

Training in 2010

It's August 2010. Too far away? What about August 1998? A lifetime ago, or yesterday?

Here's a slightly tongue-in-cheek view into the crystal ball, and ten predictions for the state of training and trainers in just 6 years time.

1. There are no trainers. Those are shoes worn by people aged exclusively between 7 and 22 and those of us feebly seeking youth, aged 40-44. Instead, we are called Learning Designers and Learning Engineers in larger organizations, and Learning Buyers in the smaller ones – see below for more.
2. We don't work in the Human Resources department. Human Resources is now called "People Potential". Learning Designers and Learning Engineers report directly to the CEO. Learning Buyers report to the "Director of People Potential".
3. Learning design has become polarized. For more senior-level managers, it is increasingly tailored to their personal requirements and convenience. Using technology that allows delivery just-in-time, in bite-sized bits, wherever they are, whenever there is a gap in their diary. Holidays are no-longer no-go zones. Everything is up for grabs, even sleep-time.
4. 40% of us work from home for 2 days a week or more.
5. For many customer-facing staff learning is mandatory, more structured and performed in groups.
6. Learning Designers and Learning engineers understand the language and measurement of intangible assets. We appreciate how the outside world rates our organization in terms of our Human capital, customer capital, execution of corporate strategy, capacity to innovate, ability to attract and keep talented people. We measure these. We (and the board) rate our effectiveness against these.
7. Learning buyers negotiate with outside providers. They deal with agents for a number of well-known celebrity Learning suppliers. They have no in-house providers.
8. Huge leaps forward in our understanding of the human brain help us design and measure the effectiveness of our learning. For programmes with an emotional intelligence portion, portable Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging scanners are available to measure the changes in individual brain structures as a result of learning. This prompts an ethical body to regulate the practice.
9. Increasingly, our time is spent across a range of boundaries. Part-time in-house, part external provider, part-time gardener, parent, student, writer, other... Average job length in-house is 18 months. Burnout is a problem.
10. We don't wear suits.

Rob Sheffield, August 2004

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