

New research proves that employees are eager to learn

Submitted by: On Tap Communications

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A major study formally launched today by e-learning provider, SkillSoft, proves that the majority of employees are eager to improve their professional and personal development – despite some of the barriers they have to overcome in order to do so.

A random selection of e-learning users within 16 global organisations participated in the study. Pressure of workload and/or lack of time was cited by 51% of the sample as the main barrier to professional and personal development, with a further 16% saying that interruptions in the workplace made it difficult for them to focus on their learning. For others, it was a lack of management support and encouragement – both at line manager and senior manager level – that prevented them from taking fuller advantage of the e-learning opportunities open to them.

But, the good news for employers is that, despite these constraints, with e-learning the majority of employees (68%) are taking responsibility for their own development and finding the time and the motivation to learn at their desks when their pressure of work allows. This group dips in and out of e-learning courses during quieter times – typically learning in 10 – 30 minute chunks. Only 9% are able to make use of a dedicated training area at work.

The remainder of the sample (23%) are opting to access e-learning in their own time - either at home (11%) - or by coming into work early; leaving the office late or using their lunch breaks (12%).

Due to the sporadic nature of these learning patterns and because most employees are learning online in small chunks, most of them (77%) either didn't complete the

online course in one attempt or didn't finish it at all. Despite this, 93% of respondents say that they still learnt what they needed to; 88% say that they have already used something that they learnt from an online course to help them in their jobs; and 52% have passed on something they have learnt to at least one colleague.

e-learning also scored highly as a method of training delivery, with 93.5% of the sample stating that they enjoy e-learning and 98% saying that they would recommend it to other colleagues.

Kevin Young, managing director of SkillSoft EMEA said:

“It's very encouraging that employees are using e-learning to take increased ownership of their skills development and perhaps more importantly that they are actually applying their knowledge in the workplace, despite the barriers they are experiencing. But organisations are missing a valuable lesson here. Managers ought to be considering how much more effective their teams could be if the organisational culture encouraged the provision of dedicated time in which to learn online– however short this may be. The impact of giving employees a specific amount of time in which to enhance their skills is likely to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the organisation.”

Free copies of a management summary of the full research findings are available from Kay Baldwin-Evans,

head of research at SkillSoft on +44 (0)20 8283 1811 or email: kay_baldwinevans@skillsoft.com
Ends

End-user quotes and additional findings are available from Louise Jaggs at TextOnTap: tel: +44 (0)1242 257770; mob: +44 (0)7712 011246;
email: skillsoft@textontap.com

Notes to editors

Research methodology

16 global organisations using e-learning as a critical component of their training delivery agreed to contribute to this study: AT&T; Deloitte; FedEx; Hilton Group; Intelligent Finance; Lloyds TSB; Nestle; Norwich Union; Price Waterhouse Coopers; Prudential; Royal Mail; Siemens; Schlumberger; Telewest; Wolters Kluwer and Xerox.

The research participants (204 users) were based in 14 countries across EMEA and were randomly selected by their organisations. Approximately a quarter of the respondents were located outside the UK. They represented a diverse range of functional and occupational groups. The only criterion stipulated by SkillSoft was that each participant had to have experience of at least one course online.

The fieldwork took place between June 2003 and January 2004. In-depth qualitative interviews (of around 20 minutes in length) were undertaken either face-to-face (68%) or - where participants were unavailable or located outside Europe - over the telephone (32%). The results were launched to research participants during March 2004 and to a wider audience in April 2004.

Other generic information:

Gender: Female - 46%; Male - 54%

Age: 18–15 (14%); 25–35 (47%); 35–45 (25%); 45–55 (12%); Over 55 (2%)

PC skills (self-rated): Bad - 8%; Not very good - 3%; Average - 17%; Good - 46%; Excellent - 27%

About SkillSoft (www.skillsoft.com)

SkillSoft is a major global supplier of integrated e-Learning solutions that provide the workforces of corporate organisations with management, business, computer and information technology skills. SkillSoft focuses on generating tangible business results through both formal and informal learning processes – providing learners with the tools to access information, training modules, reference material and other resources at the point they really need it – i.e. when they are actually trying to complete a specific task during a working day.

SkillSoft's customers include international corporate organisations such as AT&T, FedEx, Hilton, Lloyds TSB, Nestle, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Royal Mail, Siemens, Telewest and Wolters Kluwer. The company works with a wide range of technology suppliers to ensure that its SkillChoice blended learning solutions can

be seamlessly integrated into an organisation's existing systems and software.