

Everything you need to know about microlearning

The business leader's guide to changing employee behavior, boosting overall performance, and achieving transformational results



Welcome to Everything you need to know about microlearning, your go-to resource for all the ins and outs of this revolutionary strategy that has the power to completely transform your business.

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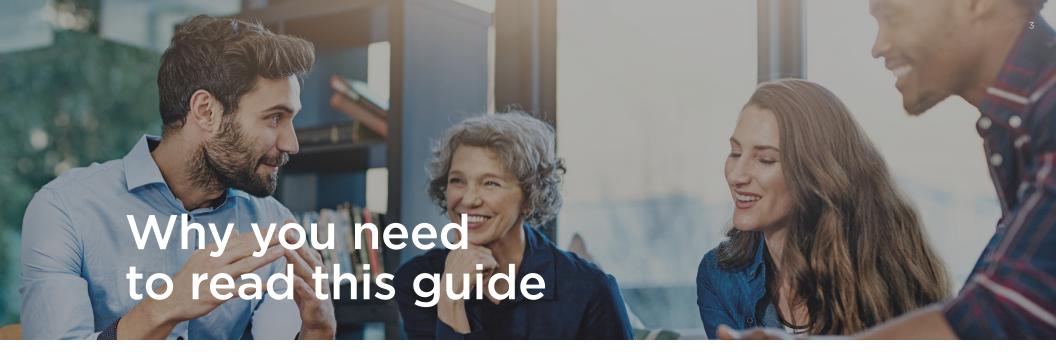
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Everyone's buzzing about microlearning these days. But, while the concept's all the rage, there's no standard definition. This means the conversation is getting pretty convoluted. After all, depending on who's doing the talking, you get a different explanation. And that's just diluting the power of this transformational business strategy.

We want to help you cut through the noise once and for all. So, we've created a comprehensive resource on this topic that you can use as your go-to whenever you need to set the record straight.

### In a nutshell, this eBook is your field guide for demystifying microlearning. It includes all the info you need to:

- Understand the fundamental principles of microlearning
- Build employee knowledge and change employee behavior to get results
- Convince key stakeholders that microlearning is the right strategy
- Apply a simple framework to build powerful microlearning content
- Evaluate a microlearning solution
- Implement microlearning in your own organization



Whether you're an experienced learning practitioner looking to up your game or a business professional trying to solve a critical operational problem, here is everything you need to know about microlearning!

## CHAPTER 1: Microlearning myth busters



First thing's first. Before answering the question, "What is microlearning?", let's get on the same page about what microlearning is NOT.

Here are the 7 most common myths we've captured—from individuals and organizations alike—that mess with the true definition of microlearning.

#### Myth #1

#### Microlearning is a brand new idea

Not true. In fact, it's been around a long time. It got its start in cognitive science. And, in recent years, it's just been labeled differently. (Do the terms "bite-sized" or "chunked" sound familiar?)

#### Myth #2

#### Microlearning is defined only by its duration

Nope. While it's obvious that microlearning content should be short, the duration isn't as important as the focus. Frankly, traditional training content includes a lot of fluff. But microlearning is the opposite. It hones in on the most important info employees need to know to change their behavior and reach a specific goal.

#### Myth #3

#### Microlearning is only video

Nix that. With all the misinformation out there, we get why some people think this. But the truth is video isn't the only content format that can be used in microlearning. Other formats work too. And, by the way, simply breaking up one long video into a series of short ones isn't microlearning either. (More on that later).

#### Myth #4

#### Microlearning only works for simple topics

Negative. It doesn't matter whether the content is cut and dry or more of a brain-bender, microlearning can work for any topic. You just need to use it in the right way, at the right time.

#### Myth #5

### Microlearning is a replacement for other types of training

Thumbs down. Microlearning isn't an "all-ornothing" proposition. While it might replace some of your existing approaches, think of it as part of your toolkit. It's meant to fit into your overall training strategy to help you maximize business results.

#### Myth #6

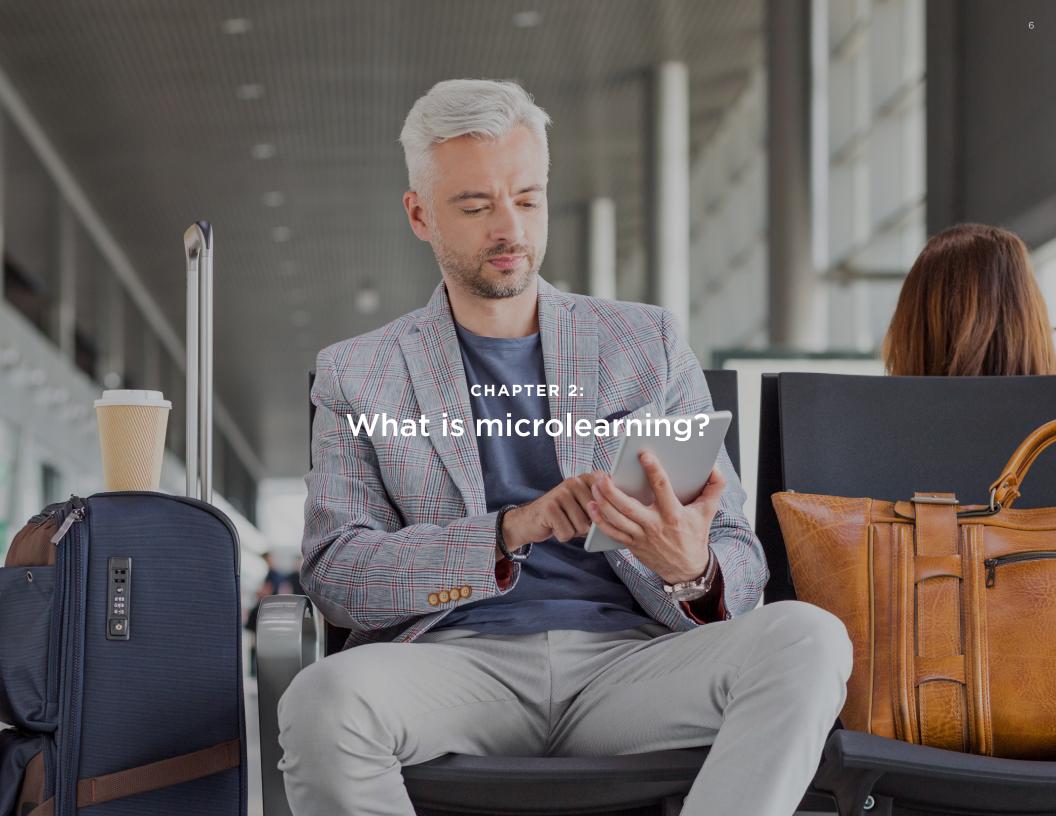
#### Microlearning must be self-directed

