



Future-proof your learning strategy:

4 simple steps to address the unique
challenges facing healthcare

A triage of training

Hospitals and health systems are undergoing a dramatic shift in their business models due to forces that are expected to eventually turn the industry on its head. From providers concerned with the volume of services they provide, to providers who focus on offering high-value services that emphasize keeping populations healthy, healthcare organizations are rethinking the ways they can more effectively support patient care.

On top of this, hospital employees are so busy delivering around-the-clock care that they don't always have the time necessary to keep up to date on technology trends. However, staying current on the latest developments and best practices is essential for patient safety and regulatory compliance.

The abundance of information on how to address these challenges can be daunting—including scientific research on learning, new teaching methodologies, and a seemingly endless supply of technology solutions. Rather than empowering leaders, it can lead to information overload.

This guide can help. We've curated the essential insights you need to strengthen your program and learning experience—so you emerge with clear criteria for finding the right partner to help future-proof your training strategy.

The state of healthcare



Higher turnover
2 years
is the average tenure of today's millennial workers



Increased hiring expenses
\$4,129
is the average cost per hire for companies*



Revenue opportunities
\$2 million
per year, the additional amount a hospital could earn by successfully attesting meaningful use of electronic medical records



Shortage of physicians
150,000
projected shortage by 2025, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges

* Source: Society for Human Resources' Human Capital Benchmarking Report 2016. www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/human-capital-benchmarking-report.aspx

1

Identify specific areas of training opportunity

In a sector where the consequences of making mistakes is always high, delivering effective training must be a priority.



The role of training in healthcare has far-reaching impacts. When executed well, it can:

- **Improve patient outcomes:** Well-designed and executed training has the ability to improve patient care quality through consistent, timely, and cost-effective delivery methods.
- **Keep pace with the constant change in regulations and accreditations:** By educating employees on organization-specific policies and procedures, hospitals can limit their risk of being fined by OSHA and other accrediting agencies.
- **Help staff operate more efficiently:** A well-designed program that includes in-person and online training options ensures that busy mobile workers can keep up to date on policy changes and patient care trends—on their schedules.
- **Improve the hospital's financial position:** A scalable training platform ensures timely delivery of information (again, mitigating compliance risk), increases employee satisfaction (thereby improving retention rates), and could uncover additional revenue opportunities (such as demonstrating “meaningful use” of electronic health records, which could result in the hospital receiving incentive payments).

Conversely, healthcare systems that don't offer clear learning opportunities risk higher-than-average employee attrition rates. Workers know that to stay relevant in a technologically fluid marketplace, they'll need to reinvent themselves on a regular basis—and will look to their employers to help them do so. The steps in this guide will provide hospitals with corporate-learning best practices that can help them “compete” in today's evolving marketplace.

Take action

Identify the skills gaps:

- Are staff members properly trained to deliver the highest quality patient outcomes?
- Has training on electronic records systems affected the changes in practice necessary to demonstrate meaningful use?

Assess the program's level of effectiveness:

- Does the program reduce training costs while increasing staff knowledge?
- Are you able to rapidly deploy new training content?
- Is training standardized to reduce risk?
- Is training flexible enough to accommodate busy schedules and a highly mobile workforce?
- How does your program track, monitor, and certify employee training?

Assess current and projected turnover:

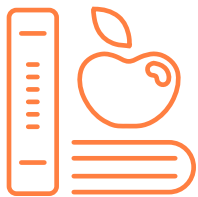
- What is the average tenure of your workforce?
- Do certain departments have higher attrition than others?
- Do you anticipate a wave of future openings due to retirements? If so, how will you manage critical knowledge transfer to new employees?

2

What is a core competency?

“
A cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one’s job, that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development.”

S. B. Parry,
The Quest for Competencies



Focus on core competencies

Competency-based education (CBE) has gained traction in colleges and universities over the past decade, but how does it apply to a healthcare learning environment?

Simply put, CBE is a win-win for both the employee and the hospital. It enables workers to progress through training at their own pace while empowering the organization to accurately assess mastery and establish quantifiable benchmarks. It offers the personalization that today’s workers demand, along with the scalability that hospitals need.

Hallmarks of a CBE program include:

- Learners can access learning regardless of time, pace, or place
- Performance expectations are known from the beginning
- Time can vary, but learning is held constant
- Learners do not need to engage with content if they can demonstrate proficiency
- Dashboards and visualization tools allow learners to track their progress

And the benefits to organizations are clear:

- Decreases time to completion
- Increases relevance
- Increases trainee proficiency
- Saves on travel expenses by shifting to online/hybrid delivery
- Reduces productivity loss due to employee absence
- Frees up time for trainers to coach and mentor

Take action

Define the training outcomes:

Work with functional leaders to determine what learners need to know, think, or be able to do as a result of the learning unit.

