

# Five Tips for Taking your Company's Training Online

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## Introduction

Companies are looking to online methods that provide training to an increasingly global work force. Market trends mirror this move, and recent innovations have made e-learning a more powerful way to deliver training



content to employees. The experiences of those who have gone down this road before can be a guide to many just arriving at the decision now.

Dennis Dillon worked on the information systems training team at Micron Technologies when budget cuts forced them to deliver content in more affordable ways. For a company as global as the Idaho based memory chip manufacturer, the changes would be challenging. “When a department in Scotland suddenly needed high-end Excel training, we couldn’t afford to send a trainer over there anymore,” Dillon says. The company also maintains significant production facilities in Italy, Singapore, Japan and Puerto Rico, and each needed IT training. “Initially we used an online live meeting tool to deliver content into a classroom at the other end,” he says. “We started capturing and recording those sessions so they were available online for others, but there were drawbacks to that. We did learn a few things the hard way.” In the process of successfully moving the company’s in-person training online, Dillon and Micron’s training department learned several valuable lessons. We’ll look at five of them below.

## Don't duplicate the old training materials in a new medium



There's a temptation to simply digitize the existing training manual, post it online as a PDF, and consider the migration complete. But doing so ignores most of the benefits of transitioning to online learning. "Say I'm teaching a course in a classroom and we record it," Dillon says, referring to one of the first steps taken by his department at Micron. "That does not successfully translate to online learning. The way the audience is taking the training is totally different." It's important to choose the right format for each part of the training and provide trainees a variety of experiences to keep the experience engaging and interactive. For example, you might use a video of a presenter to introduce the course, use text or screen casts to deliver the "meat" of the training, and provide links to websites or supplemental documents from which trainees can learn more on a specific topic.

## Break curriculum into smaller pieces

Like at many companies, it was not uncommon for Dillon to present multiple-hour, in-person training sessions, sensible when the largest cost of the training may have been the airfares paid for to get trainees to one location. But when the training shifted online, employees did not respond well to multiple-hour long remote training sessions.

Employees needed content that fit better into the time slots they had available. "People are managing their own learning into their workdays," Dillon says. "They might only have 20 minutes in the morning, so a two-hour video isn't going to help." Smaller, episodic blocks of curriculum make it easier for remote workers to fit training into their day, and actually get more training completed.

## Provide contact with instructors

Even halfway around the world and studying on their own time, training is more effective if there's an identifiable instructor. From learner feedback, Dillon learned that his presence as a facilitator still mattered. "Having a chat room available was a big help," he says. "We developed a tool that essentially allowed them to raise their hands with questions." Even trainees doing the coursework outside of regular hours can interact with instructors via chat rooms and other social media. Social media tools like Yammer can also be a great way for instructors and learners to interact.

## Keep learners on track

It's easier for most people to remain attentive if they are in the presence of others participating in the same activity. With online training, you will often need to adapt your methods to ensure trainees remain engaged in the material. One method Dillon used was to inject frequent periods of review. "We added quizzes and summary slides to allow the trainee to demonstrate to him/herself, and the trainer, that they were really absorbing the material." He recalled, "If the trainee failed the quiz or did not remember a key point on a section summary, she could immediately go back and review the material before going forward." This resulted in more efficient, appropriately self-paced learning... one of the main advantages of online vs. live training.

## Repeat, review and improve

Dillon recalls that his team was learning as they went, and made many mistakes along the way to their eventual, very successful program. But, anticipating their own learning curve, they built the time and attention required to address those errors right into their workflow. They did speed their climb up the learning curve by including feedback surveys right in the training, giving them immediate insights into trainee's recommendations for course improvements, new courses, etc.

This global company had obvious challenges in training their employees: the challenge of managing time zones and the costs of international travel and communication. The value of transitioning to online learning was clear. However, it isn't only global companies that face these challenges. Companies with employees scattered across the country, state, city, or even throughout the office can benefit from online, self-paced training. The methods for making a smooth transition to online training can be the same, no matter the size your organization.

# Case Study: Kofax

## About the Organization

Kofax is a global software company with more than 1250 employees based in 48 countries. Their solutions automate information-intensive processes to help enterprises streamline their operations, increase productivity, and better engage with their customers for competitive advantage and growth. In the 2012 fiscal year, the company earned \$262.5 million in revenue.

