Bite-Size Revolution with
Microlearning

Small Chunks, Big Returns

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INDEX

INTRODUCTION TO
MICROLEARNING

Microlearning is a process of learning in small chunks to address different needs of learners. It is a way of teaching and delivering learning content in small and specific bursts. As the pace of technological change is increasing, huge number of audiences are relying on microlearning to seek knowledge in real time. Microlearning is adopted to handle different challenges such as increasing needs of learners, rapidly accelerating technology and training that can't keep pace. Failure to do so drives a loss in business revenues seeping into all the departments of every organization across the globe.

A modern learner is often on-the-go and are in need of relevant knowledge on a continuous basis. Organizations are looking for knowledge-based solutions that facilitate microlearning, allowing learners to access information and answers to their questions - when and where they need it most. Small learning units are easy to understand and learners can easily access content anytime and from anywhere.

Microlearning is not merely putting learning material online, nor it is dividing the complete learning experience into small bites. The prime goal is to identify basic application points and close identified performance gaps.

To keep the content short and precise, instructional design efforts must focus on achieving the results without fail. Microlearning involves two stages: The creation of content or instructional design and the execution of that content using advanced technology. The content is cut-short in small modules with a duration of not more than five minutes. Apart from delivering content in small chunks, microlearning is also about focusing on specific topics to aid learners complete their tasks. Microlearning objects have a simple structure and are easy to navigate.

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BUSINESS BENEFITS
OF MICROLEARNING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Conventional training methods are not sufficient for continuous skills updates as they confine learners to closed systems. Microlearning enhances learning by offering learning solutions that are fast-paced and combine different learning styles. When aligned with formal training methods and implemented on online platforms, microlearning has the potential to support professional development.

When learning time is short and the need is evident, that's where Microlearning works its magic!

Here are some of the benefits of microlearning that helps organizations reap business benefits:

● **Learner-centric**

The bite-sized information can be embedded in the learning path, enabling learners to choose what they want to learn and on which kind of device. Microlearning helps to address a plethora of diverse learning styles.

● **Perfect for mobile learning**

Microlearning fits best for mobile-based learning, as learners can participate in short learning modules as per their convenience. No matter, if they are in a meeting or stuck in traffic, they can access the training content on their mobile device and enhance their knowledge level.

● **Cost-effective approach**

Microlearning is perfect if you have limited training budgets. You can organize quality-proven e-learning sessions, prepare online presentations or tutorials at a lesser amount compared to the cost of a full-sized training program. It is more precise and condensed, therefore it requires less design time, which is another plus point.

● **Easy to update**

The nuggets of information are easy to update, thus reducing the overall turn around time. It does not take much time to fix or update them, thus adding an advantage for the organizations.

● **Rapidly fills skill gaps**

Microlearning focuses on one task or concept at a time. This enables learners to fill their performance gaps more quickly. Learners are not required to sit all-day to attend a lengthy online course, but can simply access the specific module to improve knowledge. For instance: If you need to know how to repair some part of a machinery, then you can simply access that specific module to brush up your knowledge and re-enforce the process involved.

● **Boosts learner motivation**

When learners are able to finish a short training module and acquire the skills they need, it helps to drive their motivation level and prompts them to seek out for more learning opportunities.

● **Wider application**

Microlearning is implemented for both formal and informal training requirements. It provides learners an opportunity to use microlearning as a performance support tool, and chunks of information as a series of sources.

● **Just-in-Time support**

Learners pull microlearning moments as per their convenience. This empowers just-in-time performance support, so that participants can apply learning in real-time at the point of need. Organizations reap the benefit of a better trained staff that helps them gain excellence.

Microlearning is not a replacement for everyday learning that include classroom learning, collaborative learning or any other method to engage modern learners. Instead, it is mostly useful for employees when they need an immediate resolution to their problems. Its flexibility makes it easier to engage learning whenever and wherever learners prefer, thus making it a perfect learning environment for all.

AUDIENCES THAT
APPRECIATE MICROLEARNING

Everyday, all of us engage in microlearning. Whether you are flicking through news headlines, browsing through social media sites on your mobile device, you digest new information quickly before going to the next topic. Millennials who have grown up with smart phones and tablets, have the tendency to digest chunked content. Various audiences can be identified who are well inclined to microlearning:

Natural microlearners

Born and brought up in the age of smartphones, millennials wish to access information that is short and to the point. If organizations deliver micro content, they align with less attention span and engage more audience. It leads to increased learner efficiency and retention rate, over traditional learning approach.

Learners across start-ups and smaller organizations

Many organizations prefer microlearning because it provides them efficiencies of time as well as money. Start-ups or smaller organizations can create relevant learning content and make it available for their learners – making sure limited budgets or timelines is not a deterrent to learning.

Learning empowerment

Enabling young learners to have more control over how, when and what they learn empowers them to take responsibility for their learning capability, and helps them boost their confidence level.

TYPES OF **MICROLEARNING**

You have been watching videos, playing games in a virtual environment and listening to podcasts. All of these can be employed to create effective microlearning content. Delivery of chunked content bolsters the online learning approach. In addition, microlearning helps to improve retention rate, bypassing the forgetting curve of learners. There are different types of microlearning that can be easily integrated in e-learning solutions to cater tailored needs of new-age learners.