Nah-uh. While it can be, it doesn't have to be. The most effective microlearning combines push and pull training. This means employees receive certain content they must learn, but are empowered to access info for themselves as well—whenever and wherever they need it.

#### Myth #7

#### Microlearning is only for millennials

No. It doesn't matter if you're 22 or 62 (or any age in between) microlearning meets the unique needs of any employee—regardless of demographics. In fact, when done right, it's proven to help everyone learn and remember more.

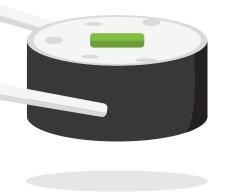




Ask 10 people to define microlearning and you'll likely get back 10 different responses. That's why we put together an official microlearning definition you can use to explain the concept to anyone who's interested. Here it is:

Microlearning is an approach to training that delivers content in short, focused bites. To be effective, microlearning must fit naturally into the daily workflow, engage employees in voluntary participation, be based in brain science (how people actually learn), adapt continually to ingrain the knowledge employees need to be successful, and ultimately drive behaviors that impact specific business results.

Sounds simple enough, right?
Well, let's not get ahead ourselves.
We wouldn't need this guide if
this definition was enough. To help
you understand the full context
behind these words, we're going
to share the fundamentals behind
this transformational approach.





# 6 MICROLEARNING fundamentals

While this definition of microlearning is short and sweet, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. If you want to implement a true microlearning strategy that positions everyone—from the mailroom to the boardroom—for success, then it must (and we mean must) include these 6 fundamentals:

#### 1. A clear business objective

We definitely don't want to play favorites but, out of all the fundamentals we mention, this one tops the list. There's no getting around it. If you can't identify a clear, measureable business objective you want to achieve, then just stop right here. There's really no point in investing in a microlearning approach. Microlearning is all about driving business results. So, before you do anything, you've got to figure out what your goals are—period. Need a few examples of clear, measurable business objectives? Here's what we mean:

BOOST CUSTOMER
SERVICE SCORES BY 50%

INCREASE PRODUCT SALES BY 25% DECREASE SAFETY INCIDENTS BY 10%

#### 2. Desired employee knowledge and behavior

After you know what your goals are, it's time to get into the nitty-gritty details. You've got to determine the kinds of information your employees need to know and the types of job actions they need to perform in order to achieve your objectives. This is no time to be wishy washy. You've got to document specifics. Here's what we mean:

If your goal is to decrease safety incidents by 10%, figure out what employees need to know and do to hit this target. Maybe ladder accidents are on the rise. If so, employees would need to learn things like:

HOW TO INSPECT A LADDER
TO ENSURE IT IS SAFE TO USE

PROPER STEPS FOR CLIMBING A LADDER

WHICH LADDERS TO USE IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

#### 3. Scientifically proven brain hacks

Let's be honest—If employees can't remember their training or how to apply it on the job, it's a waste. That's where brain hacking comes in.

Scientists have been digging in to how the brain works for years. And they've come up with a few proven techniques to help make information stick. Ever heard of the forgetting curve? This study shows that if you don't reinforce what you learn, you forget 90% of it within 30 days. That's why true microlearning relies on two things: Exposing employees to



# 6 fundamentals CONT ...

training content continuously and using the following 3 neuroscience techniques to boost memory long term:



#### **SPACED REPETITION:**

Practicing a new topic repeatedly over increased periods of time to deepen memory



#### RETRIEVAL PRACTICE:

Using questions to strengthen memory by forcing the brain to recall information



#### CONFIDENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT:

Measuring an employee's expressed confidence in a topic to improve memory and self-awareness

#### 4. Anytime, anywhere access to information

No question, employees are swamped these days. They're asked to know more, do more, and deliver more—often without any added support. For frontline workers (sales associates, field service workers, delivery drivers, and material handlers) it's even worse. Taking them off the floor to sit through a bunch of training modules is a scheduling nightmare. And what manager wants to handle the fallout from lost productivity time? That's where true microlearning has the advantage. It fits training into employees' day-to-day workflow without pulling them out of their workspace. By tapping into existing tech (like mobile devices and point of sales systems), it's easy to deliver training to employees in just a few minutes each day. And, with information at their fingertips on these devices at all times, it's just as easy for them to do a quick lookup when they have a question. The result? No more guessing games when it comes to figuring out the correct actions to take on the job.