## Situation

For years Kofax had used traditional methods, such as classroom-style, in-person learning, to train sales reps, business partners, marketing personnel, and tech support teams. As the company continued to grow at a rapid pace, senior management came to realize that these methods were no longer fitting the company's needs. Traditional, in-person training methods were costing the company \$93.75 per employee per hour. Further, these "information dumps" were not particularly effective methods of knowledge transfer. The company had to rely on employees to proactively seek out information, and results were not predictable or easily measured. Employees outside the main office struggled to stay up to date on the latest product information.



## Solution

In 2011 Kofax brought on Phillip Jones as Vice President of Field Enablement to optimize the company's learning and development programs. He knew that the company needed accountability and testing as part of its training program. But as a new employee, Phillip had zero credibility within the organization and sky-high expectations from his fellow executives. As a result, it was not an option for Phillip to recommend a traditional LMS system that would take months to implement, require IT support, and would come with a six-figure price tag. He needed to make an impact quickly and cost-effectively to get results.

After searching online for flexible and scalable learning solutions, Phillip discovered Mindflash. "I was blown away with what I saw and experienced with Mindflash," Phillip said. "It's incredibly intuitive and very easy to administer. Billing is so easy and it's very painless to launch new courses."

Developing quality e-learning courses can be both time-intensive and expensive. According to industry averages, it takes instructional designers 79 hours of labor and costs \$10,054 to produce one hour of usable training.

However, without sacrificing quality, Kofax now is able to use Mindflash to significantly reduce the time and costs involved in course creation. With the increased efficiencies provided by Mindflash, Kofax is developing an hour of training in 61 hours at a cost of \$4,991. The average individual course takes 23 hours in development time and costs only \$1,897. "We won't put anything out there that's not perfect." Phillip says.

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<sup>1</sup> Data based on the Chapman Alliance survey from 249 organizations representing 3,947 learning development professionals.

Phillip and his team run a six-step, two-week process for course creation:

1. A subject matter expert develops a PowerPoint deck with voice-recorded narration
2. A temporary worker creates a transcript of the narration
3. The PowerPoint presentation and written script go out to an editor who then ensures that all text is translated into international English
4. A voice-over artist creates professional narration
5. Phillip performs a final review of the course
6. The course is published to Mindflash and distributed to employees

Using this process, Kofax now creates 5–8 new Mindflash courses per quarter. Course topics range from basic training about target industries to detailed lessons about every product in the Kofax catalog. These courses are distributed to every sales and marketing rep around the world and used to on-board new employees. Kofax also makes the entire course catalog available to its partners. After a new course has been distributed, employees have three weeks to finish the course with a pass rate of 80% or higher. These results then get circulated to all management with the names of employees who haven't yet finished courses highlighted in red. "Needless to say, we have tremendous compliance rates," Phillip says.

## Results

To date, roughly 1500 Kofax employees and partners have completed more than 20,000 Mindflash courses. Each hour of training now averages \$18.74 to deliver online instead of \$93.75 to train in the classroom. Because of this 80% reduction in costs, Kofax is now able to provide even more training to its employees and partners. On average, trainees now take ten Mindflash courses a year. Phillip notes that both subject experts and employees love the new Mindflash training program. Since the implementation of Mindflash, the entire culture of the company has shifted. Now, almost all company initiatives are accompanied by a Mindflash training course and knowledge transfer within the organization is a far more efficient and positive experience.

“I’m eternally grateful for what Mindflash has done for our training program and organization,” Phillip says. “Everyone is now open to building courses and sharing knowledge. We couldn’t have grown our training program to where it is today without the features, ease of use, and low costs we enjoy with Mindflash. For the value I’m getting, we should be paying significantly more!”

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Phillip Jones  
Vice President of Field Enablement  
Kofax

## Want to learn more?



Start your own online training program today with a free trial of Mindflash!  
Visit <http://www.mindflash.com/sign-up> to get started.

## Contact us at:

+1.805.963.8417

+1.877.771.1900 (toll-free)

[sales@mindflash.com](mailto:sales@mindflash.com)

Visit our website at [www.mindflash.com](http://www.mindflash.com)