Videos

Videos are on the top, when it comes to microlearning as learners love to watch them. Mostly, learners choose video option because these are playable on multiple devices, readily built and time effective. These features help learners to absorb and retain the concepts, that last for long. Interactive videos enhance the microlearning experiences in different ways, that include:

- **Videos can be watched outside of the learning environment as per the learners' convenience.**
- **Visual cues are appealing to learners' sensory-based learning preferences, increasing retention rates.**
- **Videos can depict any number of to-do-lists, tasks and assessments.**

Blogs

There are millions of blogs written on hundreds of topics. In the context of microlearning, blogs are more than merely a reading material. They are interactive and easily assessible tools that facilitate learning. Blogs are short, concise and appealing at the same time. They have multiple uses in the modern learning approach, including:

- **Blogs open the discussions digitally on a global scale.**
- **Trainers create blogs to keep learners, informed about assignments, new courses, etc.**
- **Blogs summarize the content, focusing on important topics covered and practices to be followed.**

Podcasts

Podcasts are versatile audio tools that help to improve learners' retention of training content. These can be easily shared on MP3 files through varied cloud-based services. With microlearning, podcasts fit in the best to overall learning content. Several benefits of podcasts while using microlearning are given below:

- **Podcasts feature industry experts, organizational leaders and other specialists.**
- **These serve as tools that learners can review as per their convenience.**
- **These are portable as content is assessible on iPods, iPhones and other mobile devices.**

Job Aids

Job aids help learners perform their tasks in an efficient way. They come in different formats such as diagrams, checklists, flowcharts and decision tables. No matter what the format is, a job aid helps learners to complete a specific set of actions. Discussed below are various ways job aids help to boost microlearning process.

- **These can be matched to segments of a lengthier learning course.**
- **Learners use job aids to give context for a video they watch.**
- **These are useful, especially when a quick update occurs.**
- **These aid learners at different stages, from doing something for the first time to remembering and implementing the process at workplace.**

Social Media

Social media and microlearning are paired, because learners look for the same thing in both, snippets of information that are readily available and require less time to review. Most of the social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are perfect platforms to publish micro content. Social media increases learner engagement through the following activities:

- **Social websites engage huge audience with short and relevant discussions.**
- **Social media presents an opportunity for learners to interact in real-time scenario with industry experts and leaders.**
- **Trainers can share the training material on platforms like Instagram or Pinterest and even host an entire course on a specific platform.**
- **Daily tips help learners keep engaged during the whole training session.**

Interactivities

Interactives provide great opportunities of communication that require high level decision-making and critical thinking skills. For interactives to be effective, organizations must first identify their audience, smartly integrate web-based paths to provide content and boost efficiency and develop fun activities associated with the course. Interactives in microlearning engage more learners with the help of activities:

- **Interactive videos to grab maximum attention of learners with the on-screen elements.**
- **Branching scenarios require learners to choose an action that helps to make decisions.**
- **Hands-on elements help learners to do things and develop better understanding of content. For instance: Click, drag, drop and hover tasks to reveal information and fillable components such as feedback forms, assessments and others.**

TECHNOLOGIES
USED IN MICROLEARNING

Learning with small chunks of information has always been around and technology plays a major role in efficient content delivery. Unlike conventional methods, microlearning thrives on the following digital-age realities:

The emergence of videos

Video is the most important medium to deliver content in today's era. It is a great learning platform used to present content in a format which learners mostly prefer. Also, it is a fact that our brain process videos faster than normal text, thus reducing the content's cognitive load.

Modern learners find videos more engaging overall because it requires less cognitive strain. As a learner, if you are given the choice between reading a document and watching a video, you will choose the video! Isn't it?

Mobile access

Microlearning is an excellent way to learn on mobile. Several smartphone users have shared their experience saying that they are always in a hurry when searching for something on their devices and they abandon a website or app which opens too slow. Mobile devices are perfect to access micro content, as learners are able to interact with small pieces of content on the fly.

Search on demand

Learning and Development lacks behind on search capability and majority of people are looking for new learning solutions. The bite size modules in microlearning are easy to search and immediately applicable to meet learning requirements at the point of need.

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Here's how we did it – A Case Study

Our Client is an organization which develops and delivers high-quality professional training solutions for a varied array of clients. For more than 30 years, they have been dedicated to the creation of impactful and innovative training, by mingling modern educational tools and newer technologies to help new-age learners realize their educational and professional goals. G-Cube developed a mobile-enabled microlearning digital platform for continual training delivery and re-enforcement.

Business requirement

- While firmly believing in the strength of instructor-led trainings to make a meaningful experience for learners, the Client realized the need for sustained learner support that extends beyond the confines of a classroom.

- Continuing re-enforcements in the classroom format had logistical barriers which made it a cost and time-prohibitive proposition.

- Today's tech-savvy professionals needed a flexible learning platform to provide them with the necessary learning support and multiple learning opportunities anywhere, anytime, and on any device they choose.

