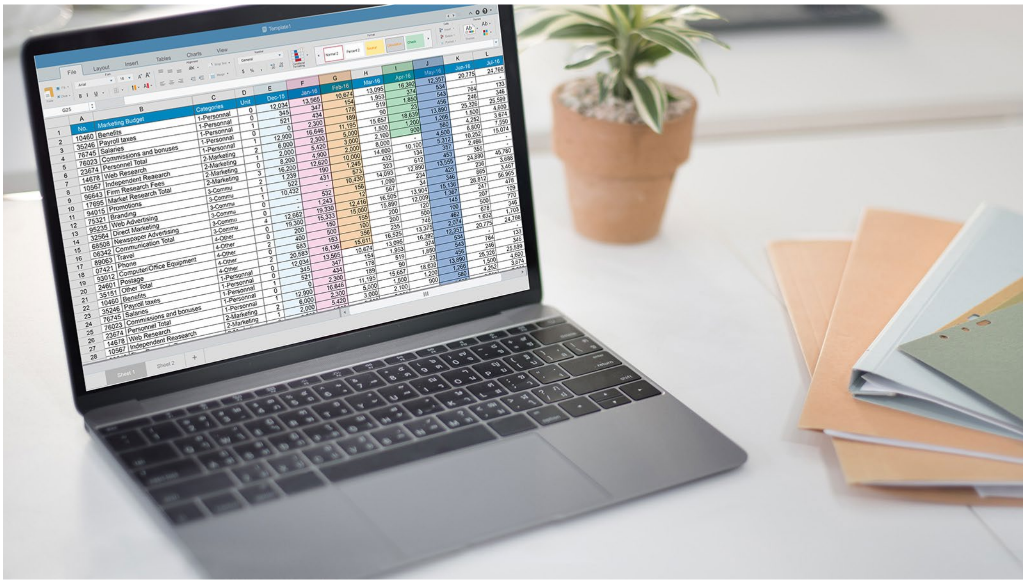
Often people rush in when it comes to reporting; gathering data, throwing it into a spreadsheet and making assumptions without taking a breath and thinking about what will be meaningful and actionable. Here are some key points to consider before you dive in:

- **What's the aim of this report?** What question does it answer or what problem does it solve? Every report should have a clear purpose.
- **Who is this report for?** It may be that it's purely for your information, however, if you're supplying this data to a colleague, you must think about what they need to be able to conclude from it (hint – ask them!).
- **What data do I need and how should it be sorted?** By date? By resource? Nailing this from the beginning will make your reports far easier to understand and is really down to individual preference.

- **How should the data be presented?** Some people prefer graphs and charts, while others may be happier just looking at data within columns.

Three Essential Reports

The following reports are examples that Administrate customers use and get real benefit from. We've chosen them as they're relevant to a wide variety of Training Companies, but please do bear in mind that requirements, of course, vary from business to business. The data points in these examples are relevant to all, regardless of what reporting system you use.



1 – Future Events Summary

What's the aim?

This report delivers a forward view of all upcoming training events, supplying you with a clear overview of operations – essential for planning, resource allocation and so on.

Who is this report for?

People from across your business can benefit from this report, for example, management, training administrators and instructors.

What key data do you need?

- Event title
- Start date
- Start and end time
- Number of delegates

- Public or private event
- Instructor name
- Location

2 – Sales Pipeline Report

What's the aim?

This report establishes a view of upcoming potential course sales, allowing you to understand the existing sales opportunities and Sales team/person performance.

Who is this report for?

Your Sales team and company senior management.

What key data do you need?

- Salesperson name
- Opportunity name (this is the company name of the potential customer)
- Contact name
- Contact email
- Course code
- Value
- Stage (are they engaged, has a proposal been submitted, do you have a verbal commitment etc.?)
- Forecasted close date of the sale
- Age of opportunity

3 – Revenue Forecast

What's the aim?

To create a clear picture of your current and future revenues.

Who is this report for?

This will be of particular interest to your Management team and Accounting department.

What key data do you need?

- Course code or name
- Start date
- Forecasted revenue
- Actual revenue

It goes without saying that this list does not represent all of the reports that you need to be a hugely insightful being, but hopefully you've found it to be a valuable primer!

Free Template Download and Video

Now that you know what the essential reports are, you need to go and create them! In order to help with that process, we've created an Excel template that you can fill with your data.

We recommend automating your reporting processes, and a key feature of Administrate is our Reporting Engine that can do exactly that for you. If you'd like to see it in action, watch Administrate team member, Gilles Bell, deliver a video demo of the engine here.

The 5th Training Evaluation Level: ROI

In the past we've talked about the four training evaluation levels you need to consider when measuring how successful your business is. Now we're here to talk about The 5th Training Evaluation Level: ROI. Return on Investment might seem complicated to calculate, but it's actually relatively simple when you have the correct data to hand. We've even created a ROI Calculator, which you can download to help make the calculations a breeze.

Back in 2013, we wrote a post on the four training evaluation levels you need to know about, based on the late Donald Kirkpatrick's highly influential 'four level' model for training course evaluation.

Vital in understanding whether your training has been delivered effectively, the four levels of evaluation (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour and Results) are invaluable in finding opportunities to improve throughout the training delivery process.