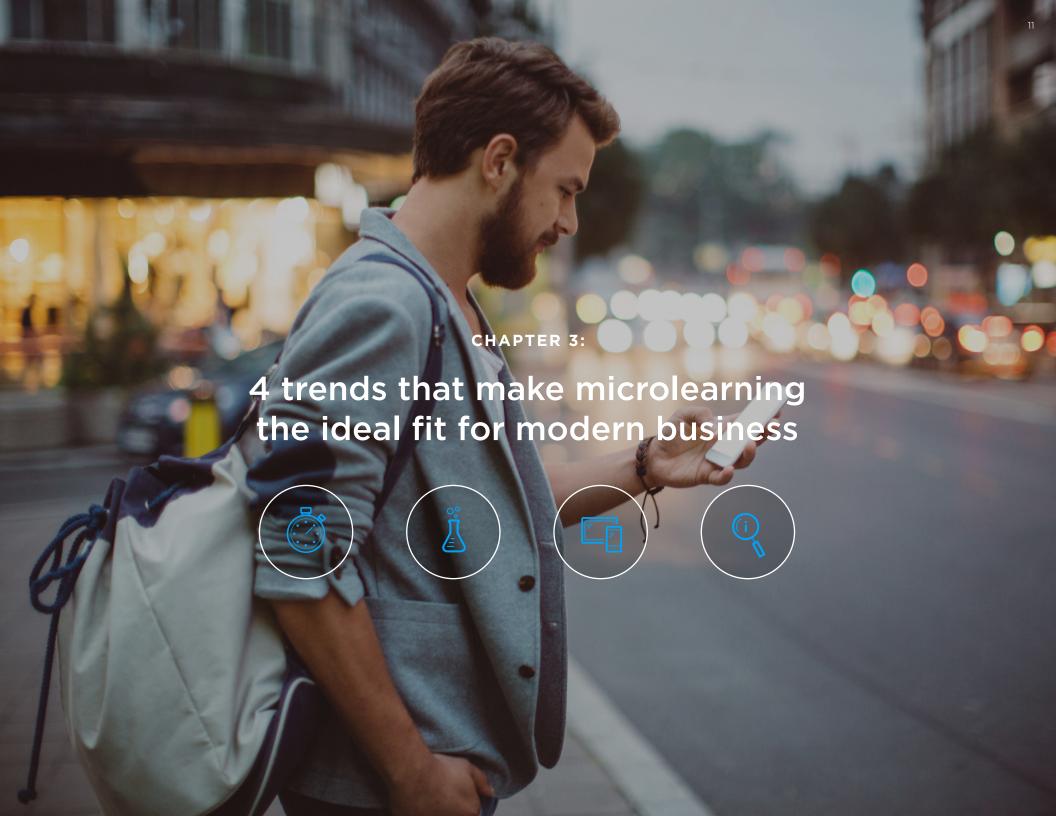
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#### 5. Content formats that fit

Imagine having to learn how to operate a complex woodworking machine. Wouldn't it be easier to watch a short video with simple pictures and narration rather than pour over a text-rich instruction manual? What if you had to troubleshoot a customer problem. Wouldn't it be easier to do a quick Google-like search to pull up a short answer, on the fly, rather than comb through an entire elearning module? This is exactly what we mean when we say the microlearning content format must fit the specific training need. If you don't provide content in the right format, it just won't work. (Side note: Just to make sure we're crystal clear, while we gave a thumbs up to video in this example, don't get the wrong idea. Simply chopping one long video into shorter pieces isn't microlearning. Otherwise, you might as well just hit the pause button every few minutes. True microlearning must incorporate all the fundamentals we're talking about).

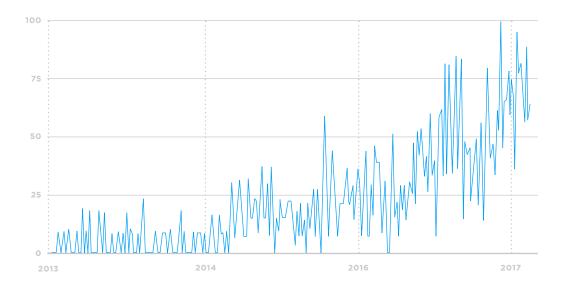
#### 6. Meaningful metrics

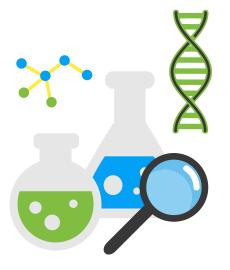
Feeling limited by test scores and course completions? Not anymore! It's time to take things up a notch. Microlearning, done right, is much more advanced. Because this approach focuses on continuous learning, employees take training multiple times a week (or even every day). This means you can collect all kinds of meaningful data points: the exact information employees know and don't know at any given time, how this knowledge connects to their ability to perform on the job, which areas of the business are at risk because employees are not taking the right actions, and so much more. And, with all this info, you can directly connect how training impacts the business objectives you outlined at the start. Not making the right progress? Better that you know sooner rather than later! With informed data, you can pinpoint trouble areas and adjust training proactively so you can hit your target as planned.