Solutions implemented

- The delivery of content on the platform's learner interface is designed on the concept of the Windows 8 tile-based interface. This provides a visually attractive and intuitive layout design, which is graphically enhanced and user friendly. The tile interface also kept the UI design clutter-free, allowing learner-ease with the system.

- The platform has fifteen tiles in all, with six main tiles including the Classroom, eBook, Collaborate, Twitter, Videos, and Checklist.

- Highlight of the platform was a Video library, offering an array of short instructional videos for instant support. Availability of the short learning videos on this platform helps the learner derive more out of the learning experience. Keeping the videos short and light, it is made sure that they render well on the mobile platform – creating a strong audio-visual connect with the learner.

Business benefits

- Enabling the student with tools to succeed post-class, the platform increases learning retention while decreasing the need for class re-takes, overall improving training ROI.

- The learning videos have an extra edge of superior learner engagement and deliver well through the mobile platform. They provide instant support, create instant re-enforcements and deliver instant refreshers

- The experience of learning as a whole has been both enriched and enhanced. Learners are more enthusiastic to engage in a technology-enabled solution – which saves them time and effort all the while imparting practical learning for their benefit.

DEVELOPMENT OF MICROLEARNING:
DO'S AND DONT'S

From short video clips to small quizzes and composed tweets, microlearning aids learners to get the most significant content out of the whole curriculum. Here are some of the dos and dont's of microlearning:

Do's

Understand your audience
Think about your audience and their preferred ways of learning before choosing microlearning. Do consider factors like readiness with the format or access to resources like mobile devices or internet access.

Use different interactivities
Interactive elements help to grab more attention of learners, reducing the time to learn and improving learners' engagement. Microlearning courses should be visually appealing with the inclusion of graphics and multimedia.

Focus on keeping it short
Microlearning will lose relevance if the learning content runs too long – it has to be short and crisp. Chunking longer content into shorter modules is the way to go ahead.

Provide assessments
Short assessments like quizzes or multiple choice questions can be utilized to assess the understanding of learners and check if they are able to apply the learning in a fruitful manner. These short assessments are also a way to check the success of the chosen medium of microlearning.

Gamification
A gamified environment on microlearning through points, badges or even leaderboards can increase learner engagement a lot.

Dont's

Do not add too much information
You should include only relevant content which the learner needs to know. For instance: Adding extraneous information in a compliance training where the content is already dense makes the course heavier and difficult to understand.

Do not use irrelevant multimedia
Adding images and videos just for the sake of filling space is not a good decision. These should be linked with the content in a way that learners are able to understand the course better and quicker.

Do not be too formal
When it is about self-paced courses, formal language should not be used. Using a conversational and direct tone creates better learning experience for the learner.

Do not skip on production quality
Just because it is short, doesn't mean that it requires no work at all! Modern learners have come to expect a certain level of quality with all content – including the learning content that they access. Visual appeal goes a long way and it would not be wise to de-prioritize it to save some bucks

Do not utilize microlearning as a stand-alone learning activity
As well-illustrated in the live case-study shared in the previous section, microlearning is a fantastic tool as a learning refresher. But having said that, it is often not enough to just provide concise information. When learners have to grasp complex topics, detailed e-courses or classroom sessions have to be utilized – and microlearning effectively creates a sustainable platform of learning re-enforcements for the same.
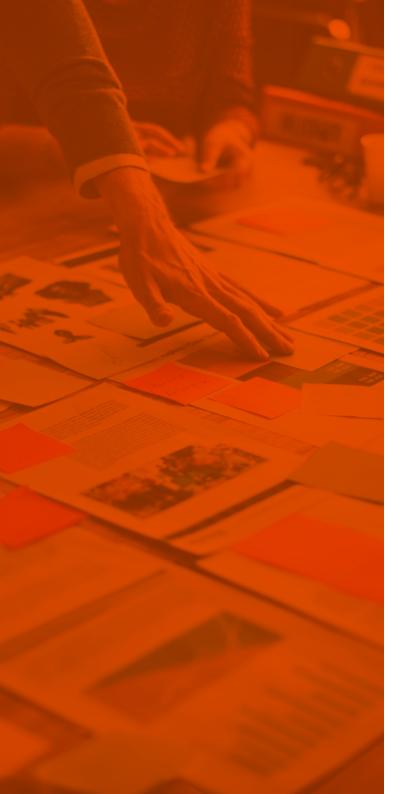
Summary

Do you wish to increase the completion rates of your e-learning courses? Are you looking for ways to improve the retention level of your employees at workplace? If yes, then you need to adopt microlearning. With the evolution of modern learning styles, microlearning has become the latest trend in the realm of e-learning. With this approach, you can break down a specific subject content into bite-sized modules, giving the flexibility to learners to learn at their own pace and in order of their choice.

Microlearning has immense potential to serve mobile learners globally, because chunked or micro content can be accessed anywhere and from any device. It has gained popularity in recent years, primarily because of two factors – technology platform that enables tracking of micro content and on the other side, content creation made easy and understandable with videos. This e-book will help learning enthusiasts from all domains learn more about microlearning, how it's done and most importantly – the practicalities of it all.

Request for Microlearning Sample

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