As Kirkpatrick said himself, in a 2009 interview with *Chief Learning Officer*;

> *"We call it the chain of evidence. You get evidence on Level 1 that they liked the program – they thought it was practical; Level 2 that they learned the knowledge, skills and attitudes; Level 3 that they changed their behaviour; and Level 4 that you're going to get the results from it."*

Chances are that if you're reading this post, you're a passionate deliverer of learning. You get a kick out of reading evaluation reports and knowing that your training has had impact on your students. Making a difference to others lives is a worthy and rewarding career and who doesn't like that feeling of self-worth knowing that you've affected positive change?

However, like all businesses, training companies must turn a profit in order to be sustainable. Beyond focusing on the effectiveness of training and learning development, we must also evaluate monetary benefit. When the Finance Director knocks on your office door, it's unlikely that he's going to ask how effective your training was last month!

Therefore, it's essential for training companies to show the return on any training or marketing related costs.

The 5th Level

ROI (Return On Investment) as a 5th level of evaluation isn't a new concept, in fact Jack J. Philips suggested the addition as somewhat of a precursor to his now widely adopted ROI Methodology.

Now you might argue, as Roger Kaufman has previously, that the 4th evaluation level, Results, should encompass the evaluation of monetary performance, and that any 5th level should really be reserved for evaluating the wider societal impact of the training provided, something akin to the 'Kirkpatrick Plus' model proposed by Kaufman.

However, the results level tends to cover the revenue generated by training, rather than a comparison of revenue generated vs. cost of acquiring the business. Of course, this is a vital metric as if costs outweigh revenues generated, then your training company has a bleak future.

How Can You Measure ROI?

It's a relatively straightforward calculation to understand how many £/$ you returned for every £/$ you spent.

Simply;

ROI = (Revenue – Total Costs) / Total Costs

For example, if your total benefit/sales were £1,000 and your costs were £200 then your ROI would be (£1,000 – £200) / £200, therefore a ROI of 4 to 1.

Or, if you want to display ROI as a percentage.

*ROI % = (Revenue – Total Costs) / Total Costs * 100*

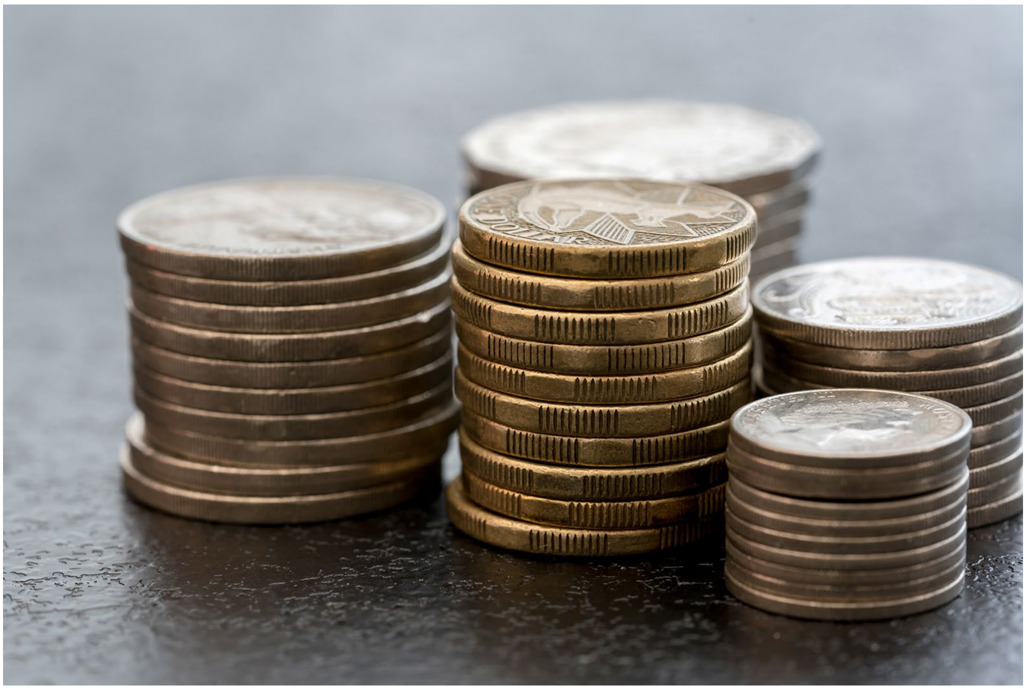
Revenue could well be a total sales/revenue metric evaluated from Level 4, results.

Total Costs are, of course, the costs associated with delivering the training. Philips suggests that these should be all encompassing, including:

- Assessment costs (prorated)
- Development costs (prorated)
- Program material costs
- Instructor/facilitator costs
- Facilities/venue costs
- Travel, lodging and catering costs
- Participant salaries and benefits
- Administrative and overhead costs (prorated)
- The cost of evaluation itself

Administrate User? Good News!

If you're already an Administrate user, then calculating the profitability and ROI of your courses is a breeze within our Events and Reporting Systems.



Step 1 – Revenue and Costs

Revenue will be calculated for you, based on the prices set for each student. This includes both invoiced and forecast revenue for convenience.

