

Efficacy of Online Learning of Employees in Consumer Goods Industry

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Abstract

Consumer Goods industry in India has a turnover of 76400 Crores in 2019. It is expected to double by 2025. The number of employees in the consumer goods sector are over 7,00,000 full time employees with Learning and development needs. The employees in the industry are found to part way with their traditional techniques of working, where online learning comes into rescue. Online learning among employees seeks to fringe benefits as much as possible. The present study is made as an attempt to identify the efficacy of online learning among the employees of consumer goods industry in Chennai city.

Introduction and Problem discussion

The Consumer Goods industry has diverse challenges to produce innovative products. With an increasing demand which is resulting in the growth of this industry at 11.64% CAGR, there is a significant need for this industry to provide excellent learning and development to all of its employees. Online-learning courses provide an opportunity to enhance productivity, efficiency, mitigate risks and increase competitive advantage. In order to evolve in today's competitive environment, consumer goods industries follow an efficient business strategy, to enhance the overall workplace productivity and boost learning experiences. Online Learning is an good way to deliver successful outcomes without affecting the content quality and budgets. The online courses are created to ease the accessibility of the employees and to engage with maximum audience. The different challenges faced by the Consumer Goods Industry and different e-learning strategies including mobile learning, experimental learning and game-based learning that are adopted to overcome those challenges are addressed.

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The engaging online learning programs in Consumer Goods industry help to deliver unparalleled experience, proficient and experienced trainers help learners to get the most from the training budget. Different challenges faced by this industry and training solutions offered are discussed below:

1. The new age learners demand for information on new products, provenance and their overall impacts. Therefore, training on organizational values and global consumer base is very important to keep learners updated.
2. Customers must build a strong relationship with the global supply chain partners and deal with international standards, handling compliance and traceability issues. With this, trainings on Six-Sigma or Kaizen is essential to meet the quality standards.
3. To transform from traditional classroom-based training to innovative e-learning solutions can be tedious for some employees. The e-courseware is based on real-life examples so that learners can associate themselves and develop self-confidence.
4. The next challenge is to meet the ever-changing regulatory requirements. So, the learners are trained on different regulations that include ISO standards, Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) and others.
5. It is important to hire appropriate resources that help to boost workplace efficiency. E-learning helps to enhance portfolio awareness and give efficient merchandising tips to the participants.
6. The last challenge is to recognize employees who have leadership traits and help to improve business productivity. Simulations are integrated in online courses to help learners understand the content better.

Today's learners are also today's consumers and learning professionals must recognise that employees need their training like they need their entertainment: fast, user-friendly, portable and on-demand. Modern corporate learning programmes should be learning from the on-demand consumer entertainment streaming services, which employees are using on a daily basis, such as Spotify, HBO, Disney or Netflix. These content streaming companies have given consumers the power to program their own entertainment. And learners now want and deserve the same freedom to decide for themselves what, when, where, and how they're going to learn. Huge

entertainment streaming services and corporate eLearning platforms may appear to be strange comparisons to make but L&D professionals can learn a lot about implementing a successful eLearning programme by looking at these platforms and the qualities that have made them so successful. Here are 7 ways to make your learning programme feel like a consumer product:

1. Make sure it's quality content
2. Use programmes that source original content
3. Provide a variety of content
4. Ensure the platform is easy to navigate
5. Use programmes with recommended 'binge learning'
6. Give users offline learning opportunities
7. Promote new learning content and a learning culture

In the present era of creativity and AI, the organisation must work in possible way to get the learning process easy and inherent. With the above setting, the present study seeks to find the solution for the following research question;

1. What is the Efficacy of Online Learning of Employees in Consumer Goods Industry?

Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses framed for the study based on the objective;

H₀₁: Association between the demographic profile and the online learning of employees is insignificant

Research Design

The study focuses on the employees of consumer goods industry in the Chennai city of Tamilnadu. The questionnaires were circulated among the 55 employees in various companies located in the city. The sampling technique adopted is simple random sampling. The study is analytical and is based on primary data, which is collected through structured questionnaires. Other required data has been collected from various websites, magazines, journals and theses.

Limitations of the study

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. This research was location specific and was confined to the city of Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. Hence the results of this research may not be applicable to other parts of globe.
2. The primary data collected depicts the attitude of the respondents which may be self biased.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Classification	No of Respondents	Percentage
Age (Years)		
<25	02	03
25-40	45	82
>40	08	15
Gender		
Male	39	71
Female	16	29
Professional Level		
Entry	12	22
Middle	35	64
High	08	14

Source: Compiled and calculated using primary data

The above table represents the demographic profile of the respondents who are the employees of various companies in Chennai city. Out of 55 employees selected as respondents nearly 82 percent of the respondents were between 25 - 40 years of age. 71 percent of the respondents were male and 54 percent of the respondents were at middle level profession.

