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**tips for Rapid
Learning rollout**

Foreword

The ongoing evolution of e-learning continues to present new opportunities and challenges for those tasked with delivering business training and implementing learning technologies. For most L&D and HR professionals, Rapid Learning was a revelation; it unlocked the potential of e-learning by dramatically accelerating the creation of content. Rapid Learning allowed anyone to create and distribute courses within weeks rather than months, and without demanding any special technical know-how.

This white paper is not a sales pitch for Rapid Learning, nor does it give any guidance on how to select the best software solution. Instead, we offer practical advice and insight for three types of L&D and HR professional:

1. Those planning their first Rapid Learning project and who want to get off to the best possible start.
2. Those engaged in Rapid Learning creation and who want to ensure their strategy maximises the success of future projects.
3. Those with more extensive Rapid Learning experience but who want to take things to the next level.

Applying these principles will help to ensure not only that your individual Rapid Learning projects have the best chance of success, but also that your whole 'rapid' approach achieves real excellence in terms of cost effectiveness, bottom line impact, replicability, audience uptake, and much more.

Tip
N°01

*Don't just plan,
do*

Start a project now and take an active role in making sure
Rapid Learning is integrated into your organization.

Don't just plan, do

01

There's plenty to gain from having a big vision and setting long-term goals, but to secure maximum benefit from Rapid Learning for your organization it pays to get into action. One of the main advantages of rapid content creation is that it lets you do exactly what its name implies. This can run counter to the way we're comfortable working. We 'know' that it's important to plan before committing resources to a project - and our organizational structures reflect this belief. It's true that planning can reduce risk, increase efficiency, and improve business outcomes, but when it comes to Rapid Learning, planning can easily slip into overplanning and become counterproductive.

So, avoid getting stuck in strategizing and planning, and instead get your own hands dirty. Practise using your 'rapid' tool to produce a genuine project, then get it out of the door and in front of a real audience.

By learning as you go you are quite likely to make mistakes or to create learning that doesn't live up to all of your expectations. But at the same time you'll be getting feedback on exactly how well Rapid Learning suits your organization. Your subsequent attempts will be a tangible improvement and you'll gain invaluable practical experience that will help you to develop a long-term strategy, a shared vision, a content-creation methodology, a coaching structure, or whatever else you need - and you'll be able to do so much more effectively than by sitting in meetings hypothesizing. What's more, your output will be a practical demonstration that it can be done. This makes it much easier to become the kind of organization where people use Rapid Learning to quickly disseminate knowledge and expertise to their colleagues.

Tip N°02

Adopt a process

Adopt a consistent approach to creating Rapid Learning, and base it around a workflow that is proven to deliver results. A single, robust process will enable almost anyone in your organization to produce high quality content.

Adopt a process

02

Creating e-learning involves a range of activities that must be managed efficiently to deliver a successful project. But imagine someone given the job of creating a piece of Rapid Learning for the first time. He/She's got bags of experience, several PowerPoint presentations, and a file full of notes on the subject, but who should he/she talk through his/her content choices with? How does he/she get feedback on his/her creative ideas? When and where should he/she get graphics or other media? Who reviews his/her work, and who approves it as good to go? These are just a few of the uncertainties that face the novice content creator; uncertainties that can be eliminated if you establish a robust process and use it for every Rapid Learning project. Adopting a single process offers a number of benefits to any organization that is serious about making rapid content creation a standard tool for knowledge transfer between its people. Perhaps more importantly, it hugely simplifies life for the individuals whose job it is to make that vision a reality.

Major steps of a workflow

It may not seem like a problem, but most organizations are packed to the rafters with information. A key outcome of your planning process must be to tame this content monster so it doesn't gobble up your Rapid Learning project - budget, resources and all.

It's tempting to throw everything into the mix just because lots of information is available. But you'll get a more streamlined and effective end product if you include only the relevant content and cut everything else. This prioritization process is a cornerstone of effective learning design, so make it part of your planning process.