Costs can be entered with just a few clicks, be they fixed (e.g. a venue cost), per student (in which case every time you add a new student, we'll automatically add that cost – e.g. lunch!), costs associated with personnel or costs associated with everyone. Costs will be totalled for you, both invoiced and forecasted, so you have full transparency over both the revenue generated and costs associated with your event.

Step 2 – Set Up ROI Reporting

Next, simply create a new report using the criteria below for Output Columns and you'll be presented with ROI figures for each of your Events;

- Code
- Start Date
- Title
- Costs
- Revenue
- Gross Profit
- ROI

Not Using Administrate Yet? We've Got You Covered...

While we wax lyrical about how spreadsheets aren't a good way to manage your training operation, they have their uses in evaluating your training performance – especially if you don't yet have an all-encompassing Training Management System!

Download our free Training Company ROI Calculator and once downloaded, simply enter the total number of events and students, your revenues and total costs and it'll calculate your training ROI right there and then.

Don't forget, the ROI score you end up with only gives you a picture of the profitability of the courses you run, not the information required to improve your training course delivery – the first four levels remain invaluable for this.

The Importance of Customer Reviews

Positive customer reviews can be a nice ego boost, but what about those less favourable ones? It can be easy to focus on the negative side of these reviews, but how about using them as a chance to improve your business? We're here to show you all the different ways reviews of any kind can be important for your training business.

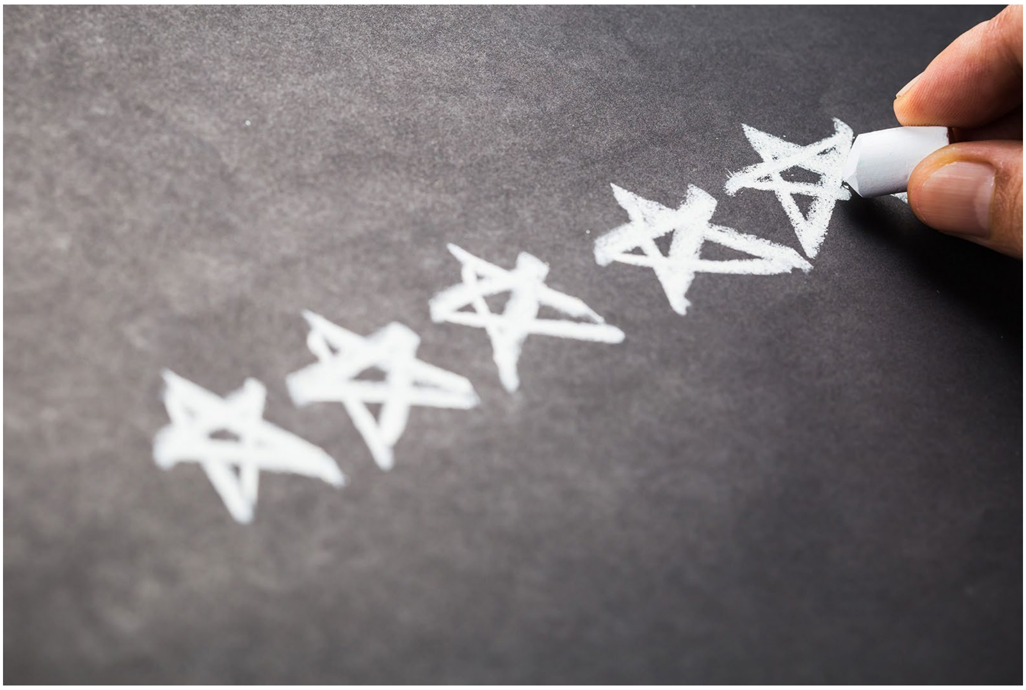
Show of hands, how many of you have candid, honest, reviews of your training courses featured on your website? Nope, not the cherry-picked customer testimonials with glorious quotes about how your training forever changed the life of Mr Smith from London. We're talking genuine, gritty, honest, not-always-positive reviews that add an extra layer of transparency to your brand.

Try to put yourself in the shoes of your customers and envisage their buying process. When choosing a training course, what will make them select yours over the many other similar courses available? Beyond the usual criteria of price, location, instructor, accreditation et al, what will they ultimately care about? It's perhaps obvious, but they'll want to know, "Are these trainers actually any good?", "Sure their website says they're amazing, but can I really believe them?". When it comes to choosing a training course provider, reviews can be an excellent differentiator.

As Chris Wigglesworth, founder of Administrate partner, Coursecheck, notes:

> *"These days, a brand is determined far more by the way that you're seen to interact with your customers. The reality is that people care less about what you say about yourself; and more about what other people say about you."*

Beyond transparency, why else should you include reviews on your website?



Reviews Increase Conversion

By including reviews on your website you can potentially drive incremental sales of your training courses. Don't believe me? The research is pretty conclusive – 61% of customers read online reviews before making a purchase and 63% of customers are more likely to make a purchase from a site that has user reviews. Consumer review platform, Reevoo, even conducted a study that suggested the potential sales uplift from including reviews can be as much as 18%.

They're the New Word-Of-Mouth for Digital Natives

According to research from BrightLocal, 92% of consumers read online reviews in 2015. That figure is even higher amongst what could be considered a more 'digitally native' audience, those aged 18-34, where a staggering 97% read online reviews.

