How to Deliver Compliance Training
that is Strategic, Engaging and Scalable

2021

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Introduction

Despite its importance, compliance training is often less engaging than other types of learning.

Lacking the right technology, tracking and management, it can be time-consuming and unscalable.

So, with all the urgent learning needs that employers have — upskilling, reskilling, leadership development, sales training, etc. — delivering compliance training is still the highest priority, according to Brandon Hall Group research.

Organizations must meet federal, state and local regulations as well as internal policies and industry best practices. If they don't and are found in non-compliance, the organization can face stiff fines. For egregious violations, employees could be put on forced leave — and business units, locations or the entire business could be shut down. Even if non-compliant organizations are not flagged via external audits, quality of service could suffer and employees or customers could be exposed to serious health and safety conditions.

In this eBook, Brandon Hall Group provides research-based recommendations on how organizations can make Compliance Training as compelling as it is important and help enterprises manage compliance at scale.

Current State

Compliance affects just about every single organization, regardless of size, industry or geography. It ranges from something as simple as an employee handbook to complex legal and financial regulations.

Figure 1: What Are Your Organization's Top Learning & Development Priorities?

62%
Compliance training

58%
Job-specific technical skills

47%
Leadership development

36%
Development of high-potential employees

35%
Product and services knowledge

Source: Brandon Hall Group Optimizing Learning to Drive Performance Study

Organizations clearly understand compliance training's importance — in essence, it is an insurance policy. When compliance discrepancies occur, regulators will want to know two things:

1 What process did your company have in place to prevent discrepancies before they occurred?

2 What did you do once you realized that you had a problem? If you can demonstrate that you have an effective compliance program in place, chances are that potential fines or sanctions will be reduced.

Although most types of learning are quickly evolving in pursuit of improved individual and organizational performance, compliance training remains relatively static.

Complexities

Most organizations still tend to think of compliance as a necessary evil or a "check-the-box" exercise. Regarding design and delivery, compliance training gets nowhere near the attention as Leadership Development does — despite being a higher priority (See Figure 1). Companies should treat compliance training as the bigger priority it is.

COMPLIANCE REALITIES	COMPLIANCE OPPORTUNITIES

❯ Only the negative impacts are seen
❯ Arguably gets the least attention
❯ Outdated content/material
❯ Significant costs of doing it poorly:
   ❯ Fines   ❯ Accidents
   ❯ Lawsuits ❯ Slowdowns
	❯ Typically the first learning experience
	❯ Typically the most common learning experience
	❯ Hours often mandated

Source: Brandon Hall Group Research

Compliance Training is typically the first learning experience employees have with an organization, which can impact their opinion of the employer and their engagement and commitment to their jobs. It is also the one type of training that impacts the most employees, and time spent in compliance training is often mandated. This should be driving organizations to create new, better and more impactful compliance training experiences, rather than relying on outdated content and courses.

Making matters more challenging is that more than 40% of compliance training is still managed manually or semi-manually. This type of tracking isn't scalable and is basically guesswork.
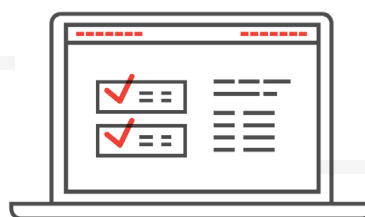
Consequences

Only 34% of companies report that their compliance training efforts are effective, according to Brandon Hall Group research.

When it comes to compliance, "somewhat effective" is essentially the same as "not effective." In other words, two-thirds of companies fall short of their compliance training expectations. The reasons most-often cited were that the training is:

> Difficult to access

> Not relevant to their work

> Not available on mobile devices

> Did not engage them through videos, scenarios

> Did not enable collaboration with peers

While other forms of training may sometimes show similar effectiveness results, the outcomes are much more serious for compliance. This is evidenced by the fact that only 0% of companies say they are fully prepared for a compliance audit. It's arguable that if a company is not fully prepared, it is not prepared at all. When it comes to an audit, a company is either compliant or not. There is no gray area.

Critical Questions

- What are your organization's compliance requirements?

- How do you track compliance status across roles, departments, business units and locations?

- How do you encourage employees to take compliance courses?

- What are the risks of non-compliance to your organization?

Brandon Hall Group POV
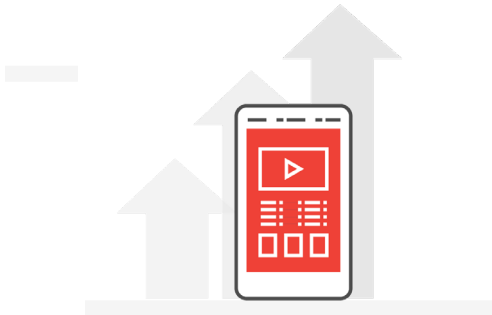
Organizations must upgrade their approach to compliance training.

Here are three high-level recommendations for success.

