

The Fool-Proof Guide to Creating a Training Strategy

5 Must-Do Steps to Nail Your Employee
Training Strategy



Introduction

So, what is a training strategy anyway?

Technically speaking, a training strategy is the plan you put in place to achieve an educational goal in your business.

For example, teaching your team new skills, training them to adopt new behaviours or updating them on new company policies or product information.

Why is having a training strategy important?

When it comes to staff training and development, knowing how to create online training is one thing, but developing a complete training strategy is another. There are a number of benefits to training your team.

A training program allows you to strengthen skills or knowledge that each employee needs to improve. In a business environment, this typically means one of the following;

- An improvement in product knowledge
- Growth in employee performance
- Reduction in compliance risk



A development program brings all employees to a higher level so they all have similar skills and knowledge. In fact, employees who work in an environment which invests in training are 2.4 times more likely to hit their performance targets.

The trouble is, a development program and improvement in skills or knowledge aren't mutually exclusive. There is a distinct difference between training and learning that's important to understand when you're building employee training programs.

So, before you dive head-first into custom elearning development, it's important to spend time getting your strategy right first.

A training strategy helps to reduce the chance of a course or program of work failing

...which happens more often than you might think!

How do you write a training strategy?

A training strategy isn't simply building a course on a particular topic.

A good training strategy will involve understanding six key factors and developing a way forward based on each of them.

- Identify the Problem
- Understand Your Audience
- Find Your SME
- Decide on an Objective
- Choose Your Delivery Method



CHAPTER 1

Identify the Problem You're Solving



So you're about to start your e-learning project?

You've picked your topic and you're ready to jump right in and start building.

Stop...

Before you go any further, start by taking a step back and spending some time figuring out what exactly your online course is trying to achieve.

What problem are you trying to solve?

Great online courses are the result of a thorough needs assessment. That's because they have a clearly defined problem that they're solving. This helps with trainee buy-in, course completions and the transfer of knowledge to practical skill.

Don't automatically assume that perceived need = real need for training.

Using skills assessment, direct observations, surveys or focus groups can help you to determine whether the need is, in fact, real.

Remember, the goal is to deliver online learning when your trainees need it – not when you want them to take it.

To do this, think about:

- The problem - Is the online course going to solve a specific problem?
- Opportunity - Would performance improve by offering an online course?

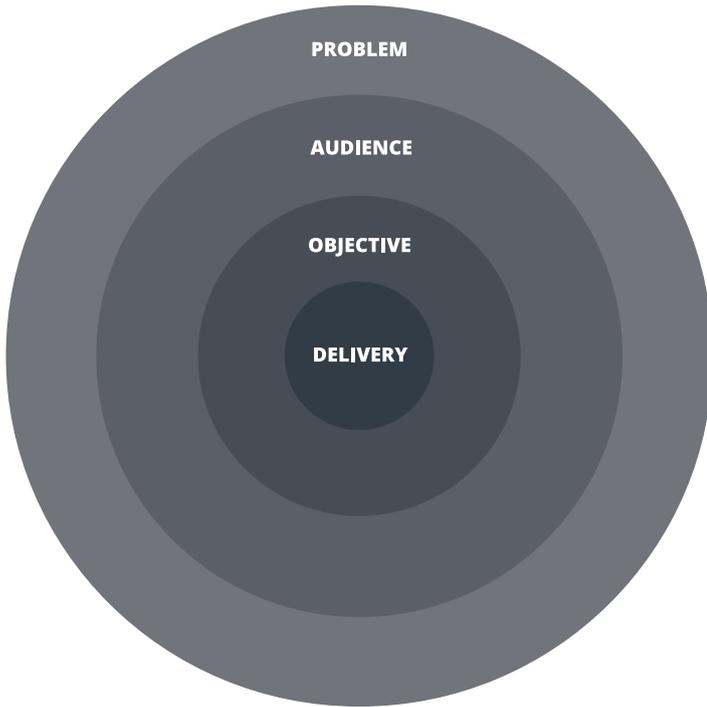
Change

- Are there consistent changes in staffing that require re-training?
- Are new processes and equipment on the horizon?
- Or, maybe there are new features, products or services that are driving the need for training?

Lastly, compliance - Are there mandatory laws that determine which training is required?

The point of all of this is to dig deeper into why you're creating this course so that you can ensure you meet the needs of your business and your trainees.





A common approach to developing training is to start with the delivery method.



However, a training strategy should always start by identifying the problem to be solved.



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5 Reasons Online Courses Fail (And How to Fix it)

LEAD FROM THE TOP DOWN

It's important to have executives and managers "buy-in" from the beginning of any programme launch. Once you have their buy-in, the job gets much easier when getting the wider team onboard.