Further research suggests that 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations, such is their impact on purchasing behaviour. Online reviews are rapidly becoming the 'new' word-of-mouth when it comes to business referral.

And it's not just confined to review sites. Research shows that social media is being increasingly used to review products and services too, especially amongst younger consumers. Indeed, 87% of those aged 18-34 have already reviewed a local business on Facebook, Twitter or Google+.

Reviews Help SEO

Digital natives know that the answer to their question 'Is this training company any good?' is just a quick Google search away. In fact, it's very likely that their decision process for most things in life involves a Google search!

We covered the basics of on-page SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) in our first post on using digital marketing to supercharge your course sales, but how can the inclusion of online reviews further improve your search engine performance?

Regularly Updated Content

Reviews offer an opportunity to have regularly updated, relevant and valuable content on your website, something that search engines are known to favour.

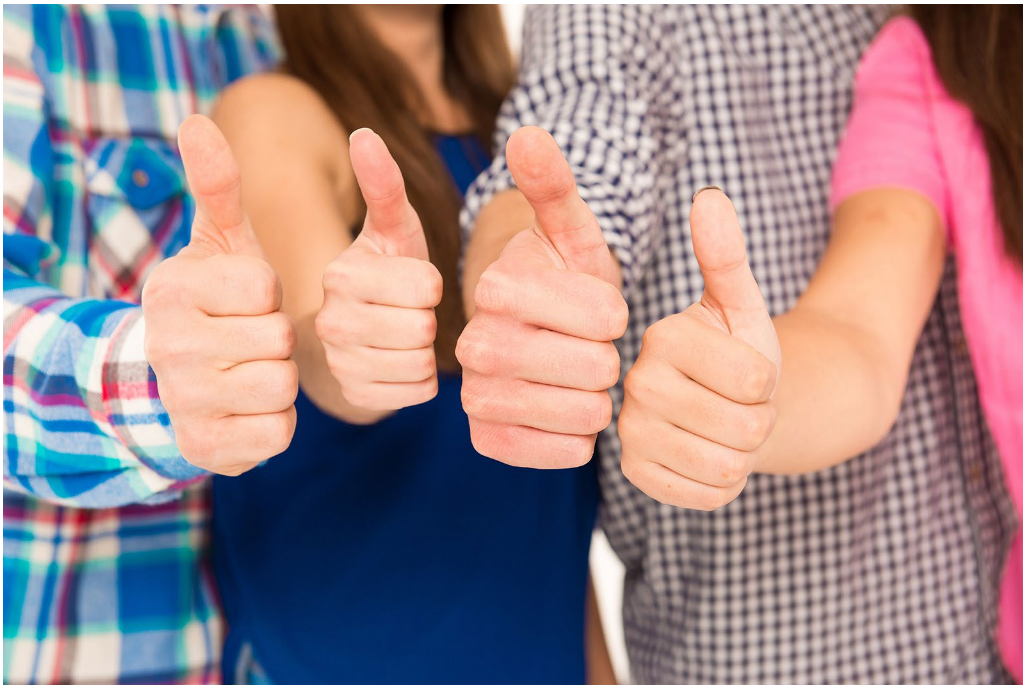
Ranking for Brand + Review Terms

It's very likely that if you offer training courses, then someone will search for 'Your Brand + Reviews'. By incorporating reviews into your training website, either with their own dedicated page or alongside other content, you can help ensure you rank well for those searches. It could also help push any less favourable legacy content further down the search results.

Encourage Click Through

You may have noticed star ratings along with the Page Title and Meta Descriptions within search engine results pages. You can add these to your own search results by using services like Coursecheck, or by getting a little technical and adding schema markup to your website. The latter might require some support from your web developer, but it's not a major change and you can find out more about getting started here.

With those stars, comes an increased CTR (Click Through Rate) on search results. Research from Distilled has shown that including rich snippets (which incorporates star ratings) within search results can boost CTR by as much as 10-20%.



Because Nobody's Perfect.

Finally, a study by Reevoo found that 68% of consumers trust reviews more when they see both good and bad scores, while 30% suspect that a company has employed censorship or fake reviews when they don't see anything negative at all.

Don't be afraid of neutral or negative reviews, we all have our 'off days'. Savvy customers will understand that there are always going to be exceptional occasions when you can't deliver an A+ service. By illustrating how you responded in those situations, customers could even have a better perception of you than if the problem had never occurred in the first place.

As our LITE 2016 keynote speaker, Graeme Obree, taught us recently – we should always deal with discontentment. By ignoring customer feedback and staying within our comfort zones, we may well be missing an opportunity to continually improve.

The Ultimate EdTech & eLearning Jargon Buster!

Whether you're relatively new to the world of training, or you've been involved in it for years, the amount of jargon and acronyms that are used throughout the industry can still be confusing! To make it a bit easier we've produced The Ultimate EdTech & eLearning Jargon Buster to act as a handy resource so you never have to Google what that acronym means ever again!

Struggling to find a CAT to integrate with your LMS? Maybe a CAT isn't suitable and only a RAT will do? Of course, regardless of whether you choose a CAT or a RAT, it'll need to be SCORM compliant.

I think it's safe to say that we like an acronym in the learning industry, don't we?

