

eLearning is Dead. 6 Important Things You Need to Know

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eLearning is dead, people.

Let's face it, our efforts to translate one-on-one analogue learning into digital tools have failed. Despite our best efforts to entice learners with "interactive" content, online communities, and incentives for completion, people remain uninspired and unmotivated.

Here's why:

- **It's usually boring:** boring videos, boring content, multiple choice *sigh*
- **We often assume one size fits all:** We know that people have different behaviours and different learning needs so why do we assume that one e-learning solution is going to be right for everyone?
- **It's not relevant:** Does everyone need to have the same learning at the same time for the same business challenge? Probably not.

A New Era of Digital Learning

"The art of L&D is about creating a learning journey"

These eloquent words were spoken by Reza Moussavian, SVP HR Digital & Innovation at Deutsche Telekom (DT) during his presentation at [HR Innovation & Tech Fest](#) 2017. As the incubator of Deutsche Telekom's HR function, Reza has challenged the existing Learning & Development approach: from mass standardised boring e-Learning to human-centered exciting social learning.

"After some soul searching we came to the conclusion at Deutsche Telekom that eLearning is not the future. We had to do things differently if we wanted to engage our 220,000 strong workforce who were already living a digital lifestyle. But we knew that our HR and L&D people were not going to be able to disrupt themselves, so we set up a special disruption unit which focuses on delivering different digital learning experiences," Reza said.

Here are Reza's top 6 ideas about the future of digital learning that he presented at [HR Innovation & Tech Fest](#) 2017:

1. Treat Your Employees Like Your Customers

Most savvy companies are currently switching from cost focus to customer focus, creating exceptional experiences for their customers. The interesting thing is you can only have satisfied customers if you have satisfied employees, so there is a clear link between employee experience and customer experience. However when it comes to corporate learning, many companies are forgetting about the experience they're delivering for their people. Put as much effort into your digital learning strategy as you would your customer experience strategy and you're on your way.

2. Start with an Innovation and Growth Mindset

When Reza's team started their digital learning journey at Deutsche Telekom, the team looked at reports like [The Future of Jobs](#) from the World Economic Forum which outlines the core skills that people are going to need for the future of work: things like complex problem solving skills, critical thinking, and creativity were key. "We realised our focus on learning needed to shift from teaching people how to do things right, to giving them the capabilities and competencies that are suitable for working in the digital age," he said.

3. Make Digital Learning Self-Paced and Self-Managed

Learners should feel they have control over the content, they should be inspired rather than forced to do something. So digital learning should be flexible enough to allow learners to login when they choose: during private time or working hours depending on the daily business challenges they have.

It should also be self-managed. Trust that your learners can master the complexity of different tools and don't settle for one HR system that promises to do it all. After all they are mastering the use of Twitter, SharePoint, a browser, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc. all at the same time in their private lives. "By making use of different tools, we can expose people to a certain level of complexity, which can actually be a good thing. Our job as L&D professionals is to set the flow and create a learning journey using these different tools," Reza said.

4. Focus on Relevance

We should ideally be making digital learning journeys that are applicable to learners' jobs. That way we can weave them into digital transformation programs. And if they're not immediately available for on-the-job applications (because not every business unit of 20,000 people has the same challenges at any given time) then think about how you can make it more fun, more entertaining, more inspiring.

5. Utilise your Enterprise Social Network

DT was one of the first companies in Europe to make use of an Enterprise Social Network seven years ago, and now have 120,000 active users. Reza believes this is one of the most underrated tools from an HR perspective. "We are currently putting digital learning into the social network, but this is limited due to its capabilities: you can upload videos, comment and link to articles, but that's it. So you have to be very good at providing fresh content on a weekly basis, because otherwise people lose interest in it."

6. Deliver an Experience

Great Digital Learning provides an experience learners wouldn't get in a face-to-face or analogue training. At DT, they're currently looking at how they can use Virtual Reality to deliver coaching and virtual classrooms. One stumbling block they've come across has been the physical restrictions of VR "We initially thought that we could get rid of training spaces,

but we found when people use VR and they walk around, they are a threat to themselves and to colleagues unless they're using it in a contained space. So we're learning that new requirements arise by making use of new technology," Reza said.

Less Technical, More Experience

"Digital learning for me is designing learning not only by content, technical skills and competencies; it's about designing a storyline that provides an experience for people," Reza said.

Digital Learning is not eLearning 2.0. It's about shifting learning to align with the new realities of the digital world.

The future of digital learning is:

- Making use of different experience types: video, podcast, quizzes, gamified elements
- Having access to the learning on the go, anytime, anywhere, from any device
- Choosing topics that users think is of relevance (not just HR) so they can connect to the overall story
- And above all making whatever is there inspiring!

About the Speaker



Dr. Reza Moussavian is Senior Vice President of the HR division "Digital & Innovation " at Deutsche Telekom AG. Since its establishment in April 2016, the division successfully introduced new tools like a leadership-app, digital collaboration, innovation methods, future work, top management innovation formats and exploration of new technologies for Deutsche Telekom AG. Before taking the lead for the HR division "Digital & Innovation", Dr. Moussavian ran its predecessor named "Shareground" that focused on implementing a culture of innovation throughout Deutsche Telekom.