Evaluate your content and include only that which is necessary to deliver your learning objectives and outcomes. This will allow you to:

- Produce your courses even more quickly.
- Deliver shorter, more logical and more digestible modules.
- Use interactive and/or creative approaches to deliver objectives instead of wasting them on irrelevant information.
- Leave users feeling they've had relevant input at a pace they can absorb and a volume they can remember and use.

Adopt a process

All this preparation will make the **authoring** phase much more straightforward. This part is all about taking the messages, information, and media that you want your audience to experience, and putting them together to create an informative, interactive learning package. You don't have to start from scratch; you can reuse existing written material, presentations, diagrams, photography, illustrations, audio, or video. Specialist expertise isn't necessary - you can use templated screen interactions to create tried-and-tested activities to engage learners. Thus, the authoring process need involve nothing more technically challenging than putting together a PowerPoint presentation or sending an email.

The **quality assurance** phase is when you and your key stakeholders review and give feedback on the learning content. Ideally you will get a working online version of the course rather than a paper-based description. If your feedback and revisions are made directly into the content creation system, Subject Matter Experts will easily be able to see what changes are required for sign-off.

With traditional e-learning, QA can account for as much as 30% of the total project costs. The most common reasons for this are inviting too many people to review the content, failing to structure or control feedback, not tracking changes made to the content, and even adding new errors by allowing people who aren't content experts to make changes. However, a good Rapid Learning solution can eliminate many of these difficulties by managing the review process, tracking comments, and controlling exactly who can and can't edit the content.

Finally, at **publishing** the e-learning course is prepared for circulation. The most successful solutions also have a built-in translation feature that helps you create multiple language versions with minimum effort.

Choose an e-learning solution that moves you through these phases methodically from start to finish, and a potentially unfamiliar set of steps naturally breaks down into a manageable sequence of actions - all following the natural workflow of a successful Rapid Learning project.

Tip
N°03

*Small
is beautiful*

Create a bigger impact on your bottom line by taking on the small-scale, short term projects that have a real business impact.

Small is beautiful

For the last couple of decades, businesses have tended to view e-learning as something necessarily complicated.

Today, these ideas are increasingly obsolete, and organizations that aren't limited by this old way of thinking are discovering that quickly creating a lot of small e-learning courses is a more effective learning strategy than dedicating huge budgets to a few monolithic learning programs. Quite simply, smaller courses can deliver urgent information to where it is needed more quickly, and are often better at improving business performance and bottom line profitability.

Here are three things you are likely to find yourself doing if you embrace the shift to a more agile and responsive learning culture.

1: Demystifying e-learning

When Subject Matter Experts start creating content for themselves, they find out that e-learning is really just a tool for transferring knowledge online, and secondly they realize that they don't need any 'e-learning magic' to create perfectly good content. As this happens, you will probably find that you move from the position of 'e-learning expert' to 'e-learning enabler', coaching people as they follow a simple but effective content creation process and giving them the confidence to use your chosen rapid content creation solution. The best tools come with instructional design embedded, and provide templates or wizards that guide SMEs through the authoring process so that you don't have to. That will free up some of your valuable time - perhaps to support more SMEs as they create more content for your organization.

2: Trusting your people

Once you've empowered the Subject Matter Experts in your business to create their own content, you may need to take a step back. People often know their own needs best - and with Rapid Learning they have a great tool to help them meet those needs using their own resources. Trusting your people to produce e-learning without your constant supervision is an important part of the process. You'll see the benefits of quickly-generated

Small is beautiful

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'disposable' learning emerge, and simultaneously you'll get more time to draw out and develop the other talent that is latent in your organization.

3: Setting your experts free

People with specialized knowledge can become trapped by their expertise. You all know the one who knows everything about a certain skill area and who spends half the day answering questions from colleagues - the same questions over and over.

By giving her the ability to record his/her experiences, store his/her knowledge, and share his/her wisdom you'll free his/her to move on and do something more productive. Meanwhile, the knowledge trapped in his/her head will be available for everyone to create value with.