To help cut through the acronyms, terminology and language used within the learning, eLearning and EdTech industries, the team at Administrate compiled this handy list of all the terms we could think of, along with a brief explanation. Some of these terms might not crop up in day-to-day discussion about learning, eLearning and EdTech, but you may well encounter them when you delve a little deeper. Of course, it's always going to be a work-in-progress as the industry evolves and new terms pop up.

We hope this proves to be a helpful glossary for learning professionals, but welcome your feedback. Have we missed any? Let us know and we'll add them in!

A

Accessibility – Refers to the provisioning of technology to be usable by those with disabilities, e.g. sight impairment, hearing impairment, cognitive impairment etc.

ADDIE – Developed by Florida State University, ADDIE is an Instructional Systems Design (ISD) framework offering guidelines for building an effective training process, as part of five phases; Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation.

ADL – Advanced Distributed Learning. An organisation established to standardise and modernise the delivery of training and education.

Affective Learning – Refers to learning that affects changes in emotion and attitudes amongst learners.

AICC – Formed by Aircraft manufacturers Boeing, Airbus and McDonnell Douglas, The Aviation Industry Computer-Based Training Committee was a provider and promoter of information, guidelines and standards for Computer Based Training (CBT) that existed from 1988 to 2014. Although the guidelines they produced were for the aviation industry, they were relevant to multiple learning technology vendors, leading to much wider adoption.

AICC HACP – HTTP AICC Communication Protocol, an eLearning standard developed by the Aviation Industry Computer-Based Training Committee used to call eLearning content and assessments, for example within a Learning Management System (LMS).

Andragogy – The method and strategy used within teaching in the education of adults. The term was first used by German educator, Alexander Kapp, in 1833.

API – Application Programming Interface. An API is a set of routine definitions, protocols and tools used when creating software. Essentially the building blocks of a piece of software, API's facilitate the development of advanced integrations with existing applications.

Apps – An App or Application is piece of software designed to perform a specific task. Apps can be web-based (a Web Application), installed onto systems or, more commonly associated with the term App in the modern world – installed on a smartphone, tablet or mobile device. In the context of training and education, Apps can facilitate mLearning (mobile learning).

ARCS – A model of motivational design developed by John Keller that proposes there are four key elements that encourage and sustain adult learner motivation; Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction.

Asynchronous Learning – A flexible learning method whereby students don't collectively learn at the same place or same time and instructors may not be present, allowing them to complete courses according to their own schedule.

AS – Authoring System, sometimes referred to as an Authoring Tool. See CAT.

AT – Authoring Tool, sometimes referred to as an Authoring System. See CAT.

Authoring – Refers to the process of creating or writing content. See CAT.

B

Blended Learning – Blended learning can incorporate a variety of approaches to education and training but typically refers to a mix of more traditional Instructor-Led Training (ILT) used alongside eLearning. Sometimes referred to as Hybrid Learning or Mixed-Mode Instruction.

BYOC – Bring Your Own Computer. See BYOD.

BYOD – Bring Your Own Device. Refers to situations whereby employers permit their employees to use their own devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets etc.) within the workplace for day-to-day work or, in the context of learning, for training and development.

BYOP – Bring Your Own Phone. See BYOD.

BYOT – Bring Your Own Technology. See BYOD.

C

CAI – Computer Assisted Instruction. Involves the use of a computer as a tool to facilitate instruction within education, or as a method of delivering training. Sometimes referred to as Computer Aided Instruction.

CAL – Computer Assisted Learning. See CAI.

CAT – Content Authoring Tool. A [Content Authoring Tool] is piece of software that allows trainers and instructional designers to create eLearning course material for delivery through a Learning Management System (LMS).

CBE – Computer Based Education. See CAI.

CBE (2) – Competency Based Education. See CBL (2).

CBI – Computer Based Instruction. See CAI.

CBL – Computer Based Learning. See CBT.

CBL (2) – Competency Based Learning. An approach to education or training which focuses on measuring learning, rather than time. Students progress by demonstrating their competence in the subject matter, i.e. once they've mastered a course, regardless of how long that might take.

CBT – Computer Based Training. Training conducted on computers. See also CAI.

CEC – Continuing Education Credit. See CEU.

Certification – The process of recognising when an individual has achieved a minimum level of competency against a predefined criteria of success. Often these criteria are set by a professional standards organisation.

CEU – Continuing Education Unit. A unit/measure used within educational programmes to determine the progress made by professionals towards a learning objective and/or professional license or qualification. Can also be referred to as a Continuing Education Credit (CEC).

Classroom Learning/Training – Refers to training conducted face-to-face within a physical room (see Instructor-Led Training). Also referred to as cLearning.

cLearning – See Classroom Training.

Cloud – Cloud or Cloud Based refers to applications, services or resources that are available on demand from internet-based computing environments – cloud based services don't require local installation.

CMI5 – An eLearning standard that the Aviation Industry Computer-Based Training Committee (AICC) started to develop before handing over responsibility to Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL). CMI5 acts as a bridge between Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) and the Experience API (also known as Tin Can).

CMI – Computer Managed Instruction. An instructional strategy in which computers are used to manage learning objectives, resources, assessments and tracking of learner progression.

CMS – Content Management System. Software or systems that manage the creation and publishing of eLearning content.

CMS (2) – Course Management System. A software application, or applications, that allow instructors or administrators to create and manage course content.

