### Why Now Is the Perfect Opportunity to Promote Remote Learning for Employees

### **Going beyond the LMS with remote learning to boost retention and business growth**

The pandemic has revealed a silver lining for employees: reduced commuting time. Rather than spending two to four hours per day commuting to and from an office, employees are signing on and off each day with zero commute time. They’ve gained so many more hours in their day that many workers are reluctant to return to the old office-based work structure.

In addition to not having a long commute to bookend their day, employees are reporting that they have more energy to devote to their jobs, too. It’s not unusual in cities with grueling commutes like Boston, San Francisco, and Atlanta, for workers to need some time after they arrive at the office to physically and mentally recover from the stress of just getting to the office! Working from home removed that need for recovery time and added to their availability as productive workers.

Well great, a status-quo-oriented employer may think. The more they work, the better for the company, right? But a forward-thinking employer knows that a company does better when it helps employees do smarter work. And that the extra energy they have right now is a golden opportunity to promote career development through remote learning.

**Career Development Through Remote Learning Boosts Your Business**

I’m talking about career development beyond what the company offers via its Learning Management System (LMS) in most cases. I’m talking about certificates and certifications; continuing education and advanced degrees. Employees staying on top of their skills and adapting to technological innovation in their business. Managers gaining additional knowledge to lead their teams effectively.

Offering continued educational and skill development opportunities helps companies to attract top candidates, reduce employee turnover, and boost productivity overall.

Most career development can be done in one to two hours of study per day or even per week. Employees in the past may have only had the option to pursue degrees or certifications outside of work hours, but many companies are making it possible for their employees to schedule “learning time” to do this.

**How Companies of Any Size Can Support Employee Remote Learning**

Companies of all sizes can support employees’ remote learning and career development. Here are some ideas:

* Invest in a digital library of learning resources that employees can tap into.
* Expand the company’s LMS to include career development programs, skills training, and skills certification.
* Sponsor virtual training, seminars, and lunch n’ learns, all over Zoom or Teams.
* Look into business memberships for online learning sites like MasterClass, Google Career Certificates, and Coursera for Business. Companies can purchase a block of annual memberships at a discount or get custom pricing for expanded or unlimited access to programs on these sites.
* Offer a learning stipend that covers part or all of the cost of a professional development course.
* Give all employees two or more hours per week to use specifically for career or personal development.
* Encourage employees to seek out learning resources nearby, such as continuing education courses at local colleges.

The last two are great options for small businesses on a tight budget that still want to upskill their employees and build goodwill within their workforce. Just giving them that extra time to learn will have a minimal impact on the company’s bottom line but return huge dividends in employee knowledge, skill, and loyalty to the company that supported their growth.

What’s great about starting an employee learning initiative now is that any of these programs can continue when your company transitions back to a primarily in-office routine. With many companies considering a hybrid work schedule — half the work week at the office and half working remotely — employees can still take advantage of that reduced commute time to relax, recharge, and learn.

#### **Sources:**

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International speaker and author, Susan Fitzell,M.Ed., CSP, works with educators, organization leaders, and employees to discover their personal learning preferences. She works to establish cultures of learning that keep organizations competitive and increase the ROI of their people investments. This helps organizations reduce costs while increasing profits and retention. She helps leaders understand the motivation drivers that engage their employees and provides unique solutions that transform performance by teaching people how they learn .Susan provides unique solutions that transform performance by teaching people how they learn.

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