

SMALL FORMAT, BIG IMPACT: NANO LEARNING IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Learning is the lifeblood of every business in the digital world. But in a fast-paced environment, employees cannot take time out of their busy schedules just to learn. With technologies and related skills evolving continuously, how can enterprises enable a workforce with wide-ranging needs to build the knowledge they need, opportunistically, over time? Bite-sized, to-the-point learning delivered just when it is needed, is the future.



If you thought TikTok was only good for crazy dance videos, think again. A couple of years ago, spurred by the seven billion views scored by #LearnOnTikTok, the platform said it would recruit hundreds of individuals and entities to produce educational content. TikTok was right about its potential as a teaching tool: when Instagram opened a TikTok account in March this year, one of the first things it did was to post a video on how to use Reels, TikTok's challenger!

Although the "how to" videos on TikTok and Instagram Reels are mainly targeted at entertainment, their instructional appeal can carry through other contexts as well. This article explores one of them, namely, leveraging bite-sized, to the point, content to augment employee learning in the corporate sector.

Agile IT needs quick skilling

IT work has turned extremely agile over the years, often delivered in short, highly productive sprints. Proliferating

digital technology is further fueling the pace of work, and creating a constant need for new skills across industries. With delivery timelines being what they are, asking employees to attend reskilling/ upskilling programs lasting a few days up to a few months is becoming increasingly difficult. It may not even be required given that most times companies are only looking to deliver quick learning before the commencement of a project to help employees brush up existing knowledge.

Enterprises, therefore, need a reimagined training and education approach, where nuggets of contextual learning are pushed just-in-time, even as employees go about their work. This approach is popularly called nano learning.

The trend of short-format learning began some years ago in the form of micro learning, which typically runs for three to five minutes, in keeping with the average five-to-eight-minute attention span of the average learner. Nano learning is the next evolutionary stage, where knowledge

is compressed into even smaller capsules of about a minute or two at most. Based on the enormous success of TikTok and Reels in the personal space, it is clear that companies would also need to create propositions exerting an irresistible pull over users to achieve good learning outcomes. For that, enterprises should structure the information in a way so that it can be quickly understood and applied in an agile working environment.

Effective learning needs a structure

Here, it is worth looking at the nearly two-decade old – but still relevant – CFP3 model for breaking down content. The elements of this model, namely, concept, fact, process, principle, and procedure, provide a useful guideline for structuring/ sequencing minute-long videos to make them effective in training. Basically, the model says that a learning capsule should start by explaining the concept; offer facts to establish credibility and interest;

and present a procedure, principle or process to inform the learner about how, when and where to implement this knowledge. Once the information is organized in this manner, it can be delivered over a learning platform exactly when required, seamlessly, during the course of work.

Nano learning at Infosys

Potentially, nano learning could find a very large number of use cases in the technology and other industries. Here is an example from our own experience.

Over three decades, Infosys has finely honed its employee training and development programs. Today, about 90 percent of our employees spend an average of 35 - 40 minutes learning on a weekday and 45 - 50 minutes during the weekend. To facilitate their experience by enabling just-in-time, bite-sized learning, we recently launched the "Glossary" app on Lex, our learning platform. Glossary is a nano learning tool enabling

employees to discover, look up, and also add interesting words related to technology.

Create knowledge champions

The importance of a content structure was discussed earlier in this article. Another requirement for ensuring the effectiveness of nano learning is right culture.

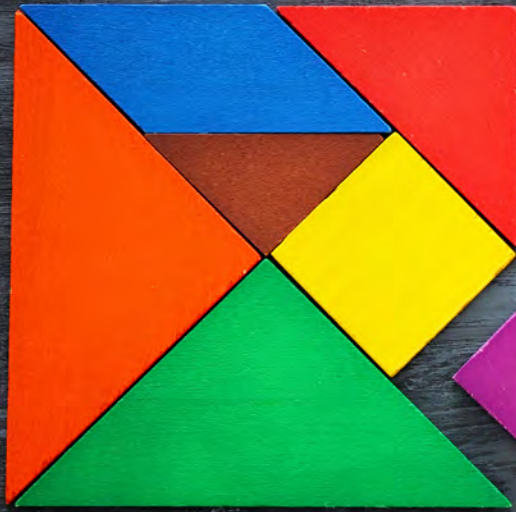
As the shortest form of learning till date, nano learning is essentially a do-it-yourself instructional resource. At the same time, it feeds off the power of the collective. The success of a TikTok or Instagram video is determined purely by the size of its creator's following. Then a virtuous cycle kicks in – a massive following makes influencers, even celebrities, of ordinary people, whose video bites then go on to accumulate even more followers. Companies in every industry need to replicate this by creating internal knowledge champions who acquire celebrity

status over time. Indeed, this could shake up knowledge management, which thus far has not sufficiently promoted sharing of information. Organizations should identify able communicators to propagate CFP3 and nano learning, ideally through short-format instructional content, so the message is self-reinforcing. As these champions become visible – at the center of things, so to speak – it will increase adoption of nano learning across the organization. Over time, first followers will create more followers to set a flywheel effect in motion.

The future is nano, micro, macro

Bite-sized, to-the-point learning delivered just when it is needed, is particularly suited to today's employees who cannot take time out of their busy schedules just to learn. That being said, enterprises also have other types of learning needs, which will continue to be served by





other methods of training – think long duration, in-person, theoretical instruction, and so on. For instance, people shifting careers, or in need of completely new skills, *will have to undergo* focused training to acquire threshold competency. Micro learning will be important for applications ranging from building leadership and problem-solving skills to teaching

data analysis or project management. For the best outcomes, organizations should make sure that the different formats of learning co-exist and reinforce each other; one way is to set up nano, micro and macro learning programs as a stack, where multiple nano learning nuggets make up a micro learning module, which can combine with similar modules to

create a macro program. This structure makes it easy for learners to pick what they need and skip what they know; also, it can leverage AI to understand their individual learning patterns to make the experience intelligent and adaptive.

Nano learning may be small in size but its potential is anything but small.

Author

Thirumala Arohi

*Senior Vice President, Head -
Education, Training & Assessments*



In his tenure at Infosys, which spans 23+ years, Thiru has managed many vital client relationships for the Financial Services Europe based accounts before taking on the current role of Head of Education, Training and Assessment (ETA). ETA department is one of the key business enabling departments at Infosys. Thirumala Arohi (known as Thiru) in his role of Head of ETA, drives various learning interventions aggressively to enable the employees to be future ready. In this journey of creating next-gen learning experiences, ETA has progressed well in establishing and enhancing Digital Learning platforms that enables “Anytime, Anywhere and on Any Device” learning combining with adoption of AI/ML techniques to engage and enrich learners’ experiences. Several partnering agreements are in place with Universities and MOOCs, etc. in leveraging their programs. Along with driving content digitally, the Learning and Development arm of ETA also focuses on developing holistic skills in the areas of business, behavioral and leadership such as Design Thinking.



For more information, contact askus@infosys.com

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