Search microlearning on Google Trends and you'll see a steady upward curve. Considering all the hype, it's not a shocker it's climbing the charts.

#### INTEREST IN MICROLEARNING OVER TIME





But, what might surprise you, is microlearning isn't a new idea. Scientists have known for years that it's easier for people to learn and remember information when it's broken down into smaller chunks. So, why is it the 'in' thing right now? Well, we think it's a combo of several important trends that have boosted its popularity status.

#### TREND #1

#### Accelerated pace of business

A product recall. A world event. A new trend. Anything can have huge repercussions in our hyperconnected world. To stay ahead, organizations must keep a finger on the pulse and be ready to morph in an instant. Employees must keep on top of changes too or risk being left behind. But, with ever-growing demands on employee time, it's nearly impossible to complete all their to-dos, let alone squeeze in time for training and development. Plus, no manager wants employees taken out of the operation for hours or days to participate in training. They'll never recoup the time. That's why microlearning just makes sense. It's agile and quick. It's proactive, not reactive. So, when it's time to change, it's easy to adjust existing content or create net new material. Plus, it fits seamlessly into the daily workflow. Employees can get up to speed fast without impacting productivity.





#### TREND #2

#### Renewed focus on brain science

Neuroscience is cool these days. After all, who doesn't want to know how to brain hack their way to excellence? And, why not? While this kind of research used to be reserved for uber smart PhDs, books like *Make it Stick, Brain Rules*, and *How We Learn* have made it easier to wrap our heads around these complex concepts. Because of this, "brain science" is now a well-known term. And business leaders are on the hunt for ways to embed these proven practices into their corporate strategies to get results. After all, it doesn't take a brain scientist to figure out why this is a smart thing to do. That's why true microlearning (which is rooted in learning science) is the perfect solution.

#### TREND #3

#### Reliance on technology

Most of us would probably go bananas without our hightech, mobile gadgets. But it wasn't that long ago when they didn't even exist. Remember when training used to be limited to the clunky computer in the back room? Surprisingly, many organizations still haven't progressed far beyond that. But now our always-on, mobile-everything environment means there's really no reason why employees shouldn't be able to quickly search the answer to a question at work, just like they do at home. Plus, when they're already using internetenabled equipment—like point of sale systems, package tracking devices, or a range of other tools—it's easy for employees to use these devices to take a few minutes of training every day. Another great argument for microlearning!





#### TREND #4

#### Increased employee expectations

Have a question when you're at home or on the go? Most of us just Google the answer. But at work, this isn't the typical experience. More often than not it's a struggle to locate even the most basic content—let alone the most up to date version. And for today's employees, this is well below the acceptable standard. They're just too overwhelmed, distracted, and impatient to spend hours searching multiple repositories or sitting through lengthy training sessions to get answers. These archaic formats don't make sense to them anymore. They want their work experience to mimic their personal lives. And that means immediate access to information at the moment they need it, so they don't waste time and can get on with their tasks. Since microlearning is simple, accessible and engaging, it's the perfect solution.



No doubt about it—It's easy to get caught up in the status quo. And, when this happens, we forget to question "why".

Take education, for example.
Remember your old school
days when you were stuck
to your seat, listening to your
teacher lecture for hours
on end?

This has always been the norm. So, it's no wonder we swapped the classroom for the training room when we joined the corporate ranks. But, based on what we know about the brain, this learning format doesn't make sense. We can only absorb so much. Then, we can't help but tune out. Besides this challenge, a big part of how we learn is by doing. Without the chance to practice any concepts, we simply forget the information and move on.

This is where microlearning has a leg up. When done right, employees get smarter—faster.

And they make the right choices on the job to get your organization to where it needs to go.

#### Here are 5 advantages of microlearning to help you convince your boss, it's the right move:

#### 1. Keeps the business agile

Need everyone to focus on solving a specific problem? Microlearning is the way to go. Because content is targeted to a specific business need, you can zero-in on the critical things people need to know. And, by focusing only on the essentials, you can build material much guicker and get it to employees faster too. No need to create time-consuming, lengthy modules that cover absolutely everything and anything about a topic and take forever to compile. Instead, microlearning allows you to address the issues impacting your organization in the here and now. In no time, you go from reactive to proactive and can mitigate problem areas before they become massive crises

#### 2. Ups the engagement factor

Most people want to do a good job. They want to feel valued too. By delivering only the training content employees need, they see a direct connection between what they do every day and how it impacts the business. Plus, since microlearning fits right into their regular workflow, and only takes a few minutes to complete, they embrace it rather than resent it. Who wouldn't want to work for an organization that enables every employee to succeed and respects their time in the process?

### 3. Decreases information overload and increases memory

Eyes glazing over. Heads bobbing. Mouths surrendering to huge yawns. We know you've seen it. These reactions are pretty commonplace during drawn out training events. When employees can't take in any more information, their brains just shut down. But with microlearning, employees don't have



time to get bored. The short bites of content keep them focused and alert. And because of this, they're better able to learn the information and remember it long term.