CoD – Content on Demand. Within an eLearning context this is content delivered digitally, on demand, perhaps via a Learning Management System (LMS).

Collaborative Learning – Refers to learning that occurs when information is shared within groups.

Content Authoring – Refers to the process of creating or writing content. See CAT.

Content – Material delivered during the learning or training process. Can be delivered physically or digitally, with formats including printed documents, text, video, imagery, audio, quizzes, assignments etc.

Content Objects – See Learning Objects.

Cookies – Cookies are small files, sent by Internet servers to a browser, that identify users and/or track their interaction with a server. Commonly used by eLearning technologies to store learner details.

CPD – Continuing Professional Development. Can refer to the learning activities that professionals undertake in order to develop their skills and abilities as well as the actual process of CPD, whereby professionals document their skills, knowledge and experience in order to record their progression. Can also be referred to as simply Professional Development or Continuing Professional Education (CPE).

CPE – Continuing Professional Education. See CPD.

CSS – Cascading Style Sheets. CSS is a style sheet language that defines the layout and presentation of information. It's most common use is to set the visual style of websites, but it can also be applied to any Extensible Markup Language (XML) document. Often used to style eLearning systems, for example a Learning Management System (LMS).

D

DELES – Distance Education Learning Environments Survey. A learning environment survey to measure students' perception of educational establishment learning environments.

Digital Literacy – Demonstration of the required knowledge, skills and behaviours in operating a range of networked devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops etc.

Digital Native – Generally refers to those born or brought up during the age of digital technology (primarily the last decade of the 20th century), leading to a familiarity with computers and the Internet. The term was coined by education consultant Marc Prensky in 2001.

Distance Learning/Education – Involves the delivery of training when a student and instructor are separated by location and/or time. A popular method of distance learning delivery is eLearning via a Learning Management System (LMS), but can include written correspondence, video conferencing etc.

Distributed Learning – An instructional model centred around instructors, students and content being located separately, i.e.

learning can occur regardless of time and place. Can be used alongside more traditional Instructor-Led Training (ILT) within a classroom environment as part of a blended learning strategy. See also eLearning.

DLA – Digital Learning Assets. Any form of content/media created to be used within an eLearning environment, for example eLearning modules, resources and activities.

E

EdTech – Education (or Educational) Technology. EdTech involves the use of various forms of technology to facilitate the delivery of education and support learning.

Educational Objects – See Learning Objects.

eLearning – Electronic Learning. Can be defined as learning that is conducted via digital media, usually via the Internet. Also referred to as e-learning, elearning and Elearning.

EOTO – Each One Teach One. See LOTO.

F

Facilitators – Within a learning context, refers to individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced in the subject matter being taught and who's purpose it is to facilitate learning. They may also be instructors (see Instructors) but could also be providing a supporting role to instructors.

F2F – Face-to-Face. Refers to training delivered in a face-to-face environment like a classroom, rather than through a computer.

Flash – Flash is a multimedia software platform used to create animations, rich Internet applications, games and more. In the context of eLearning it can be used in the creation of eLearning content although it's lack of support on mobile/tablet devices has meant that industry has largely moved to authoring using alternative technologies such as HTML 5.

Flipped Classroom – An educational model whereby the traditional approach of classroom time being used for lectures with homework issued for after class is reversed. Classes are used for homework, assignments and discussion and lectures are delivered outside of the classroom, often via eLearning.

Formative Assessment – A range of formal and informal assessment processes, typically involving qualitative feedback, conducted by teachers or training professionals to shape or form the learning process so as to improve student attainment.

G

Gamification – In a learning context this refers to the addition of gaming elements to add further enjoyment, and even competitiveness, to the learning process.

GBL – Game Based Learning. This refers to the use of video games as a learning tool, i.e. students learn while playing the game itself.

GUI – Graphical User Interface. A display or method of visual delivery of content for training purposes.

H

HACP – See AICC HACP.

HR – Human Resources. A function within an organisation that's commonly associated with the management of people and personal development.

HRD – Human Resource Development. A function within an organisation that's commonly associated with the betterment of individuals and teams through training and development. See also HR.

HRM – Human Resource Management. See HR.

HTML 5 – Hypertext Markup Language 5. HTML 5 is a standard markup language for website page creation, but can also be used to author eLearning content, usually via a Content Authoring Tool (CAT) for use within a Learning Management System (LMS).

HTTP – Hypertext Transfer Protocol. A set of protocols and standards that define how information is formatted and transmitted, used by the World Wide Web (WWW).

Hybrid Learning – See Blended Learning.

I

ID – Instructional Design. See ISD.

IDP – Individual Development Plan. Typically a function within a Learning Management System (LMS), the creation of an Individual Development Plan, also known as a Personal Development Plan or Personal Learning Path, usually involves establishing learning objectives, any training requirements and the subsequent stages/steps to realise the plan.

IHT – In-House Training. Training conducted within an organisation, by Instructors employed by the organisation.

IHT Enrolment – See Private Enrolment.

ILMS – Integrated Learning Management System. See ILS and LMS.

ILS – Integrated Learning System. A range of hardware/software solutions that are designed to deliver instructional content.

ILS (2) – Immersive Learning Simulation. See Serious Games.

