

## **Best Practices – On-Boarding**

**By Josh Bersin**

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### **Corporate Learning in 2008**

Most learning executives have a list of “things to think about.” But all too often, time limits contemplation. Three trends will have great impact on corporate learning in the coming year. Make sure they’re on your thinking list!

#### **The Big One: Talent-Driven Learning Programs**

The business demand for integrated talent management solutions will have the most significant impact on corporate learning in 2008. Over the last year, we’ve talked with many executives who are working hard to break down the silos of HR and develop integrated, enterprisewide talent management strategies to address these shortages.

Concurrently, forward-thinking learning executives are emphasizing talent-driven learning programs — particularly in areas such as leadership development, onboarding and career development — to support talent strategies. These long-term, complex learning programs require competency analysis, complex blended learning activities, and new levels of integration with development planning and performance management.

The current focus on talent management — which we believe will shape business for years to come — also will shape the role of corporate learning. The most successful learning executives will be those who champion talent-driven learning programs and who initiate and support collaboration with HR and business leaders to solve their companies’ talent challenges.

#### **The New Learning on Demand**

We have been writing about rapid e-learning, performance support and informal learning for years. All provide some level of learning on demand. However, in 2008, the phrase “learning on demand” will mean even greater immediacy, personalization and relevance. Conditioned by Google, RSS feeds, YouTube and other popular tools, employees are now expecting to find answers on any job- or company-related topic in seconds.

Learning organizations are no longer focused on getting instructional material online. The new challenge is to develop content rapidly, make it highly accessible and integrate it into workflows. We see the emergence of many new solutions to this problem, including on-

demand content management systems, easy-to-build learning portals (rarely included in the LMS, by the way), and the use of employee profiles to create miniportals that provide highly relevant performance support to employees.

But, these tools alone don't make for successful on-demand learning. Companies must have a defined learning architecture that guides their team on which tools to use for different learning applications. In order to keep content development consistent and efficient, a learning architecture also should guide developers on the formats, features and types of delivery to use for various learning projects. With so many choices for learning now available, such an architecture is mandatory for learning organizations.

### **Get Ready for Self-Published Content**

About 70 percent of all corporate learning takes place through on-the-job experiences. This means that your company's best instructors and training resources rarely reside in the training organization. Self-published content, when used effectively, can help you leverage the contributions of subject-matter experts and give employees ways to collaborate and share experiences.

Organizations that successfully use self-published content have created knowledge-sharing cultures with ways to help employees with similar jobs, interests or challenges share information quickly and easily. For instance, customer service agents dealing with a particular product area have much to share with fellow agents, but much less with agents dealing with other products.

Today, organizations can take "off the shelf" tools for blogs and wikis and use them to create communities of practice that facilitate such informal, on-the-job learning. Best practices are emerging to make such solutions more successful and more widely adopted. If you haven't already done so, you should start to experiment and find what works in your corporate culture in 2008.

*Josh Bersin is the principal and founder of Bersin & Associates, with more than 25 years of experience in corporate solutions, training and e-learning.*