

CLOSE THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Meet your employees where they are



By Dave Hodgson

It was Sunday, May 15, and I was excited to travel south to Sarasota, Fla. – one of my favourite places in Florida – flying through Detroit, Mich.

After checking my bags, I headed towards security and noticed one of the TSA employees looking at their phone while adjusting the post and rope stanchions, clearly looking at his cell for reference.



Curious, I asked what he was up to. He replied, “I’ve only been on the job a few weeks, my phone let me know it’s time to adjust the lines because of increased traffic – the layouts are on my phone.”

This confirmed what I suspected. The security company used micro-learning or learn-in-the-flow of work to train and educate staff. This young gent was clearly happy to be self-sufficient in this task and have the information at his fingertips when he needed it. Imagine the delays if he had to wait for a manager to come and let him know it was time, or worse, if he was expected to have memorized it back in orientation?

undrey/123rf

Micro-learning is the delivery of condensed content for learners to study at their convenience.

So how can this apply to the club industry?

Before we get there, and for those of you who are Gen-X and later like me, let's take a quick walk down the evolutionary road of learning, according to Josh Bersin.

We've seen training and education go from projector learning in the '70s and '80s, to the PC era of scaled learning with no ability to track. Then, in the '90s, we moved to LMS systems where e-learning was born. Google facilitated this change to an experience where learners were able to search for content. By 2007, mobile apps such as YouTube and Twitter captured learner's attention, with staff gravitating to short videos to fulfil their learning needs.

More recently, educators have leaned towards micro-learning to meet the expectations of the modern learner. Platforms were created with features that integrate, manage, curate and organize bite-sized multi-media content such as videos, articles and podcasts. We may not love where we are at, and we certainly can't replace the value of in-person support and team building, but we also can't deny where 46 per cent of our workforce comes from – and that is Gen-Z and Millennials!

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Further defined, it's:

- Two minutes or less, generally
- Topic or problem based
- Video and/or text
- Indexed and searchable
- Content is rated for quality and utility

Like many of you reading this, the golf, club or hospitality industry has pretty much been my entire life since age 11, and so being an operator will always be a part of my DNA.

While my role may differ now from day-to-day operations, my mind always seeks solutions and innovations. At the most recent NGCOA and CMAC conferences in Vancouver, many sessions were focused on current staffing challenges. Although it's a little scary to think about, Gallup tells us that in all sectors of our workforce, on average, 17 per cent of our staff are actively disengaged. This means they genuinely don't care about our member and guest experience, or the success of our business.

We owe it to our teams to evaluate ways to improve employee engagement, by meeting them where they are, with experiences that will resonate. Like any other industry, it's important to foster an environment that encourages employees to learn and grow, that is fully transparent and embraces diversity. Using current trends in education and training will ensure employees are set up for success, increase engagement and reduce potential turnover.

Statistics Canada recently indicated a record high of one million job vacancies. With the high cost of turnover (up to one-third of the annual cost of an employee), and an increased demand for part-time work, clubs need to consider different techniques like micro-learning. Candidates are interviewing us, not the other way around. According to Forbes, investing in your employees will improve productivity, attract new talent and contribute to the bottom line.

There's no better time to implement micro-learning into your training initiatives.

Consider adding these and more to your toolbox:

- Golf cart safety
- How to change a pin hole or rake a bunker
- Properly loading the Café Express
- How to do a roll-up
- Standards of service for specific tasks or roles
- How to sell a gift card with your POS
- How to do a split bill with your POS
- How to set up for a banquet – formal and casual options
- How to set up the driving range – how to pick the driving range – safely!
- How to make and garnish our Caesar salad
- How to reset the credit card machine
- How about orientation videos for board and committee members – there's only 60 or so of them, right?
- Access to guest policies and critical phone numbers for services

The list goes on and on, and the win is: take the time now to add content so it will be available when recruiting and onboarding are busiest. Allow your new employees to feel independent and capable, while saving time for you and your managers.

Learning shouldn't end after orientation. Many aspects of your club departments change daily, and allowing employees to learn in the flow of work equips them with tools to adapt to ever-changing requirements.

Who knows, maybe the next time you're at the club, you might see firsthand "learning in the flow" – a young range attendant watching a video on how to properly stack the golf pyramid or a maintenance team member reviewing on their phone the perfect technique to finish the bunker edges. They might even use their device to check that off their list of duties for the day, seamlessly letting the superintendent know that part of the golf course duties for the day are complete! 🍀

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