Tip
N°04

*Treat Rapid Learning
as a serious business
project*

Approach the creation of Rapid Learning as a formalized project, not an open-ended activity to be done in people's spare time.

Treat Rapid Learning as a serious business project

04

Treat Rapid Learning like it matters. This may seem like blindingly obvious advice but it is surprising how often organizations under-commit to their 'rapid' projects. The process of creating Rapid Learning works best when it has some of the formal structure of a business-critical activity – but not so much that it overwhelms the project. Having an internal customer waiting for the output, working towards a fixed deadline, and defining and managing the costs involved will bring greater focus to your efforts and increase your degree of success.

Rapid Learning projects most often stall, or fail to deliver, when organizations invest in content creation software but assume that content creation itself is so simple that it can be done in a spare afternoon, without formally allocated resources, without a project plan, and without a tool for managing the activities involved. They aren't willing to put a price tag on the project or to set a deadline and dedicate the resources needed to meet it. In effect, this communicates that the work is neither urgent nor important. Such undervalued, open-ended projects tend to drift indefinitely and the output is stale if it gets delivered at all.

Simply training people to use the new software tool is another common mistake. Subject Matter Experts need coaching and they need time to tackle the work. For example, it should only take an SME five days to produce 30 minutes of content – but those five days need to be set aside and ring-fenced. It is extremely difficult to create timely e-learning content if the process is open-ended and everyone is working in a spare minute here and there. Too many variables can hijack the project.

Without effective project management, a project is also much more likely to waste people's time, which is a big problem if you're depending on their favor and goodwill to get the job done. When a project has no formal structure, no one really knows how much effort is required of them. And when members of the team don't know who else is doing what, or when they are doing it, it becomes harder for them to communicate effectively with each other.

These difficulties are even more significant in projects that depend on a

Treat Rapid Learning as a serious business project

distributed team of content creators and stakeholders. Quite simply, it is unwise to attempt to produce Rapid Learning 'on the side', without dedicated resources and solid planning.

Don't start the project until you have the resources you need. If these aren't forthcoming then you have to question whether the project is worth initiating at all. Do you have an internal customer with a real need for the output? Having an internal customer can help to release resources, and of course that customer will probably want to see results by a certain date. This demand actually helps to make the content creation process more efficient.

The following actions will give your Rapid Learning projects more weight, and increase their chances of success.

1. Identify and engage an **internal customer**.
2. Assign a **project manager** to run your project.
3. **Quantify the resources** involved in terms of money, time etc.
4. Create a **plan of action** - but don't over plan.
5. Commit to a **delivery deadline**.
6. Make sure people **allocate time** for the work in their diaries.
7. **Start small** with short, simple projects of real business value.

Tip
N°05

*Lead the way with best
practice content*

Focus on creating content that works
and which demonstrates what others can accomplish
with Rapid Learning.

Lead the way with best practice content

As you create your first Rapid Learning projects, bear in mind that you are establishing a precedent that other internal content creators will follow. Make sure that these early courses can stand tall as demonstrations of best practice. Doing so will stimulate learner demand for more.

There are two key features that distinguish “best practice content”: being *effective* and *replicable*.

When e-learning truly works it is effective both at communicating the key messages in the brief and achieving the business objectives of the project. It ensures that the learning gets remembered and acted on in the workplace, and does this by delivering information that is timely and relevant to the audience, in a form that encourages them to interact with the subject matter rather than click through the interface.

With replicable Rapid Learning you have courses that you can hold up as a realistic benchmark of what you want rapid e-learning to accomplish; courses that you can use to support the initial coaching process (see **Take the role of coach**) and which demonstrate the standards you wish others to meet on their own projects. An SME can look at the end-product, track through the process used to create it, and feel that he or she could achieve much the same standard of learning in the same timeframe, instead of feeling confused and intimidated. Such benchmark courses must have a clear structure and should be built in such a way that they show off the possibilities of the authoring tool, so that novice content creators can understand the approaches taken and use these to transfer their own knowledge.