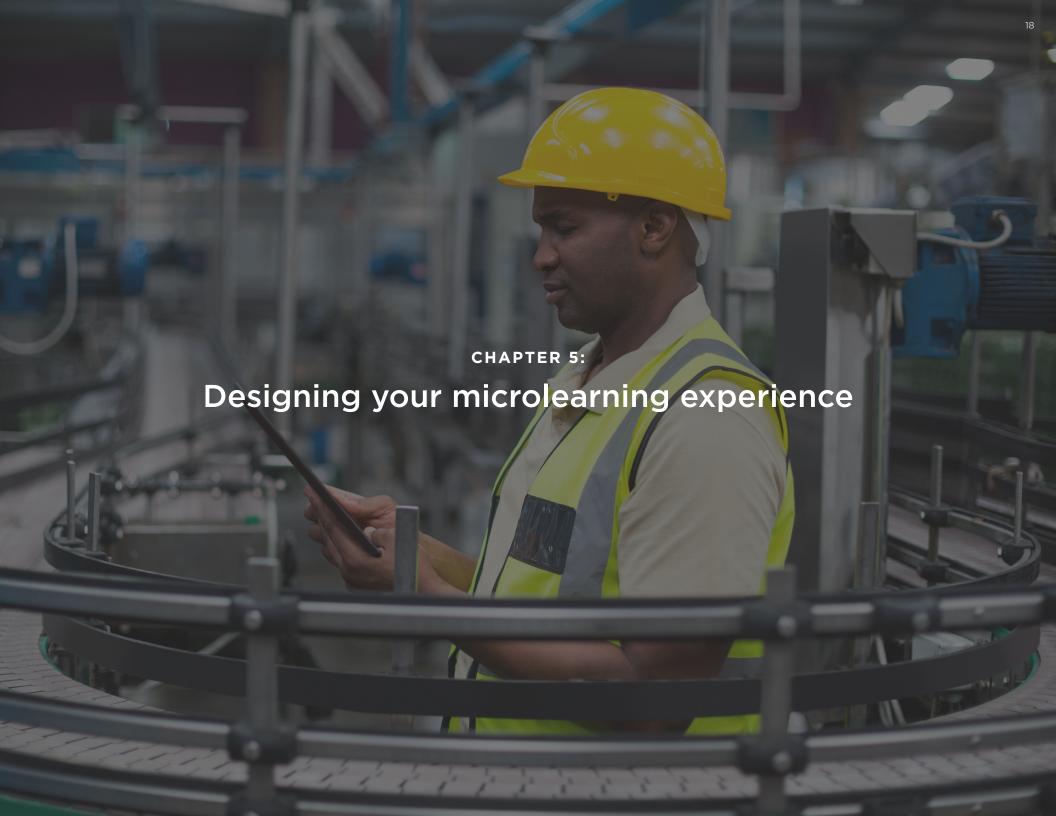
### 4. Empowers employees to make meaningful contributions

No more generic, one-size-fits all training. Because microlearning is purpose-built to target specific business problems, the content is personalzied to teach the need-to-know knowledge and behaviors required to overcome those challenges. And because microlearning allows managers to push out training to employees in minutes, while giving employees full autonomy to pull information whenever and wherever the need it, this removes any barriers when it comes to getting answers to perform at their best. (Spoiler alert! As we'll discuss later, microlearning combined with adaptive learning, also lets you automatically personalize training to each employee on an ongoing basis. There's no better way to grow expertise, close knowledge gaps, and heighten engagement long term).

### 5. Proves learning drives business results

Finally, there's a way to translate training dollars into ROI. By ditching less meaningful metrics, like test scores and completions, you can replace them with measures that matter to the C-suite. With microlearning, you start with defining a business result at the very beginning. And, because training content aligns with this goal, you can show a direct impact on increased revenue or decreased costs once employees go through the process. (Never done this before? Don't worry. We'll show you how to tie training to a specific measureable business goal when we talk about how to build microlearning content).







If you're like most organizations, you're probably stuck in a time warp—using outdated training tools and tactics that, quite frankly, aren't very effective. Long, boring elearning modules, multi-page manuals, classroom-style lectures, and other traditional techniques often induce information overload. And when the brain can't handle the volume, it goes in one ear and out the other. This means, you spend thousands of dollars on training that your employees never use. It's like throwing money away in the trash.



On top of this, training content is often all over the map. Many organizations get caught up in what we call the "spaghetti approach"— building a ton of content and throwing it at as many employees as possible just to see what sticks. At first, this might seem like the best way to cover all your "must-do" directives. But it only makes matters worse. You end up with a surplus of unnecessary content that doesn't meet any organizational objective. So, employees waste time going through mountains of material just to check a box—when they should be putting all their energy towards training that moves the needle.

#### Enter microlearning!

With microlearning, you trade place-and-time training events for a continuous learning experience. And because the approach fits neatly into the workflow, you can change behavior and boost performance throughout your employees' tenure. This doesn't mean you have to get rid of all of your existing training tactics. But, when you do push out a single event or online module, you need to make sure you include the 6 microlearning fundamentals. It's only with support like knowledge reinforcement and on-demand resources that you'll ensure these experiences are impactful.

So, what's the right way to integrate microlearning into your organization?
We're glad you asked.
While there's no magic bullet, we do have a few tips.

But just keep in mind that every organization needs to figure out how to craft the best microlearning experience to meet its unique needs.



Here's a diagram to help you visualize a continuous learning experience.

At the center, of course, is the employee. You need to use a combo of microlearning tactics to instill knowledge, change behavior and reinforce training continuously. Besides this, it's essential to compliment these tactics with adaptive learning and engagement techniques that personalize the learning experience, such as ongoing performance feedback, coaching and individual motivators like points or rewards.

