

[SERIES] THE COVID INTERRUPTION

There's No Replacement for Hands-On-Training

February 2022

Series 5 of 8

By: Latitude CG in collaboration with Brandon Hall Group

Something that's often missing from the learning technology conversation is that a lot of training is extremely hands-on. Product familiarization, technical training and service training in a pandemic environment is a huge challenge. Industries such as medical equipment and aviation are highly regulated and have very high-risk training requirements. Managing the changes, the pandemic presented became quite challenging.

For example, one of the organizations in the Information Exchanges is the largest ice-machine manufacturer in the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic set in just as their normal training season ended and they entered their busiest repair cycle. They took as much of their hands-on training for things such as putting the machines into sleep mode for cleaning and other procedures and quickly converted them to videos.

This training was well-received and effective, as the camera angles were actually better than trying to look over a trainer's shoulder in person. They could also hear better since they were not scattered around a large training room. But ultimately, there were still hands-on elements of the training they could not fully replicate.

The story was the same for many of the organizations in the study. Half said they relied heavily on hands-on ILT for training on product service and repair. They used virtual meeting tools as much as possible and instructors became very creative in using multiple video sources to create an in-person proxy learning experience. These video elements are being leveraged as reinforcement and job aids for learners moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION

The ability to turn a wrench and learn is the key to staying certified and compliant for many reasons. Organizations should develop the tool sets for trainers to provide as close to hands-on training as possible to limit the impact, and actively develop workarounds when training can't be completed. Sending regional trainers to small groups of learners, rather than gathering a large group in a training center, was one common workaround. Finding elements of the in-person training that can be converted to video or other digital formats is important and will continue to serve the organization past the pandemic.