If you spend budget on a training programme and LMS, you need to take the time to ensure it's implemented and integrated into the business effectively. Your managers play a large part in that.

Get your managers charged up, and genuinely excited about what this training program can do for them and their teams. You need to remind them of what's in it for them.

HOW WE DO THIS AT REDSEED — We launch and implement the programme within business – so you don't have to. From there, we continue to support these managers and the wider teams throughout the programme to ensure the training programme is as effective as possible.

LOSE THE POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Don't use PowerPoint presentations to try and educate your teams. We repeat: Do not use PowerPoint presentations.

If you want your team to tune out from your training content immediately, then go ahead and use PowerPoint slides and embarrassing slide transitions.

If you want your training to fly, it has to be engaging. Make sure to include some static slides, but keep the core content in audio or visual form with activities and quizzes built throughout.

HOW WE DO THIS AT REDSEED — We ensure that all training content is built into bite-sized pieces and utilise video a lot!

INVOLVE YOUR TRAINEES

Ask your trainees to share their particular experiences with your particular training topic. There is so much valuable information your experienced trainees can contribute. This also means trainees will get more out of sessions when they hear and learn from their co-workers' experiences on the subject— not just an example shown during a presentation. This keeps your learning sessions varied and interesting.

Make sure to allocate some social sharing time into each module and remind trainees to come ready to contribute.

HOW WE DO THIS AT REDSEED — RedSeed is about changing behaviour and this is greatly improved by our lead-led coaching system that encourages discussion and feedback – building trainees confidence. This ensures long-term behaviour changes and it gets results!

MEET 'EM HALFWAY

A lot of the time, no one has leftover brain space during the workday to focus on training. But they might during their morning commute? Or while waiting at the dentist's office.

Meet them halfway and let them work through virtual, self-directed and on the job training – along with activities – in their own time, in whichever location, on any device. So long as you set a deadline for training to be completed, give them the freedom to work through their training when it works for them.

HOW WE DO THIS AT REDSEED — Any training content can be accessed at any time, on any device. Whether you're viewing on computer, tablet or phone – trainees can access the LMS and training content

KISS (KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID)

Keep your training simple. Don't blast your employees with a day-long intensive workshop. Split the learning into several bite-sized digestible modules, completed over a few months, to encourage stickability.

It is proven that short module learning is more effective than a single full day-long workshop.

HOW WE DO THIS AT REDSEED — This is one of RedSeeds core values. Keeping training uncluttered, easy-to-use, simple and user-friendly. We don't make modules or any of the implementation process more intensive than it needs to be. Simple as that...

CHAPTER 2

Understand Your Audience



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Understanding who your audience is is an extremely important part of designing online learning.

Before creating an online course, you should find out as much as possible about your trainees.

This knowledge will influence how you design your course and the content you include.

Your trainees are a group of individuals with unique goals so to truly understand them you need to look beyond things like age, educational qualification, and occupation (unless the training you're looking to deliver is specific to demographic information).

In a perfect world you'll have a lot of time and resources available, to interview a pool of trainees to get an intimate understanding of your audience.

However, we know that the world isn't always perfect.

People are time-poor, and we've all been in a situation where training needed to be developed yesterday.

So...

Here are three steps to follow to help you gain a better understanding of your audience quickly:

Step 1: Describe their ordinary world

Delve into the mindset of your audience as it is relevant to your business and vice versa. It helps to write from the perspective of your audience using "I" statements. With that understanding, you can then identify what kind of content will help your audience solve the problem you've identified.

EXAMPLE:

AUDIENCE THINKING - I have a busy week. I don't have time to complete massive courses, or go away to workshops.

STRATEGY RESPONSE - Create content that is short, sharp, and to-the-point so that trainees don't feel like there is a massive time investment.



Step 2: Know the Trigger

Gain insights into what motivates your audience to complete this training. A trigger could be an intrinsic motivation such as, "I know I'm really good at opening the sale and building rapport, but I get nervous about closing."

It also could be externally driven, often stimulated through things like sales leaderboards or incentives. By identifying the triggers you can form a picture of the content topics relevant and useful to your audience.

EXAMPLE:

AUDIENCE THINKING - I want to get more confident at closing so that I can bring in more sales, and earn better commission.

STRATEGY RESPONSE - Create content around practical techniques for closing sales and handling objections.

Step 3: Pin-Point the Resistance

If training is already available, what's stopping them from completing it currently?

To discover the resistance factors, explore things like training reports (which courses do they get stuck on, which questions do they find most challenging, what topics or don't engage them sufficiently so they don't click through, etc.) You also can ask your audience in person or through an online survey.

Once you've identified the points of resistance, focus your content and its formats that prevent or mitigate the obstacles your audience encounters.