#### Balance push and pull

The foundation of the experience is the balance between push and pull. Training should never be just about pushing out information to employees. It should also allow them to pull info when they need it to drive their ongoing learning experience. After all, learning doesn't happen in isolation. It happens as we live out activities every single day.

#### Foster continuous learning

On the left, we show all the other types of formal training that you may choose to

continue within your own environment, like courses, modules, and other training events. The caveat is that these need to be combined with the microlearning tactics in the middle to drive ongoing learning that is targeted at achieving a specific result.

#### Focus on results

Speaking of results, on the right we see the goals—the tangible, measurable outcomes the training is designed to achieve. Because microlearning is meant to be a continuous experience, it provides advanced measurement and analytics opportunities. By continuously assessing what people know and do on the job, you can determine the impact of your training programs and make proactive adjustments along the way. And, because the experience is targeted to the individual employee's specific needs, the value is clear. Employees are motivated to engage in learning voluntarily—without being chased by a manager or administrator.

#### Microlearning at work

Still not quite sure how to use microlearning in your own organization?

Here are some real-world examples that describe how microlearning can fit seamlessly into an employee's already jam-packed day—no matter the role or industry:



#### RETAIL:

In a retail store, associates can access a microlearning platform right after they clock in. For 3 to 5 minutes during their shift, they can answer reinforcement questions on topics that are critical to their role and focus on information they need to perform their job well.



#### PROFESSIONAL SALES:

Before their next meeting, salespeople can complete a quick product refresher via their microlearning app.

This gives them the confidence they need to nail the meeting and win the deal.



#### **GROCERY:**

In a grocery store, employees can access on-demand job aids at any time through their microlearning platform. This gives them the info they need to prepare food items properly, while complying with safety standards.



#### WAREHOUSE:

In a warehouse, workers can log in to a microlearning platform while they wait for their forklift battery to recharge. It only takes about 5 minutes to complete their required certifications.

But this short training burst helps keep critical information top of mind.



If you want to learn more about how well-known organizations are creating continuous learning experiences with microlearning, check out the stories (later on in this guide).



Creating strategy is as big ask. So we're not about to pretend it's as easy as flipping a switch.

Making the move from once-in-awhile, place-and-time training to a continuous learning experience doesn't happen overnight.

We know that you've got to get a lot of buy-in and do a lot of planning before you can make this transition work.



The good news is that the microlearning fundamentals we talked about earlier are designed with these challenges in mind. In fact, just like the word "micro" suggests, you can break down this effort into manageable chunks so it's easier to make steady progress. If you follow our advice, you'll be able to prove the value of this approach in no time. And, no one will ever want to go back to the way things were.

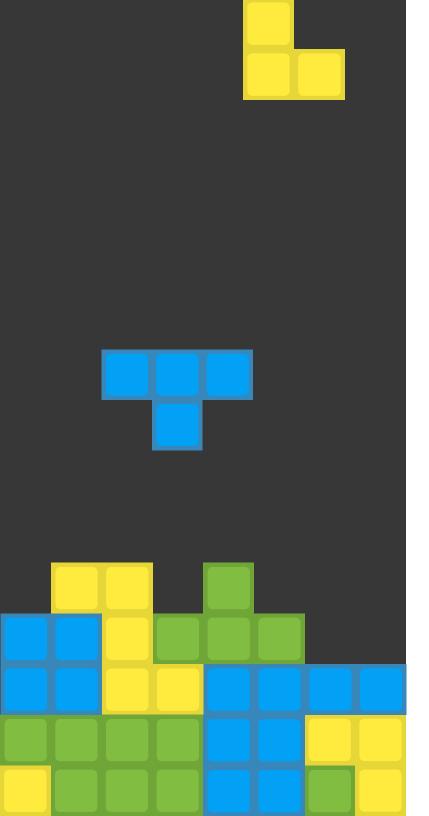
Here's what we recommend you do to kick start your transformation so you can implement a successful microlearning strategy:



#### Start building a business case

Remember all those microlearning misconceptions we highlighted earlier? Well, you'll need to help key stakeholders separate fact from fiction too. To build a strong case, you'll need to put forth a solid argument.

Take advantage of existing content from external vendors and partners that specialize in the true way to approach microlearning. Reach out to peers to pick their brains about how they implemented microlearning successfully in their own organizations. And gather some third-party proof points to demonstrate that this is a viable strategy. (Steal our customer stories if you like). This is the only way you'll be able to convince the right stakeholders to get on board.





### Get your peers and key stakeholders talking

Microlearning won't work unless everyone is all in. To get buy-in, you need to prove that this new approach is going to save time, save money and, ultimately, increase overall business success. Since most people have gotten used to status quo training techniques, you'll need to help shift their mindset. Pass around this guide or pull out key points and examples to get people thinking about ways microlearning could work in your organization. Then, continue to keep the conversation going. Bring up key business challenges and talk through how microlearning could help solve them. If you get key stakeholders in "microlearning mode" early on, you'll have a better chance of winning their support when you're ready to present your grand strategy.



### Take a hard look at existing content and tactics

Switching to a microlearning approach doesn't mean you have to start from scratch. That said,

it's important to take a hard look at the training content, tools and technology you're currently using. Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions. And don't be afraid to be purge. Just because something cost a lot of money to create way back when doesn't mean it is worth keeping. Staying laser-focused on your mission to achieve business results through a targeted microlearning approach will help you make the right decisions.