Don't get distracted by appearances

We've all seen slick bespoke content packed with clever effects and eye-catching animations. It can be impressive, but all too often it's a case of style over substance - the course looks great but is ultimately shallow in its understanding and presentation of the subject matter. That's because it's in the hands of experts with the medium, not experts on the message.

Falling into this trap causes two problems. Firstly, the effectiveness of your

Lead the way with best practice content

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e-learning is compromised. The time it takes to create bespoke e-learning means that unfortunately staff don't get trained in what's really important because the costs and timescales of large complex e-learning courses mean they must target large audiences and universal subject matter. Such generic material usually fails to stimulate much excitement, and is even less likely to stimulate demand for more. Secondly, the SMEs that you want to pick up the baton of content creation can't possibly achieve the same kind of results unless they happen to have pro-level multimedia or storytelling skills. In fact, your SMEs may not even recognize that exotic-seeming content contains anything so mundane as a reusable structure, or screen interactions that they could copy for their own projects.

As you create your initial Rapid Learning content bear in mind that it will be the benchmark for other content creators in your organization - so it has to work and it must be replicable. Expect SMEs to refer to these early courses for ideas, inspiration, and guidance when they're working on their own projects.

You should also keep in mind these principles:

- Tempt your business units with examples of quality learning.
- Work on the small-scale, quick-turnaround projects at which 'rapid' excels.
- Focus on delivering timely, practical, and relevant content that achieves business results and stimulates demand for more.
- Demonstrate the capabilities of your content creation solution.
- Model effective learning interactions.
- Develop a content creation process for other projects to follow.
- Create a coaching structure for your content creators.

Tip
N°06

Take the role of coach

If you expect people within your organization to create their own e-learning effectively, you need to support them more as a coach than a tools trainer.

Take the role of coach

06

To create Rapid Learning for yourself you'll need Subject Matter Experts in your organization to get to grips with some new tools. So, software training will be the priority, right? Actually, software training is secondary in importance compared with creating a structure for effectively coaching your content creators.

It's an easy mistake to make: an organization sets up a training session on its new e-learning software, then tries to get value for money by shoving anybody into the classroom who might conceivably need to use it – just in case. People are trained before they need to be, and forget things because they haven't had a chance to put them into practice. Trainees can even become a liability later on if they come to a live e-learning project believing they know what to do!

We have found that SMEs create significantly better e-learning if they create real content at the same time as they learn to use the content creation tool. And this learning process is even more effective when it is supported by ongoing coaching that combines process leadership, practical guidance, and feedback alongside the technical training.

So, pick a project that needs to be delivered and identify the SMEs whose input you need to deliver it. Then set up a series of sessions to train these SMEs in the different features and functions of the content creation tool as they develop this “live” e-learning course, which should have defined deadlines and resources and be rolled out to learners when it is finished.

What does a coach do?

In the context of e-learning, a coach is a vital part of the creative team who supports the SMEs creating the content by clarifying what they should and should not do. The project manager and the coach may be the same person, but the role of the coach goes beyond simply facilitating the project. Certainly, a coach should guide people through the overall workflow – easing their progress through a potentially unfamiliar process to a successful conclusion. But a coach is also a guardian of interactivity, of good learning design, and of the soft communication skills required to create effective

Take the role of coach

content. Coaches work with SMEs to ensure that these principles are put into practice. They do not write content. Instead they make sure it gets written, and written well.

One possible sequence of coaching sessions is shown below. For a 30-minute e-learning course you should expect all of these steps to fit into five, non-consecutive days.

Outlining

This first training session should explore the process of clarifying the aims of an e-learning course, agreeing learning objectives, and prioritizing and outlining the content. This is also a good time for a high level tour of the authoring software and any planning tools it provides.

Writing content

At this stage you'll need to work very closely with your SMEs to help them to write the content. This is the point at which you'll share the tricks of the trade - helping people to build solid instructional design into their course and to make better use of interactivity for maximum impact. This will involve a session on structuring material into a helpful learning experience, and on how to use different screen templates to create engaging interactive content. Note that while the SME should do all the writing - not you - joint writing sessions can be helpful as they give you a chance to provide immediate coaching and feedback.