Make Compliance Strategic

Many organizations still approach compliance training as a transaction — learning aimed at avoiding punishment (e.g., fines, sanctions, etc.). While they may seek ways to strengthen the link between learning and performance in other areas of learning, many companies still feel there is no connection between compliance and the business.

Employers must create a learning experience that makes compliance easy to access and engaging to complete. The technology should include email and app notifications about compliance training and tools that put the training on learners' calendars and reminds them. The training should be available on mobile devices. The technology should make it easy for learners to play videos or use PDFs, PowerPoints, SCORM and AICC-compliance packages within a single player without having to download any plugins. This is strategic because it makes a compelling case to take the training and removes barriers for scheduling and accessing.

TRANSACTIONAL COMPLIANCE	STRATEGIC COMPLIANCE
› Driven by fines/ punishment › Checking the boxes › No connection to the business › Not seen as development	› Driven by business › Defines an employer of choice › Improves engagement › Risk mitigation

Source: Brandon Hall Group Research

A Health Care Technology Company

For example, a health care technology company created a new code of conduct after a series of mergers and acquisitions. It struggled to get employees to complete mandated training, which was essentially an online manual with an eLearning component. The company considered this training as critical. Rather than disciplining employees and sticking to their original learning design, the company:

❯ Held a series of focus groups to gather feedback on the training and ideas for improvement.

❯ Sought input on how to redesign the training through online discussion boards.

❯ Provided email notification and calendaring of compliance training.

THE RESULT

The code of conduct learning program is structured around the company's vision and five values, so learners:

❯ **Respond** to the types of situations that pertain to each section of the code of conduct.

❯ **Interact** with video scenarios realistic to the work they do.

Percentage of employees not completing training was **reduced by 15%**.

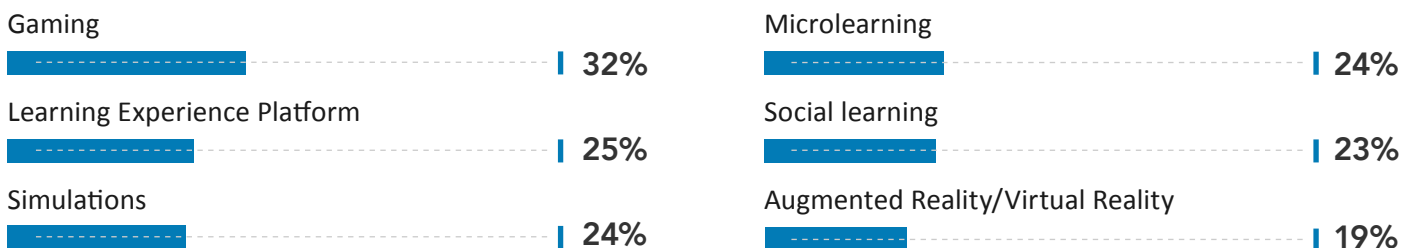Seat time was **reduced by more than 50%** from the previous training.

Make Compliance Training More Engaging

Compliance training must be as compelling as any other type of learning:

Contextual

Tailor the learning by role, location and development path

Small

Short videos, small chunks of content

Mobile

Available anytime, on any device, at the moment of need

Social

Create opportunities for peer-to-peer discussions and learner-created content based on doing their jobs well while also staying safe and compliant

After years of inaction, more organizations are ready to take steps to make learning more engaging in 2021. That should include compliance training.

Figure 2: Which Technologies Is Your Employer Mostly Likely to Add in Next 1-2 Years?

Gaming — 32%

Learning Experience Platform — 25%

Simulations — 24%

Microlearning — 24%

Social learning — 23%

Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality — 19%

Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Benchmarking Study

A Fortune 100 Insurance Company

A Fortune 100 insurance company wanted to get more than 30,000 employees to give active attention to cybersecurity training to drive behavior change.

It wanted to focus on five key behaviors to mitigate cybersecurity risks.

To attract and engage learners (and capitalize on the then-popularity of the *Games of Thrones* television show), the program was a game centered around medieval characters misplaced in modern-day corporate America. These characters provided the hook to navigate through five kingdoms:

> **Phisher's Landing** — Understand and respond to phishing attempts.

> **Password Run** — Use strong passwords.

> **The Data Keep** — Identify, manage and share confidential data securely.

> **The Workspace Expanse** — Maintain a clean and secure workspace.

> **Beyond the Network** — Keep off-site tools and information secure.

To build interest, a promotional "trailer" introduced the key characters, who were employees with backgrounds in acting. From the opening sequence (a 3D animation) to the first task (choosing a "game name" such as "John the Defender" or "Tracey the Brave"), employees were immediately engaged.

Within each kingdom, employees viewed short courses and completed an interactive "quest." Learners earned "sigils" (badges) for each kingdom they completed and could earn recognition for special achievements. For example, accessing supplemental learning materials could earn them the rank of "Master Scholar."