### Get up close and personal with your audience

The biggest piece of advice given to every marketer is: know your audience. The same goes for microlearning. Since the point of this approach is to help employees change their behavior to solve business problems, the better you understand their day-to-day job requirements and challenges, the more successful your microlearning strategy will be. Chat with employees to get the inside scoop on where they need help, the devices they already use that could house a microlearning app, the content formats they could consume most easily on the job, and the additional motivators that could boost participation.





### Break down the process into micro-sized steps

Like any big project, you can't tackle everything at once. Instead of thinking that you must do a complete 360° turn, focus on one thing at a time. Remember, microlearning isn't about taking all the courses out of your LMS and breaking them into chunks. Microlearning is about creating training that will drive specific business results. So, to start, pick a topic—the one that targets the most important challenge facing your organization and can be measured. Then, document how you would apply microlearning fundamentals to address this problem. If you want to continue using some more traditional training tactics alongside this approach, go for it. Just make sure they add value instead of fluff. Once you've put microlearning into practice for one business scenario, you'll have a proof of concept you can use to persuade key stakeholders to expand this initiative. By taking baby steps, you'll also slowly introduce employees to this new method of training and support so you can gradually shift their mindset as well.

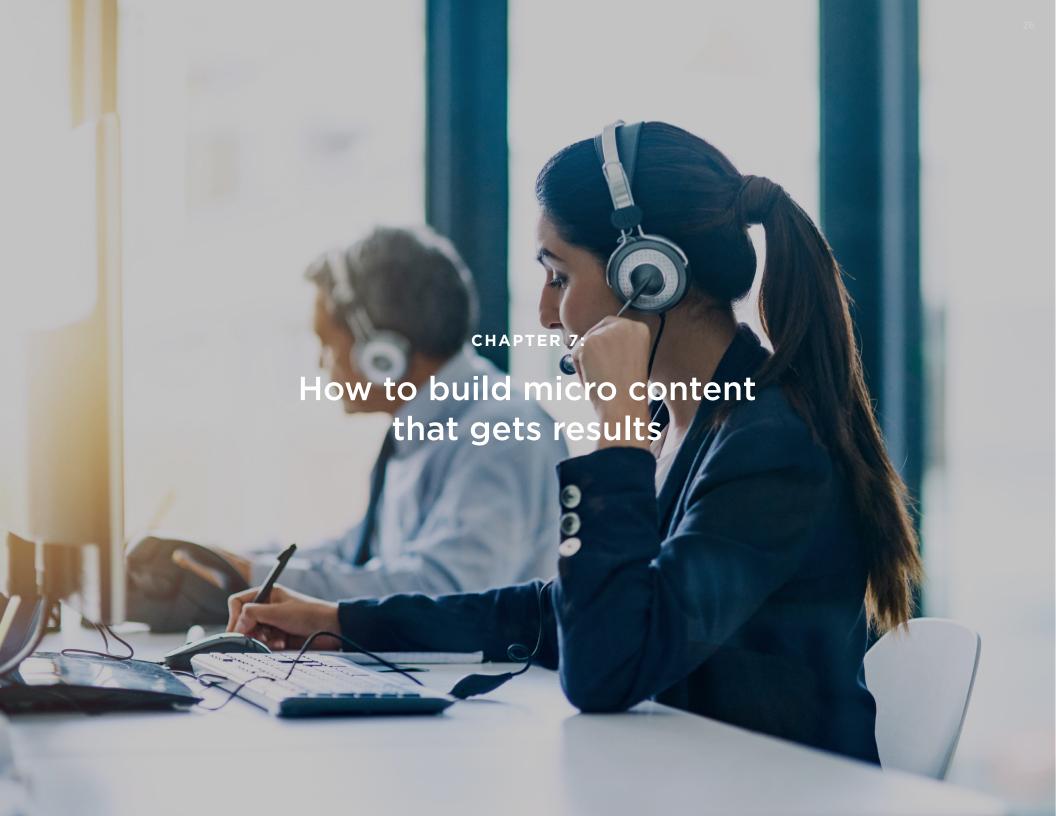


### Build your resource and communications plans

Before you can dive right in and create a bunch of micro content, you need to figure out the PPT: the right people, processes, and technology to make this business transformation successful. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who will need to be involved?
- Who will quarterback the project?
- How many subject matter experts will be needed to build content?
- Is outsourcing content or leveraging thrid-party content an option?
- How many employees will receive microlearning?
- How will this strategy be communicated to those involved as well as other key stakeholders?
- How will you drum up employee interest and participation?
- What tools will be required to deploy this content and ensure employees can access it?

These questions and more are key to ensuring you're prepared to use microlearning to solve business problems quickly and prove this strategy works.



Before we get into the "how", let's make sure we're clear on the "what".

Remember what we said before? Microlearning content is not about breaking up one long course or one long video into a bunch of shorter segments. Why? Well, because this just means you've sliced and diced some words, pictures, and text without getting at the heart of what the content is meant to achieve.

The biggest mistake people make in creating any type of training content is to build the content first. This doesn't make any sense. What good is a course or a video if it doesn't have a specific purpose? If it can't change employee behavior to move the needle in the right direction, then there's no point.

#### To create effective micro content, you need to follow a results-driven approach:





#### 1. Start with a measurable business objective

Before tapping any fingers on your keyboard, you need to figure out your goal. What business problem do you need to solve? How will you measure the results? By taking time to think through this first, you'll be sure to create content that focuses on solving a specific business challenge.

