

# How to Prevent Member Education Burnout

After the decision to increase learning opportunities at your organization – there is usually a flurry of activity to roll out some eLearning content. Build it and they will come. Classes are designed, written, and posted. Then the waiting begins. Are people signing up? Are they completing the classes?

## **NOW WHAT?**

With 86 per cent of organizations now using some form of eLearning courses (Dixon and Overton, 2011)<sup>1</sup>, you need to look at what you are offering and make sure you are thinking about keeping your educational material fresh and engaging to keep your members coming back.

### **1. Relevant Content**

Associations are in the unique position to be subject matter experts on staying current for the field that defines your membership. Curating the most interesting news stories, posting regulatory changes, bringing experts together for annual meetings help reinforce the associations position as the “go to” source for information. How does that translate into course offerings?

Instead of trying to determine what your members want or need, the best approach is the direct approach.

### **ASK THEM.**

Surveying members will give you a sense of what THEY think is relevant and show their interests. Ask in multiple ways, email, annual meetings, and picking up the phone. This gives you a compelling reason to touch your members and show that you value what is important to them.

### **2. Clear Learning Objectives**

What are they going to learn and why are they going to learn it?<sup>2</sup> Making sure you can clearly articulate what they should get out of the learning forces you to be clear about it before you offer it. If you don't know what they will get out of the learning, how will they?

### **3. Engaging content**

Adults retain 20% of what they read and hear, 40% of what they see, 50% of what they say, 60% of what they do, and 90% of what they see, hear, say and do (Copeland, 2003)<sup>3</sup> Anything you can do to change the learning content from simply a passive experience will help make the content more engaging and memorable. Frequent breaks

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1 Dixon, G & Overton, L, 2011, "Towards Maturity 2011-12 Benchmark Full Report", Towards Maturity, <http://www.towardsmaturity.org/2011benchmark>

2 Clinton Longenecker, Rob Abernathy, (2013), "The eight imperatives of effective adult learning", Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 21 Iss 7 pp. 30 - 33

3 Copeland, L. (2003). Training that rocks. Proceedings of ASSE's Safety 2003, Denver, CO, USA.

to have the learners engage with the learning material. Discussion groups where learners can share ideas and facilitate information exchange. Games can be a fun wrapper to deliver the content, but they have to use instructional design parameters to reinforce the learning objectives.

#### **4. Embrace the reality of Interruptions**

Get a group of people together and how long is it before everyone is comparing their “busyness badges”? We all suffer from time compressing and competing demands for our time and attention. Plan your learning around the fact that your students WILL get interrupted. Make the content into smaller chunks so they can move through the material and see progress.

Knowing what to do is not the same as actually doing it. Iterate your ideas, ask for feedback, test the course content with focus groups, and don't be afraid to try new approaches. Not everything will resonate with all your members. But keeping it fresh, interesting, and relevant will help them continue to come back for more.