ILT – Instructor-Led Training. Refers to the practice of training between an instructor and individual or group, typically based in a classroom, conference room or office environment.

ILT (2) Information and Learning Technology. Refers to the use of technology to enhance the learning experience.

In-Person Learning – Refers to situations where the instructor and student are in the same room, i.e. learning takes place synchronously, in real-time.

Informal Learning – Generally refers to the way we learn most things in life, i.e. not through formal classroom learning environments or eLearning, but by learning through experiences.

Instructors – Refers to individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced in the subject matter being taught and are responsible for the actual delivery of training. Can sometimes be referred to as Facilitators.

Intelligent Objects – See Learning Objects.

Interactive Learning – A shared learning model whereby the boundaries between student and teacher are blurred, Interactive Learning is born out of Generation Y's (sometimes referred to as

Digital Natives) heavy use of digital technology within education. Interactive Learning is made up of three components; social networking, urban computing and serious games.

ISD – Instructional Systems Design (also known as Instructional Design) is the process of creating and developing instructional courses and materials for more effective and efficient learning amongst students. It generally takes the format of analysing learning needs, curriculum development to achieve defined training goals and evaluation, with a common instructional design model being ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation).

J

JIT – Just In Time. Involves the delivery of learning materials at the point of need, rather than having all course material up front.

L

Learning Analytics – The collection, measurement and analysis of learner data to better understand and optimise the learning process.

LA – Learning Assets. See DLA.

Learning Environment – See PLE.

Learning Object – See also RLO, a Learning Object is a collection of content items, practice items and assessment items, combined together with a single learning objective. Learning Objects can also be known as Content Objects, Educational Objects, Intelligent Objects etc.

Learning Objectives – The defined outcome statement and goals of the learning process, usually set at the start of the learning process.

Learning Outcomes – The resultant knowledge, skills and habits that students take away after undertaking the learning process.

Learning Portal – Generally refers to a website that offers learning or training materials.

LITE – Learning, Innovation, Technology, Evolution. LITE is an annual EdTech conference in Edinburgh run by Administrate!

LMS – Learning Management System. A software application that handles the administration, documentation, tracking, delivery and reporting of eLearning courses and training programs. Often used alongside Instructor-Led Training (ILT) to provide a Blended Learning approach.

Localisation – The process of adapting your learning materials to accommodate different languages/cultures.

LODOTO – Learn One, Do One, Teach One. See LOTO.

LOTO – Learn One, Teach One. Describes a learning process whereby an individual learns something new (learning one) and disperses this knowledge to another (teaching one). Variations on this concept include LODOTO and SODOTO.

LCMS – Learning Content Management System. Typically, Learning Management Systems (LMS) don't allow the creation of content directly, requiring it be authored and then imported from a Content Authoring Tool (CAT). LCMS have this function built in, allowing content to be developed, managed and published from a single system.

LRS – Learning Record Store. A repository of learning records, necessary for using the Experience API (xAPI), usually accessed by a reporting tool or Learning Management System (LMS).

LSS – Learning Support System. A system of hardware/software working together or in isolation to support learning.

M

mLearning – Mobile Learning. Learning that takes place on mobile phones, typically through Apps or Web Based via Responsive designed Learning Management Systems (LMS).

Mixed-Mode Instruction – See Blended Learning.

MOOC – Massive Open Online Course. Online courses that can accommodate unlimited participants.

MLE – Managed Learning Environment. Often referred to as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

MVLE – Managed Virtual Learning Environment. See VLE.

MLO – Mutated Learning Object. A Learning Object that has been re-purposed, changed or re-used. See also Learning Object.

O

OER – Open Educational Resources. Freely accessible, open-licensed content, documents and media that can be used for teaching, training and learning.

On-Demand Learning – See Self-Paced Learning.

On-Demand Software – See SaaS.

Open Enrolment – See Public Enrolment.

P

PBL – Project-Based Learning. Classroom training that challenges students to acquire knowledge and problem solving skills, through addressing examples of real-world challenges.

PDP – Personal Development Plan. See IDP.

Pedagogy – The process of education and teaching as well as the study of how this is best achieved.

PEP – Personal Enterprise Plan. See IDP.

PLE – Personal Learning Environment. Systems that allow learners to take control of their own learning, including aspects such as setting their own learning objectives, managing what and when they learn, and who they communicate with during the learning process. See also PLN.

PLN – Personal Learning Network. Refers to those people a learner interacts with/learns from within a Personal Learning Environment (PLE).

PLP – Personal Learning Path. See IDP.

POLS – Personal Online Learning Space. See PLE.

PowerPoint – Presentation software from Microsoft, commonly used in both Instructor-Led Training (ILT) environments and eLearning.

Private Enrolment – When a course is held for a single organisation and only students from that organisation can attend. Also known as IHT Enrolment.

Public Enrolment – When anyone can sign up to a course. Also referred to as Open Enrolment.

R

Rapid Prototyping – An Instructional Systems Design (ISD) framework focused on incorporating continual review or formative feedback processes when creating instructional material.

RAT – Rapid Authoring Tools. Similar to Content Authoring Tools (CAT) but allow very quick, efficient creation of training content.

Responsive Design – Refers to the design of a website or system that can resize it's display dynamically for tablet or mobile devices. In context, a Learning Management System (LMS) may be responsively designed to deliver learning content on mobile devices.