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CHAPTER 3

Find Your Subject Matter Experts



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A subject matter expert (SME), plays a critical role in building a robust training strategy.

The SME is someone who is considered an expert in the topic you're developing your training for. They're responsible for ensuring that your training is accurate and relevant, and they play an integral part in developing an effective training strategy.

But, remember...

While your SME might be an expert on the topic, they may not be an expert in learning design, so your role is to make sure that any content they provide translates well to a learning environment.

During the training strategy development process, you will pop in-and-out of the picture doing things like:

- Assisting with defining learning objectives
- Helping add substance to outlines and storyboards
- Ensure that content is accurate
- Answer questions that arise about the content

The relationship between a course developer and an SME is highly collaborative.

Once the instructional designer has created the objectives for the course, the SME evaluates the objectives and makes sure that each objective is properly connected to the content.

The expert may offer resources, and the instructional designer will determine if they are instructionally sound and appropriate for the course.

With the SME on board, you can now start to collaborate on your learning objectives.



HERE'S A PRO TIP

Help Your SME Understand That Less is Always More

It's not uncommon for SME's to think that the more content they can give you the better.

In this case, you need to explain that the concept of "less is best" applies here.

Remember, online learning should include only what the trainee NEEDS to know, not what would be nice to know.



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CHAPTER 4

Defining Your Learning Objectives

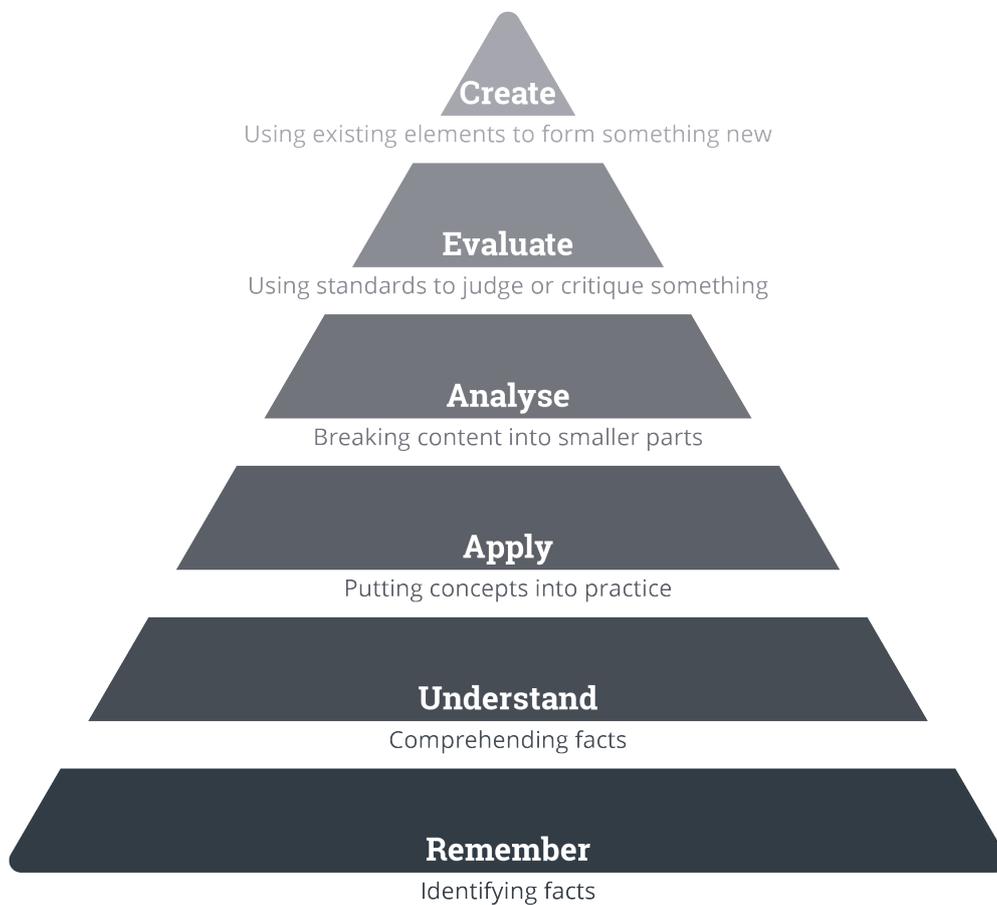


So, what are learning objectives?

Quite simply, they're the things you want your team to achieve as a result of completing your training. This could be:

- Remember and recall information
- Demonstrating understanding
- Apply knowledge in a real-world situation

If you're wanting to get technical about it, there's a thing called 'Blooms Taxonomy' which is a model that will give you a simple way of explaining the different types of training objectives and how each one is suited to different situations.