Identify gaps:

Assess how your current program supports the desired outcomes, and identify any gaps.

Define assessments to measure core competencies:

Use assessment results to evaluate trainee performance, as well as to identify strengths and areas for growth.

Choose a solutions partner:

Identify a partner that possesses both the technological platform to support CBE and the depth of expertise in the field of L&D.

Establish benchmarks:

Use aggregate assessment results to diagnose opportunities for program improvement.

Wisdom from the trenches

“
*Incorporate
peer-to-peer
collaboration.*”

Collaboration doesn't need to be en masse or in real time. By encouraging employees to help each other—which could just as easily be via instant message in a collaboration tool as it can be sitting next to someone—you're also making each of them think about what they're learning.

It's obvious but true: if it isn't clear to someone why they're being asked to complete a piece of learning, they won't engage with it. Saying “because you have to, it's for compliance” isn't enough. Somewhere, there's a reason why your employees are being asked to take this course. Share it with them.

“
*Put yourself in
the employee's
shoes.*”

“
*Snack on
information
rather than
indulge.*”

That snack could be watching a three-minute video, reading a short article, checking details of coursework, or even taking a test. If your course doesn't work properly on a mobile device, you're blocking this preferred way of learning.

3



The forgetting curve

The forgetting curve hypothesizes the decline of memory retention in time, suggesting that if newly acquired knowledge isn't reinforced within a matter of days, the likelihood of retaining it is dramatically impacted.

Create engaging experiences. And beat the forgetting curve.

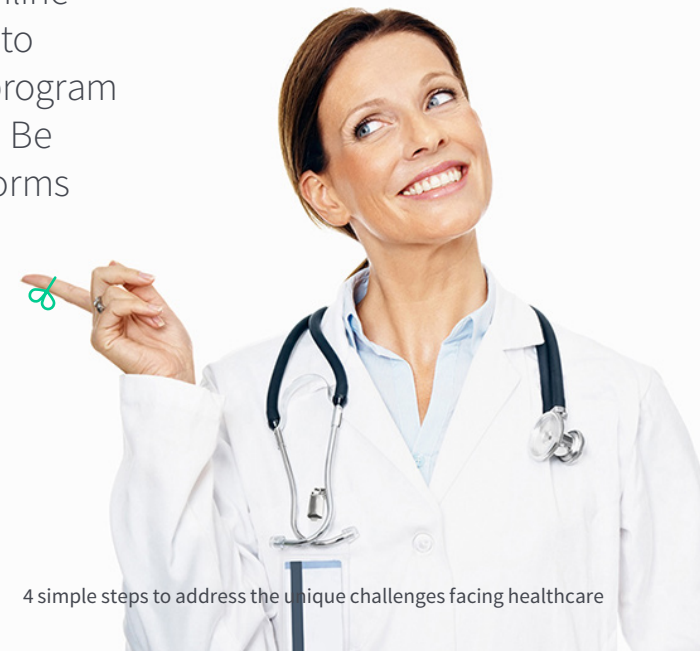
Now that you have a sense for the core competencies you'd like to develop, it's time to think about how to produce them. For today's connected learners, it's all about personalization—tailoring experiences to their unique interests and needs. This is where learning science intersects with today's technology.

With legions of digital corporate content solutions available, it can be tempting to go “all in” with an exclusively online solution. But studies show that a blended approach to learning is more successful, offering a well-rounded program that includes online, mobile, and in-person training. Be sure to create “engaging experiences” that span all forms of learning delivery.

What is microlearning?

“*Microlearning is a way of teaching and delivering content to learners in small, very specific bursts. The learners are in control of what and when they're learning.*”

elearningindustry.com



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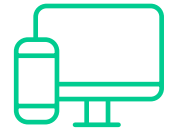
A return to “corporate” universities

Healthcare systems are realizing that providing self-paced e-learning alone will not get the job done. They need to provide a strategic program experience designed for each team/role to help their people grow and impact the organization, while also increasing employee engagement and longevity at the hospital. Key areas to explore:

Which pieces of information are more appropriate for an online training program?

Which training activities benefit best from interpersonal interaction and demonstration?

The answers to these questions are used to structure the virtual and physical composition of the organization’s “university.”



Take action

Design content that can be immediately applied:

Timing is the key to retention. Ensure learners have an opportunity to apply learnings right away.