REST API – Representational State Transfer Application Programming Interface. See API.

RLO – Reusable Learning Object. A piece of learning content that can be standalone and/or used in multiple training courses, therefore a time saver for future course creation. See also MLO and Snackable Learning.

ROI – Return on Investment. A commercial training company will care about their profitability ratio, i.e. their net income/expenses (although there are other ways that ROI can be calculated). A training department may find ROI more challenging to measure, e.g. if a sales agents productivity increased after training, then this would give some indication of the training's value or ROI.

S

SaaS – Software as a Service. SaaS refers to the licensing of software on a subscription basis instead of via an up-front, one-off, payment. Often cloud based, SaaS can also be referred to as On-Demand Software.

SAM – Successive Approximation Model. A learning model, first proposed by Michael Allen, which proposes taking small steps to achieving learning milestones.

SAM (2) – Student Administration System. See Student Information System.

SCORM – Shareable Content Object Reference Model, originally developed by the United State's Department of Defense to define content format specifications. It's had various iterations over the years, the latest being SCORM 2004 and is now maintained by Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL). It's commonly used by Course Authoring Tools (CAT) to output content into different LMS in a consistent manner. See also Tin Can/xAPI.

Self-Paced Learning – Involves learning where students undertake training courses at their own pace. Can also be referred to as On-Demand Learning.

SEO – Search Engine Optimisation. A methodology to increase traffic to a website by achieving a higher rank within search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo. In an learning context, eLearning systems may allow administrators to optimise their content to assist with SEO strategies.

Serious Games – Involves immersing students in virtual worlds with the objective of experiential learning through cooperation, critical thinking and problem solving via role-playing and community interaction. A component of Interactive Learning, also known as Immersive Learning Simulation (ILS).

SIS – Student Information System. A system for educational establishments to manage student data, including registering students on courses, documenting performance, tracking attendance levels etc.

SLO – Student Learning Objectives. See Learning Objectives.

SME – Subject Matter Expert. An expert in a particular area who will normally work with others to create eLearning content, course objectives etc.

SMS – Student Management System. See Student Information System.

Snackable Learning – Snackable Learning tends to involve breaking down larger blocks of learning content down into smaller 'snackable' learning blocks.

Social Learning – Learning facilitated by communication and interaction with others, typically in a group setting. Within an eLearning context it can also refer to collaborative learning that takes place through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.

SODOTO – See One, Do One, Teach One. See LOTO.

SSO – Single Sign-On. An authentication process that allows users to access multiple software applications with a single set of login credentials.

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Refers to the academic disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Streaming – Refers to a method of viewing video online whereby it's delivered on-demand. Often used to deliver video within a Learning Management System (LMS) – the student never actually downloads the video, but streams it from the source.

Synchronous Learning – Refers to a group of students learning together at the same time. This could be as a group within a class setting or online via eLearning.

T

TBT – Technology-Based Training. Refers to the delivery of training using various technologies. See also WBT.

Tin Can API – Also known as xAPI (Experience Application Programming Interface), Tin Can API is an eLearning specification created to allow content and learning systems to communicate with each other in order to record and track learning experiences (both online and offline). Learning experiences are then stored within a Learning Record Store (LRS) which can also be part of a Learning Management System (LMS). Released in 2013 and developed by Rustici Software on the instruction of ADL, Tin Can API is a newer, more capable, specification than Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM).

TMS – Training Management System. A software application that handles the administration of both online and offline training delivery. Whereas a Learning Management System (LMS) is more associated with the delivery of eLearning and is therefore built for students, a Training Management System is generally built for training administrators. Typical functionality of a Training Management System can include training course setup and scheduling, course booking services, resource management, customer and prospect management (usually via a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system), tracking, and reporting. It's common for a Training Management System to integrate with a

Learning Management System in order to provide a complete end-to-end solution for training managers.

U

Urban Computing – A set of technologies including use of wireless networks, smart phones, tablets and search engines, used as a component within Interactive Learning.

V

VC – Virtual Classroom. See VILT.

VCT – Virtual Classroom Training. See VILT.

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment. An online learning platform, or range of integrated web based applications, that facilitates eLearning, normally through the delivery of digital content, knowledge bases, learning modules, assignments, quizzes and more.

VILT – Virtual Instructor-Led Training. Training that's delivered in a virtual environment, sometimes referred to as Virtual Classroom, where instructor and student are normally in separate locations. Virtual Instructor-Led Training can occur synchronously (a group or individual students learning from an instructor at the same time) or asynchronously (a group or individual students learning from an instructor's pre-recorded video).

VLC – Virtual Live Classroom. See VILT.

VLCT – Virtual Live Classroom Training. See VILT.

VLT – Virtual Live Training. See VILT.

W

Webinar – Refers to a seminar conducted over the Internet.

WBT – Web-Based Training. Training delivered by the Internet (see eLearning) rather than by traditional methods, e.g. Instructor-Led Training (ILT). See also VILT.

WWW – World Wide Web.

X

xAPI – Experience Application Programming Interface (API), also known as Tin Can API.

XML – Extensible Markup Language. A markup language used to define a set of rules for encoding documents, sharing similarities with other markup languages like Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).

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