Quality assurance

You'll need to set up a couple of review cycles for peers, stakeholders, and end-users to give feedback on the content. Your role as a coach here is to give guidance on setting up effective reviews, and to evaluate and act on the comments received.

Publishing

This is an opportunity to evaluate the project and the final content before going through the technical process of publishing and distributing the e-learning course. This may also include closing the loop on comments

Take the role of coach

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contributed by stakeholders. It's also a good idea to run a session with the people involved in the project to evaluate the whole process once it's complete, and compare the final output with what you originally planned. Some teams find that they publish much shorter courses than they originally envisaged. Learning from the process will feed into future projects, making them more realistic and easier to run.

Tip
N°07

*Reuse
your resources*

Make smarter use of your valuable resources by reusing those you already have.

Reuse your resources

07

Rapid Learning was giving those who embraced it a way to achieve real business results more efficiently, and do more with less. It allows you to reuse resources effectively. The resources we're talking about here could be concepts in a specific e-learning course, an instructional design approach that you have developed internally, or a video created by an external supplier. Either way, the ability to reuse resources will enable you to create courses faster and more cost effectively. It will also make your content easier to change and maintain, so you can keep your courses up-to-date and relevant and give them a longer lifespan.

Here's an overview of the key advantages.

Swiftiness

Short-circuit some of the longer-winded stages of content creation by exploiting or adapting existing material – from presentations and video, to written material and product photography. Projects are faster to produce and reach their target audience sooner – making e-learning agile enough to deal with your most urgent business critical communications.

Cost

The rapid approach favors shorter, simpler projects. Reusing resources reduces costs further, allowing you to create even more courses, and to target audiences you might once have had to ignore.

Coherence

Getting people to follow your corporate style and brand guidelines can be an uphill battle – whether you're dealing with internal or external creatives. Rapid Learning helps you regain control of interface art direction, graphical look, and feel etc. by pooling assets and sharing them across multiple projects.

Standardization

Rapid Learning gives you ownership of the content creation process so that all of your output is created in the same way. And because you have the content creation tool, you can easily edit, update, reuse, and repurpose your content, which is much harder if your courses have been created externally using specialist programs or proprietary software.

Reuse your resources

Skills

Your skills will improve with every project. Far from doing the same thing again and again, what you produce will get better and better as you reuse and refine your project management, content authoring, interactive design and instructional capabilities.

If you regard increasing your reuse of resources as one of the more attractive benefits of Rapid Learning, then you'll find a web-based solution gives you even more of an edge. This gives your content creation teams a common platform on which to collaborate, to access and reuse media, to create and review content, and to share and save all aspects of their work - all in one place, always up-to-date and accessible to everyone. On the following page are just a few strategies for effective resource use that you'll find easier to adopt with a web-based content-creation solution.

1. Build a central media library

You no longer need to be a Fortune 500 company to effectively manage a shared media library; media over which you retain quality control. With a web-based solution, the interface itself becomes the shop window for SMEs looking for images, video, and sound files to enhance their e-learning courses.

2. Reuse, repurpose, recycle

Seize opportunities to adapt your courses, or elements of them, to the requirements of different audiences or personnel in different global markets. If someone has built a piece of material that you can use again, it will save you valuable time. In addition to reusing content, find ways to recycle approaches that have worked well. Share effective pedagogical concepts and learning models with your project groups, and encourage people to copy the kind of content structures that have worked on successful projects.

3. Care for your skin

Your content should look great even if it is rapidly created, but your SMEs should focus on creating quality content, and should not worry about look and feel. Create 'skins' for your e-learning to give every course the same

Reuse your resources

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high-end polish and to guarantee that all of your e-learning stays on-brand by default. Skins won't get in the way when you want to reuse, update, or change material, and you can also edit and reapply skins without causing problems for the underlying course.