Use real-world scenarios to allow people to practice what they learn:

For areas where the hospital has experienced consistent errors or issues, provide training exercises that offer an opportunity for participants to “learn from their mistakes” during training—instead of making them on the job.

Leverage peer-to-peer learning using online collaboration:

Tap into your own network of experts by connecting mentors with more junior employees online, regardless of where they’re based.

Incorporate multimedia elements (such as video and gamification):

For example, to demonstrate communication skills when dealing with a difficult patient situation, consider asking workers to record themselves delivering it.



4

Choose a partner—not a piece of technology

Organizations need a framework for success; not a set of disconnected widgets. L&D leaders shouldn't be bogged down with connecting the technology dots—"this system" for content, "that system" for delivery. Rather, they should be free to focus on the information and skills required for employees to succeed, and let their partner do the heavy lifting.

Consider these selection criteria when evaluating prospective partners:

- ✓ Possesses a deep understanding of the needs of both employees and trainers
- ✓ Is well-versed on pedagogy and new learning strategies
- ✓ Offers a customizable platform that can be tailored to your needs
- ✓ Demonstrates a strong commitment to customer satisfaction
- ✓ Is organizationally aligned to promote your success (such as offering a formalized cohort program and a dedicated client support division)
- ✓ Provides a wealth of resources (annual and community training events, best practices, etc.)
- ✓ Is familiar to your workers (e.g., Blackboard's entrenched experience within the university sector means that your employees likely already have experience using our solutions)

Choose a scalable, enterprise-grade technology platform that:

- ensures consistency of message, permitting course material to be updated from a central control point.
- provides ease of access, allowing participants to connect with course material and fellow learners from anywhere with an internet connection.
- integrates training tools into a single portal that can be configured and managed by each division in your organization.
- provides a blended learning experience, incorporating experiential practice, group collaboration, learner preparation, and instructor guidance and feedback.
- includes the ability to schedule and manage courses, classroom time, and webinars outside the learning management system (LMS).
- ensures the organization's ability to control enrollments.
- tracks learner progress.
- improves the reporting process.



Take action

Leverage the partner and technology selection criteria shared in this e-book to assess prospective vendors.

Conduct your own research to look beyond the marketing headlines and reveal true past performance—case studies, client lists, and available resources that reveal a depth of knowledge (or perhaps lack thereof).





Summary

Weeding through an ocean of information about the latest corporate-learning trends and technologies can steal valuable time away from organizational leaders pursuing their core mission, and may lead to decision paralysis.

Given that the risk of indecision is high—when hospital employees aren't trained adequately, patient safety suffers—it's imperative that healthcare organizations cut through the clutter and chart a clear path forward today.

Four simple steps to structuring a framework for success and future-proofing your learning strategy:

1

Identify specific areas of training opportunity

The stakes are high in healthcare. Effectively training (and retaining) employees is the key to improving patient outcomes—and requires clarity around both the areas of risk and the opportunities for growth.

2

Focus on core competencies

Deconstructing existing training content and reconstructing it as core competencies can empower organizations to employ the mutually beneficial approach of competency-based education.

3

Create engaging experiences

Develop a comprehensive program that includes a mix of multimedia, microlearning, and in-person activities. E-learning solutions should serve as complements to—not replacements of—in-person engagement activities.

4

Choose a partner—not a piece of technology

When evaluating solutions, consider the benefit of leveraging a partner that not only offers leading-edge technology, but also understands the intricacies of learning and your industry.



A successful learning strategy must not only address today's needs but also scale for those of tomorrow.

Working with an experienced partner who offers a comprehensive solution, understands the business of learning, and demonstrates a commitment to customer service frees up L&D leaders to focus on their core mission: training and retaining a productive workforce.

Blackboard can help

The task of assessing your corporate L&D program and strategizing the next steps to take it into the new millennium can be overwhelming. But with the right partner, it doesn't have to be.

For more than 20 years, Blackboard has pioneered the way learning is delivered, from K-12 to higher education to the business world. We have set the standard by which 100 million individuals learn today—including those students who will likely become your prospective applicants tomorrow.

Blackboard understands the unique training needs of businesses, supporting more than 1,600 corporate, healthcare, and government clients and 10 million employees worldwide. We can help you bridge any gaps in design and development, and enable you to deliver effective content that will have a direct impact on your organization.

Learn more: [Blackboard.com/business](https://blackboard.com/business)

Additional resources:

6 golden rules to training health industry employees [e-book]

OneBlood turns complex merger into a training coup [case study]

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services strengthen training with Blackboard Learn [blog]

Training technology: learn, grow or become obsolete [webinar]

20 essential questions to drive organizational learning [e-book]