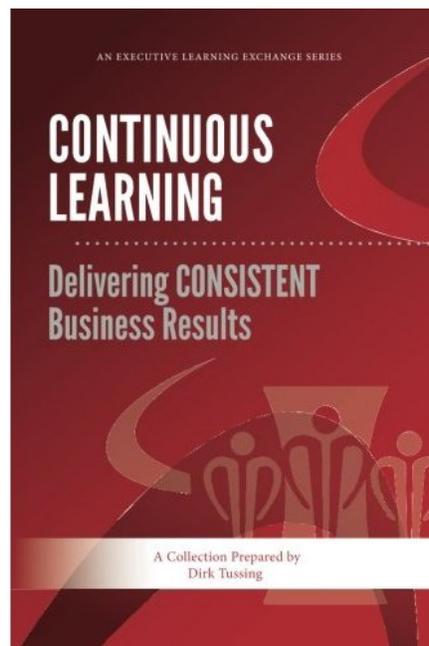# Continuous Learning

Delivering CONSISTENT Business Results (Volume 1)

A Collection Prepared by Dirk Tussing

Order your copy of **Continuous Learning**, an Executive Learning Exchange series, at http://www.amazon.com/dp/1475131259/. Read a sample of the work by Robin Busse & Corinne Miller, <mark>THE PERFECT STORM: INFORMAL + LIVE + VIRTUAL + TRAINING</mark> on the following pages.

Learn best practices from the Executive Learning Exchange's powerful network of learning and talent development leaders. What's so powerful? We focus on business results, plain and simple. Since 2002 the Executive Learning Exchange thought leaders meet annually at a corporate university in the Chicago, IL USA area for an intense, in-person action learning experience with a full-day of peer-collaboration. This is our first printed collection of lessons learned focused on Continuous Learning and presented as brief essays by the most talented learning and talent development thoughts leaders. Each essay provides real-world tips and techniques that are sure to deliver immediate inspiration and guidance on the type of continuous learning that leads to business results.

THE PERFECT STORM:
INFORMAL + LIVE + VIRTUAL + TRAINING
Contributed by Robin Busse, McDonald's Corporation and
Corinne Miller, formerly Motorola University

The perfect storm of ineffective learning is upon us. Can you hear the increasing hum of subject matter experts (SMEs) reading their bulleted slides on a virtual platform to share knowledge informally and build skills across the distance? This scenario has become an everyday part of the job for many of the currently one billion virtual workers across the world (2012, International Data Corporation). With the increased availability and affordability of virtual communication technologies, anyone can be a "trainer."

Further supporting this powerful concurrence of factors, a 2011 American Society of Training and Development report indicates that nearly half of the responding learning executives will increase e-learning, rely on informal learning, and reduce travel for learners. Supporting those initiatives is an increased reliance on peer training. Recognizing that e-learning includes both asynchronous and synchronous solutions, regardless of how content is sliced and diced, the "informal + live + virtual + training" trend is apparent from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The questions are now… "Why should learning leaders care" and "what should they do about it?"

Reflecting on this trend, many questions might go through the minds of learning leaders. How effective is SME-delivered live virtual training? What are the consequences of not meeting the intended knowledge or skill transfer objectives? It's reasonable to believe that most people who are unskilled in a discipline possess varying levels of effectiveness or ineffectiveness prior to learning the principles of that discipline.

This is where the learning organization can take a lesson from the do-it-yourself home improvement industry. Specifically, the learning organization, employing a "SME-training" strategy, can provide SME-trainers with easy-to-use tools and accelerated training that move SME-trainers from "ineffective" live virtual trainers to "effective-enough," recognizing that these SME-trainers will not likely perform at the level of learning and development professionals.

To avoid the perfect storm, "SME-training" strategy requires a collaborative partnership among the learning function, information technology (IT) organization, and a representation of SMEs. First, the technology needs to be selected with all three stakeholders involved in the decision-making process. The live virtual platform technology provided with a learning management system (LMS) may or may not be the right one for every organization that uses that LMS. Second, synchronous and/or asynchronous accelerated training on efficient use of the technology employing basic adult learning principles should be offered. Third, it is helpful to have templates and other job-aids available for SMEs to further increase their productivity when developing content for virtual delivery. Finally, it is essential to recruit SMEs to provide advice and to advocate the SME-training strategy, tools, and services across the enterprise.

This is a great time to redirect the energy of the "informal + live + virtual + training" storm to strengthening the business by increasing the effectiveness of the everyday learning solutions created and delivered by SME-trainers.

TAKEAWAYS

❖ Ineffective live virtual training is happening every day as SME-trainers, many unskilled in training, are creating and delivering content.

❖ Partnering with IT and SME-trainers is critical to success.

❖ Providing easy-to-use tools, accelerated learning, and job-aids will improve SME-trainer effectiveness.