THE IMPACT

Of 1,617 survey respondents, **78% rated the training at five stars**, the highest rating for any kind of training in this company.

Completion rates were higher and faster than expected. Initially, the HR department was concerned that the seat time of 90 minutes would be too long and would impact completion. Contrary to expectations, employees did complete it fully and quickly.

External benchmarking for cybersecurity training put this company in the **89th percentile for secure behavior** among participants in the ranking.
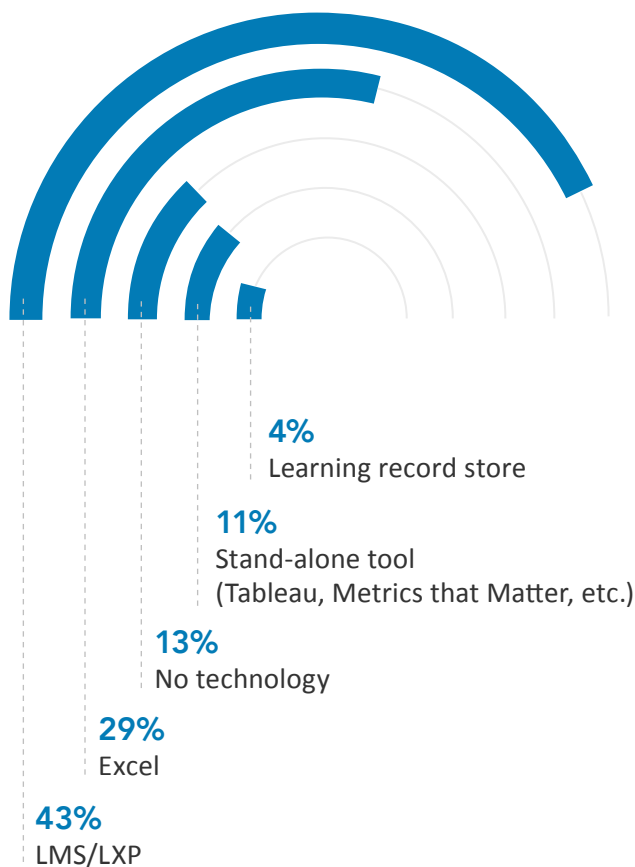
Manage Compliance Training at Scale

Tracking compliance is not nearly as automated as it should be. Almost 30% of organizations, for example, still use Excel, according to Brandon Hall Group's *Learning Measurement Study*. Another 13% are not even that advanced.

Manual — and even semi-automated — tracking is painful, time-consuming and unscalable. It requires HR and compliance managers to constantly check in and follow up with employees who have not completed the required courses.

Everyone should be able to manage compliance training at scale. A lack of visibility — or even inefficiency of visibility — leads to errors and quality of service suffers when policies and regulations are not followed. For many, managing the compliance training program for an entire organization is a full-time job that takes resources away from other critical HR duties without doing a very good job of maintaining compliance status. These problems can be solved through four elements:

Figure 3: How Organizations Track Learning

4%
Learning record store

11%
Stand-alone tool
(Tableau, Metrics that Matter, etc.)

13%
No technology

29%
Excel

43%
LMS/LXP

Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Measurement Study

Key Elements to Managing Compliance Training at Scale

Visibility

Holistic view of the entire organization's compliance state and the ability to drill-down to business units, departments, managers and individual employees.
1

Insights

Out-of-the-box analytics and data warehousing lead to actionable information activity.
2

Programmatic

Managed by HR, driven by business unit managers.
3

Audits

Powerful reporting gives insight into multilevel compliance status and information about how to reclaim compliance status.
4

More specifically:

Stakeholders should be able to view compliance status across the organization and drill-down to view business units, departments, locations and individual employees' progress and performance against their assigned training. Employees should automatically be sent notifications of required courses and guided through an intuitive and engaging learning experience delivered across devices and browsers.

The tracking should be easy to set up, manage and scale as the organization grows, keep learners compliant and stay audit-ready with multidimensional report suites.


Business unit managers should be able to manage course deadlines and certifications, automatically reassigning them upon expiration to keep learners aware of upcoming courses. Employees out of compliance for their roles should be nudged with notifications — all with the goal of ensuring everyone is up to speed on the compliance training requirements.

Key Takeaways

❯ **Because the business impact of non-compliance can be severe**, compliance training needs to be just as performance-driven as any other type of learning.

❯ **Compliance needs the same level of innovation in design** — including gaming, simulation and other modalities requiring the latest technology — to drive learner engagement.

❯ **Because the consequences are high**, compliance training needs to be tracked and managed as efficiently as possible, using leading-edge technology.

❯ **The stakes for compliance are high and organizations must always be ready for audits**. Remember that "somewhat prepared" for audits and compliance training that is "somewhat effective" really means completely you're unprepared and your programs are completely ineffective. There are no gray areas.

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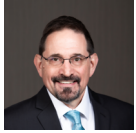
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