Efficacy of Online learning

S. No	Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1	Online learning modules are very interesting	00	01	17	26	11
2	I am able to focus and concentrate for the entire duration of the module	02	06	16	21	10
3	A certificate of completion at the end of the module would encourage me	01	01	07	19	27
4	I prefer modules having attendee interaction in terms of games, quiz etc	01	01	08	18	27
5	I am determined to complete the module irrespective of content relevancy or engagement	05	09	14	16	11
6	I feel my lifestyle has completely changed due to online/ digital training modules	05	03	07	25	15
7	I feel I am compelled to complete the tests/ quiz without understanding content.	08	16	12	10	09
8	I am unable to regularly attend online modules due to connectivity issues	07	15	14	11	08
9	I prefer modules with breaks in between rather than continuous one for better understanding	01	02	04	22	26
10	Online learning empowers me with knowledge necessary to sell my products	02	04	08	25	16
11	Online learning increases my skills of selling	02	05	12	19	17
12	Some of the Online learning modules makes my attitude more positive	01	02	09	27	16
13	I sincerely put my efforts towards understanding the online modules	00	01	05	23	26
14	If I don't understand a particular concept in any of my online modules I try and understand from my colleagues or superiors	01	01	09	26	18
15	I take the time and effort to re-watch and re-learn the modules which were difficult for me in the first attempt	01	03	11	21	19
16	I complete my modules even if my manager or supervisor does not ask me about it	00	03	08	25	19
17	I take the time to explain to my colleagues about the modules that I worked today	00	05	11	23	16

18	Online modules have helped me in handling customers better	02	04	08	29	12
19	Online learning modules have helped me in taking better decisions at work	01	06	11	24	13
20	Online learning modules have helped me in solving problems at the field	03	03	10	28	11
21	Online learning modules have helped me think innovatively	01	04	10	25	15
22	Online learning modules have helped me manage the situations well	02	03	13	23	14
23	I look forward enthusiastically to my daily online learning challenges	00	04	16	19	16
24	I feel positive and highly optimistic about learning everyday online'	00	06	13	21	15
25	I have no feeling of stress when I have to learn online	03	06	11	18	17
26	I don't feel anxious towards learning online	02	04	15	19	15
27	During COVID lockdown times online learning has helped me improve my knowledge	00	01	09	22	23
28	Also, Online learning has helped me improve my sales performance	02	05	17	20	11
29	Online Learning has helped me become more self efficient and productive	01	01	08	25	17
30	Online learning has empowered me to contribute my best to my work.	00	05	13	16	21
31	Online learning has made me overcome my challenges in work	03	04	10	24	14

Source: Compiled and calculated using primary data

The table above describes the statements depicting the online learning practices of employees from the companies in the consumer goods sector. The frequency of responses recorded by the employees are being classified on the basis of five point scale and presented.

Association between the online learning and demographic profile of employees

H₀₁: Association between the demographic profile and the online learning of employees is insignificant

H_{01a}: Association between the age and the online learning of employees is insignificant

Table 3 Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.1 ^a	.00**
Likelihood Ratio	27.2	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.1	.00
N of Valid Cases	55	
a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.		

*Significant at 5 per cent level**Significant at 1 per cent level

Source: Compiled and calculated using the primary data

The table above depicts the chi square analysis between age and the online learning of employees. It is clear from the table that the significance level being .00 which concludes the rejection of null hypothesis. Hence, there exists a significant association between age and the online learning of employees.

H_{01b}: Association between gender and the online learning of employees is not significant

Table 4 Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.2 ^a	.03*
Likelihood Ratio	1.7	.52
Linear-by-Linear Association	.51	.75
N of Valid Cases	55	
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.00.		

*Significant at 5 per cent level**Significant at 1 per cent level

Source: Compiled and calculated using the primary data

The table above depicts the chi square analysis between gender and the online learning of employees. It is clear from the table that the significance level being .03 which concludes the rejection of null hypothesis. Hence, there exists a significant association between gender and the online learning of employees.

H_{01c}: Association between professional level and the online learning of employees is not significant

Table 5 Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.2 ^a	.01*
Likelihood Ratio	3.8	.67
Linear-by-Linear Association	.0	.77
N of Valid Cases	55	
a. 3 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.		

*Significant at 5 per cent level **Significant at 1 per cent level

Source: Compiled and calculated using the primary data

The table above depicts the chi square analysis between professional level and the online learning of employees. It is clear from the table that the significance level being .01 which concludes the rejection of null hypothesis. Hence, there exists a significant association between professional level and the online learning of employees.

Conclusion

The present study defines the efficiency of online learning with respect to the demographics of employees. It is suggested that most learning initiatives fail because they are not promoted properly, and employees are either unaware or forget they exist altogether. The business professionals should look to companies that assist organisations with internal marketing of learning content through providing notifications of new material, posters, and internal newsletters. Increasing awareness of the materials available to learners is important but so is promoting a company's learning culture. When promoting learning programmes employees must know that management wants them to learn and that they are being encouraged to up skill and reskill when and how they would like to. Learning and entertainment don't need to be separate entities, and the programmes learners consume training content from should resemble entertainment platforms for many reasons. Learners must be looked up like consumers and provided a learning programme that matches the qualities of what makes the entertainment platforms they use at home so successful.

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