

# E-Learning in Leadership Training: *What Works*<sup>TM</sup>

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## How can you apply e-learning technology to Leadership Training?

Leadership training is one of the most important investments in corporate and government organizations. Leadership training establishes culture and sets in place the management processes for growth, quality, and company leadership. The very nature of leadership training requires that learners not only understand leadership principals but also practice with colleagues and, ideally, work with specific examples that apply to their current job situation.

Most leadership training is very high-touch. Workshops, outside experts, high-level executives, and expert facilitators are usually the norm. One of the goals of leadership training is for leaders to develop peer networks, so physical meetings and offsites are very common.

Yet in leadership training, as in other subject areas , companies face problems in scale, speed, and cost. Leaders are busy people and are often spread all over the globe.

**How can e-learning be applied effectively to this high-touch problem?**

## Our Industry Report

We just completed a major research project to determine the answer to this question -- details of which will be published in our upcoming industry report: *Elearning in Leadership Training: What Works*<sup>TM</sup>. We interviewed 10 large organizations that are successfully using technology in their leadership programs. Companies who participated in this study include Amazon.com, the NBA, Exult, FBI, Aventis, CNA Insurance, and E\*Trade.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Review the characteristics of Excellence in Leadership Training
- Discover best-practices in the application of e-learning technology to Leadership Training
- Review measurement techniques in leadership training
- Determine the "winning technology" approaches and the models which really work.

## Key Findings

We discovered a variety of creative ways that technology is being used to add value to the training process while still providing the interactivity, collaboration, and team building that is required to succeed.

### **1. Blended formats work.**

Leadership training for senior and middle managers in most organizations uses a blended format of on-line and off-line instruction. There are some exceptions in that a few organizations are exclusively using on-line delivery for both instruction and collaboration. In the report we will detail the blending models we found.

### **2. Format varies with management level.**

Organizations are willing to devote more in-class time, including facilitators and consultants, to more senior executives. Programs for middle managers may involve some class time with more instructional emphasis given to on-line courseware.

**3. On-line courses do work and are used at all leadership levels.**

We discovered some instances in which on-line leadership courses are offered to the entire organization to help all employees with their leadership skills. These offerings are usually optional and may be used as a one-off intervention.

**4. Blended learning reduces time investment and better prepares learners for the classroom.**

Enhancing leadership programs with on-line instruction has enabled organizations to reduce the overall time investment on the part of learners. The time investment can be reduced by anywhere from 50-60% while still retaining acceptable levels of satisfactory learner feedback.

**5. Blended Leadership Programs have high completion rates.**

Blended programs tend to increase completion rates for on-line training by orders of magnitude. We found no exception with leadership training. Completion rates were in the range of 75-95% which is unusually high for any e-learning courseware.

**6. Self-study courses must be high quality and engaging. A new category of "Premium E-Learning" has emerged for leadership training.**

In general, research participants indicated that elearning which uses video, interaction, creative story lines, exercises, and recognized management experts is required for successful on-line leadership training.

We believe the content market has split into two categories for leadership and management training: "Traditional E-Learning" and "Premium E-Learning." The report details the differences and when to use each. Companies like [Ninth House](#) and [Achieve Global](#) provide premium content.

**7. Blended does not imply "classroom". Online communities and collaboration are alive and well!**

Some organizations are using programs that are exclusively conducted virtually. In this format, participants take on-line courses that are augmented with on-line collaborate sessions, conference calls, or virtual collaborative exercises. We found several collaboration techniques in use including a virtual classroom system (e.g. Webex), an on-line collaboration tool from [Q2Learning](#), and conference calls.

While many organizations are still experimenting with elearning in leadership training and refining their program formats, we think this is an area to watch. Our upcoming report will provide more details and case studies from industry leaders in financial service, health care, pharmaceuticals, and government. Look for availability of Elearning in Leadership Training: What Works™ in the March time frame.