4. Recycle your authors

Really good content authors are hard to come by, so don't use yours once, then forget them. As well as training up novice authors, give those who have been through the process the opportunity to use what they've learned to create content for another project. Their skills will increase with each iteration and you'll soon find that you have a pool of experienced authors, any of whom can create content quickly (using fewer resources) and to a high standard.

5. Share skills

Take a 'train-the-trainer' view of your SMEs and project managers. Once they have reached a sufficient level of competence have them use their knowledge and experience to help cultivate the skills of others. Your best project team members can become coaches for a new wave of content creators, carrying the benefits of rapid e-learning even deeper into your organization.

Tip
N°08

*Standardize your
platform for content
authoring*

Use a single platform to create e-learning so you own
both the process and the content.

Standardize your platform for content authoring

08

A standardized platform is an approach to e-learning creation based on a single software solution, accessed via the web so that the tools are available to everyone in the organization wherever they work. The software is provided as a service (Software as a Service, or SaaS) ; there is no need for installation or distribution, and no need to monitor and manage downloads and patches. Such a system is easily scalable - new users are only a few clicks away from full access. All work and media assets are stored online, with a server storing a shared repository of content available to everyone in the company. In addition, external suppliers can be given access to password-protected areas to work on collaborative projects.

A good platform will scale to suit different projects, and can be used to create anything from a few screens-worth of information in a matter of days to advanced multi-module e-learning courses taking weeks or months. It should also give you control over project workflow, a web collaboration environment, the means to manage the reuse of assets, and sound tools for quality assurance. With these in place you can safely apply the rapid process to more, or even all, of your content - whether it is created internally or externally.

Creating e-learning courses in any significant volume involves managing many disparate activities. It will only complicate matters if you have multiple project teams using different technical language, planning things their own way, or following their own model of good learning. So what can a single content-creation platform give you that a more eclectic approach cannot? In short: visibility, control, ownership, and flexibility.

Visibility

A software platform helps you to co-ordinate the key activities in the content creation workflow by making them more visible and easier to control. It gives your multiple projects a common backbone, and means that you don't have to keep re-negotiating the same process over and over again with each new supplier. Every project follows the same path, so it's easier to know exactly where you are in any project plan. This improved visibility includes the input of SMEs and stakeholders into the project (planning courses, authoring

Standardize your platform for content authoring

content, saving of assets, giving feedback etc.) and it extends to tracking course uptake and reporting on effectiveness once your e-learning is out in the field.

Control

A software platform gives you greater control over e-learning projects from inception to delivery and takes away some of the variables that can be so frustrating to manage. It puts you in charge of the knowledge transfer process by giving you a structured workflow around which you can hang your own project management procedures. In turn, this makes it much easier to orchestrate the efforts of internal PMs, SMEs, and stakeholders so they deliver more consistent standards – both in the quality of learning and the style of content. You can also ensure that external designers and consultants produce compatible content by having them use the same platform. In fact, doing so is a way of regaining control of your e-learning from your vendors. Getting external suppliers to produce bespoke content using your platform brings a number of benefits. Firstly, you won't be tied to one supplier; in fact, if things aren't working with one, you can drop them mid-project and find another because a standard platform makes it easier to pick things up part way. Secondly, you'll retain ownership of the content and the assets, giving you control over how these are used, updated, or reused.

Ownership

As you produce more e-learning on your platform, you will be building your organization's knowledge base and accumulating a rich store of media and content. Reusing these assets (see Reuse your resources) will make your future learning more cost effective and give it greater impact. For example, smaller pieces of e-learning can leverage higher end content elements that would otherwise be outside the budget.

When you own the content authoring system you have genuine ownership of the content. Instead of having your intellectual property locked inside a jumble of bespoke e-learning programs, you have content that you can edit, update, reuse, and repurpose at will. And you won't need to pay an external supplier to get at it after they've finished work and left the project.