Blooms Taxonomy



Think of it like this...

Not having a clearly defined learning objective is like trying to navigate from A-to-B without a map (...or even a compass for that matter).

You're likely to get lost on your way, and you'll probably end up at the wrong place!

Not a pleasant experience for anyone.

Following these three steps will help to keep you on track when you're writing learning objectives.

FIRST — Remember that all learning objectives should begin with a phrase like, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to"

NEXT — Connect an action verb to identify what the trainee will do, for example, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to identify"

FINALLY — Finish your learning objective by clearly stating the specifics of what the trainee will be doing when they demonstrate they have achieved or mastered the objective such as, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to identify four benefits of Opening the Sale with customers."

Once you've written your clear learning objectives you can begin developing your content which will be focused on ensuring these objectives can be met.



3 Steps to Writing Clear Learning Objectives

NUMBER 1

Remember that all learning objectives should begin with a phrase like, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to"

NUMBER 2

Connect an action verb to identify what the trainee will do, for example, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to identify"

Here are a few verb suggestions to get you started:

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyse	Evaluate	Create
define	classify	apply	analyse	assess	arrange
identify	compile	calculate	calculate	compare	assemble
label	conclude	demonstrate	categorise	critique	compose
list	discuss	develop	classify	decide	construct
match	describe	interpret	criticize	determine	design
name	explain	locate	compare	establish	develop
recall	express	operate	contrast	evaluate	diagnose

NUMBER 3

Finish your learning objective by clearly stating the specifics of what the trainee will be doing when they demonstrate they have achieved or mastered the objective such as, "At the end of this course, the trainee will be able to identify four benefits of Opening the Sale with customers."

Here are some words and phrases to avoid:

appreciate	believe	improve	learn
approach	grasp the significance of	increase	thinks critically
become	grow	know	understand

CHAPTER 5

Choose Your Delivery Method



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Let's start by asking a simple question: Should this be an online course?

Our core focus, at RedSeed, is behaviour change.

A big driver of behaviour change is ensuring that training is delivered in a way that is conducive to good learning, knowledge acquisition and skills application.

That means that not all training should be delivered online.

You could follow all of the online training best practices in the world, and still not end up with good outcomes if online isn't the right delivery method for you.

There are many different types of training programs for employees, and different delivery methods have different benefits, different costs, and drive different outcomes.

This is the last step in the process because, in order for you to choose the right delivery method, you first need to have an intimate understanding of steps one through four.

L&D professionals often evaluate delivery methods based on the organization's overall learning objectives.

Most use multiple delivery methods, because a single modality can't do everything well.

So, how can you choose training delivery methods that suit your needs?

Let's consider some of the most common options.

1. Instructor-led Training (ILT)

Instructor-led training, or classroom training, is the most traditional form of training. It's most effective when you need to provide a large group of learners with a relatively small amount of information, in a short period, with the biggest value-add being the credibility of the instructor and their training skills.

ILT is also beneficial when face-to-face collaboration and/or skills practice will enhance the learning.

2. Virtual Classrooms

Virtual classrooms allow you to deliver live training from anywhere, saving organizations valuable time and money on logistics and venues.

This option is most effective when you have to train a larger group on a small amount of content in a short period, and the learners (and instructor) are geographically dispersed. The success of a virtual classroom is often limited to how well you can provide tech support to trainees and instructors.



3. E-Learning

E-learning is one of the most popular forms of training delivery available today.

E-learning is a good option for organizations that want to offer flexible learning opportunities or pathways to a global audience by delivering interactive and engaging training programs online. It's also favorable because it offers greater transparency with key metrics like course completion and training engagement.

4. Mobile Learning

Mobile learning, although a relatively new training delivery method, is increasingly offered by leading organizations due to the host of benefits it offers, including the ability to deliver training anytime, anywhere and on any device and in the form of microlearning, short how-to videos, social learning and other engaging formats.

5. Blended Learning

With blended learning, organizations can leverage a combination of approaches, ensuring that every learner retains information. A blended learning approach is perfect for organizations with diverse training requirements and complex learning objectives, or where there is a requirement for observation and skills verification through coaching.



In Summary

Building a training strategy is a practice which will set you up for success when it comes to any new employee training.

Rather than thinking of strategy development as a waste of time, think of it as your roadmap to success!

- The steps to building a successful training strategy are pretty simple;
- Have a clear understanding of the problem you're trying to solve
- Have a clear understanding of who you're building your training for
- Collaborate with someone who knows the subject inside-out
- Develop a clear outcome that you expect for your trainees
- Pick a logical delivery mechanism

With all five of these steps complete, you're well on your way to delivering fail-safe training that your team will be more likely to engage with and which will lead to better outcomes for your business.



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