Importance of evergreen e-learning content for employee development

As the world of work rapidly evolves, and technology and automation changes how work gets done, so the shelf life of employees skills shrinks. Organisations need to be ahead of this change and ensure their employees are upskilled, reskilled, and more skillful at performing their roles.

Image: Supplied

"Continuous employee development is no longer a nice to have. They're essential to remain relevant and competitive," said Michael Gullan, CEO of G&G Advocacy, an e-learning consultancy that partners with corporates to elevate their online learning and development.

Gullan explains that many jobs may soon become obsolete. New roles that require new skills and capabilities are already emerging. Organisations must invest in developing their teams to ensure they can continue to perform in their current roles and, importantly, to ensure they are ready for the future.

Most organisations have e-learning content that will always be relevant, such as onboarding, processes, vision and mission, safety, and compliance. That's not to say this content will always be accurate and correct. "Courses and training material are as dynamic as employees and organisations. It's always changing. Sometimes the changes are radical, often minor updates are required regularly," said Gullan. "This is why a content repurposes strategy is crucial if you manage content at scale."

Evergreen content is like gold for e-learning programmes

Evergreen courses and online learning material are an L&D investment with endless returns. The big work is front-loaded, after which updates can be easy and cost-effective, provided you have an evergreen content strategy. An evergreen content strategy can benefit organisations in the following ways:

- Personalise content for diverse audiences - internal or external.
- Expand into new markets.
- Quickly update and redeploy content and adapt to constant change.
- Enhance consistency and extend content longevity.

- Reduce content development and maintenance time and optimise resources.
- Increase your L&D ROI.

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"The real challenge is creating effective e-learning that is relevant and personalised to employees at their time of need," said Gullan. Gullan provided the following guidelines on managing a library of evergreen eLearning content to enhance eLearning outcomes:

1. **Repurpose and update. Don't copy and paste.**
   While a copy-and-paste approach may seem quick and easy, it becomes inefficient and challenging to manage when updates are needed. Scaling content and adapting it for various audiences, roles, education levels, or languages can be daunting. Genuine content reuse requires a more sophisticated approach to ensure efficiency and consistency, especially in dynamic content environments. To repurpose and update content effectively, Gullan suggests you regularly evaluate your content against your learning strategy to ensure it delivers on your outcomes.

2. **Content is dynamic. Employees are evolving.**
   Managing various versions and iterations of eLearning content that is personalised and relevant to diverse employees is challenging. Content must be adaptable and versatile, but managing multiple variations is equally important. Gullan recommends preserving a master version that is edited, updated, and used across all applications. This eliminates maintenance and continuity challenges and can be applied to Content CapsuleTM, eLearning content, and even your printed sales and marketing material. It also streamlines content management and ensures consistency.

3. **Evergreen content. Better ROI.**
   Your evergreen content is the heart of all eLearning programmes. Gullan suggests keeping a master, raw, undesigned version and updating it regularly. This separation of raw and designed content streamlines content management and enables effortless reuse, updates, and deployment without errors. It also facilitates collaboration and consistency and reduces production time. "Separating your raw eLearning content doesn't prevent innovation," added Gullan. "Innovation and interaction involve crafting engaging content and storing content in flexible formats that enable effortless reuse and repurposing without tedious redesigning."

   In today's fast-paced business landscape, organisations must prioritise ongoing skills development to succeed and lead. Rather than recycling old content, L&D professionals should leverage their evergreen content to streamline updates across all markets. As automation and audiences diversify, a centralised content process aligned with your learning strategy will support the organisation's ability to adapt swiftly and lean into the dynamic world of work.