Standardize your platform for content authoring

08

Flexibility

Having a single software platform allows you to adapt your approach to suit different project requirements. You can have projects that are 'pure' rapid, completely bespoke, or that incorporate elements created internally and externally. At some point, it's likely that you will come across a demand for high-end content from someone in your organization - perhaps because they have an external supplier they trust. A software platform can bridge the gap between rapid and outsourced approaches, without you having to give away control. By definition, an open platform accommodates input from anybody you choose - and that includes external designers, consultants, graphic artists, animators and so on.

Tip
N°09

*Support your content
creating community*

Support the people generating content with online
community building and interactive training.

Support your content creating community

09

As your organization gets more familiar with Rapid Learning as a way to transfer knowledge, you will probably find that you get a distributed group of 'super-users' responsible for a range of different projects - key personnel who regularly act as project managers, coaches or content creators. If this group is spread across different offices or countries then it can be challenging to provide all of them with input and inspiration, and to support them in developing their skills and improving the quality of the e-learning they create. These same individuals are also likely to be time poor, so it can be difficult for them to free up time for team-building events or training courses. Coordinating the diaries of such a disparate group can be a thankless task and, if they are spread around the globe, travel costs can be prohibitive.

Furthermore, the vast majority of people who create e-learning do so alone, with little or no face-to-face contact with their collaborators, and without being part of a tangible community with a shared purpose. In this situation, it is hard to be objective about the quality of your work, and easy to become both isolated and alienated from your audience. Many organizations aren't that great at giving feedback, so good work goes unrecognized, and bad habits go uncorrected, which can damage both morale and quality.

The solution is to consciously build a community for your e-learning content creators. Building a community takes deliberate effort, but it is surprisingly straightforward, and offers a tremendous payback when people start to get the support, learning, and inspiration that they have been missing. The obvious meeting place for such a virtual community is, of course, online.

Tip
N°10

*Know when
to let go*

Stop controlling every e-learning project yourself
and soon quality e-learning projects will appear without
you having to be directly involved all the time.

Know when to let go

10

Like any new initiative, making Rapid Learning part of how your organization works takes effort and persistence if the change is to become lasting. It needs a “rapid champion” - someone to drive things, who gets involved and cares about the long-term success of the initiative. We hope that the recommendations in the rest of this white paper make it easier to get great results, but it’s worth noting that the very hands-on involvement required to get Rapid Learning off the ground can become a limiting factor in the long run. In fact, when you’ve been up and running with Rapid Learning for a while you’ll reach a point when it’s important to start letting go.

Control freak? Me? Consider the statements below. Do any of these reflect how you view the process of creating e-learning within your organization - or how you would view it if you were fully engaged in it yet?

- “I’m the real e-learning expert in my organization - I can’t trust people to do it without me.”
- “If I’m not personally involved in a rapid e-learning project the quality will fall off.”
- “Without my supervision, e-learning projects won’t meet the brief or be delivered on time.”
- “SMEs don’t have the design skills to produce good e-learning.”

If any of these sound familiar, then you may have a tendency to hold too tight a rein over your Rapid Learning projects. Thinking that you have to control every project can actually mean that you become a bottleneck. You may begin to limit what others can achieve and even to stifle productivity. It can be challenging to rethink your role, but if you really want self-created learning projects to become “business as usual” across your organization, then you have to learn to let go of control enough for projects to happen without your continual involvement.

In practice this means finding ways to empower rather than micro-manage others and their efforts. And it also involves moving from being the e-learning expert to becoming more of an enabler or facilitator of a content-creating community.

Know when to let go

To truly empower your organization you'll need to let go of your desire to control every aspect of content creation. We're used to thinking of Subject Matter Experts as repositories of knowledge that we need to disseminate, but these SMEs, along with many other people in your organization, often have other abilities that you could draw on to enhance your learning capability. Find opportunities to let people get involved, whether as content creators, project managers, reviewers, quality testers, etc.

And far from doing yourself out of a job, you'll find that you have more headspace to think strategically about the varied learning requirements of your organization and business units, and how best to meet them.

Learn to let go and let your people get more autonomously involved in content creation. With access to a system, to training materials, and a workflow management process, people will surprise you with the quality of the results they achieve.