Let's say creating a safety culture is an important initiative at your organization. This category is too big to tackle with a single piece of micro content, so you need to get down to specifics. Start by asking more questions. For example, find out which safety incidents have caused this issue to become a top priority? Once you get more facts, pull out the biggest problem that can be measured, so you can work on creating one piece of micro content at a time.

In this case, maybe you uncovered that back injuries make up the bulk of safety incidents at your organization. So, your measurable business objective would be: **Reduce back injuries by 80%.** 



#### 2. Pinpoint the required behaviors

The next thing you need to figure out is what employees need to do to achieve the objective you identified. Put on your journalist hat again and ask more questions. Find out what specific actions employees need to take to remain safe at work. The more precise you can get, the higher quality your content will be. And you'll be more likely to achieve success when teaching employees how to change their behavior.

Let's return to our safety example. You might find out that employees must perform the following actions to reduce back injuries when lifting:

- Keep elbows tucked in
- · Bend from the knees
- Avoid twisting your back

This means your content should cover all of those topics.

#### MICROLEARNING CONTENT IDEAS

Want some other ideas for how you can create engaging micro content? Just remember to match the content format with the needs of your employees. As long as you produce content that helps them build the right knowledge and take the right actions on the job, you'll see results in no time.

#### Deliver micro content via:

- Video
- Questions
- Interactive modules
- Short articles
- Job aids

#### Reinforce microlearning with:

- Questions
- Refresher summaries
- Modules/videos
- Email newsletters
- Practice exercises
- Flashcards
- Reflection activities



#### 3. Establish must-have knowledge

After you've established the desired behaviors essential for achieving your objective, you need figure out what employees need to know to demonstrate these behaviors. By separating need-to-know from the nice-to-know training content, you can keep your focus tight. And you'll be sure to provide employees with only the knowledge that's critical to for changing their on-the-job behavior. This doesn't mean you can never share nice-to-know details to provide additional context. But this isn't the place. Make this bonus content available on demand, so employees can grab it later on if they want to explore this topic in greater detail.

If we go back to our safety example again, we would have uncovered that employees need to know the following information for safe lifting in order to reduce back injuries:

- · Steps required to execute a safe lift
- Improper vs. proper lifting techniques



#### 4. Build your microlearning content

Now that you've done all your prep work, you're ready to create some micro content. Don't default to putting together a traditional course. Think about the content formats that will best communicate the information. Remember your goal is to change employee behavior so you can achieve your result.

If we keep our safety example in mind, here's some sample micro content that would make sense for training employees on how to lift safely:

- · 3-minute video providing an overview of safe lifting techniques
- · Reinforcement questions to drive long-term retention of this knowledge
- · Job aid with step-by-step reminders that can be accessed on demand

#### MICROLEARNING CONTENT IDEAS cont.

### Allow employees to pull microlearning on-demand from:

- Blog posts
- Demonstration videos
- Articles
- Job aids
- Operational guidelines

### Provide additional performance support through:

- Designated subject matter expert lists
- Online discussion forums
- Employee help telephone lines/emails
- Enterprise social media platforms
- Help desk hours
- Question and answer applications

A closer look at **microlearning** in action

Don't just take our word for it. Check out the results for yourself!

Some of the world's leading organizations are definitely doing microlearning right. And it's paying off in droves. We know because we've seen the results firsthand. They're better able to engage their employees, build their expertise, and drive their performance to solve some of their most critical business challenges—like reducing onboarding time, boosting sales, increasing compliance, decreasing safety incidents—the list goes on and on!

Check out this handful of stories from A-list brands that prove microlearning really works!



#### AT HOME

Primary business challenge: ramping up associate knowledge faster to reduce onboarding time



#### **BRITISH TELECOM**

Primary business challenge: improving call center rep knowledge to reduce repeat calls and lower call handling times



#### MERCK

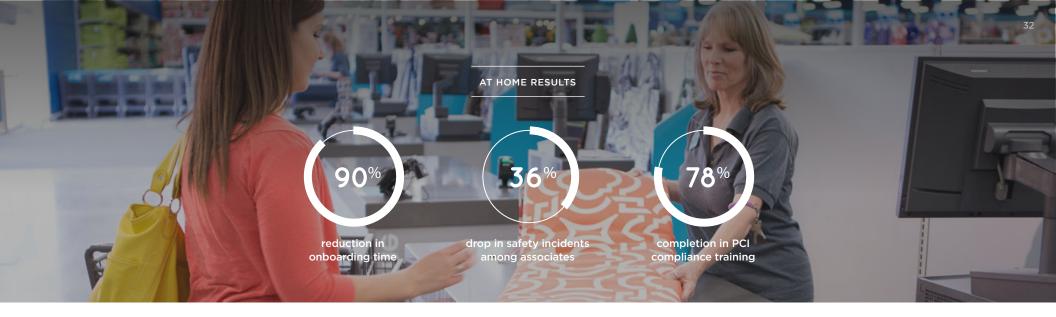
Primary business challenge: increasing worker safety knowledge and awareness to reduce safety incidents in the manufacturing environment



#### **ETHICON**

(a Johnson & Johnson company)

Primary business challenge: increasing professional sales rep product knowledge/confidence to increase sales





No one would have ever imagined a bankrupt Garden Ridge Pottery retailer would transform into thriving home décor brand, At Home. But, with the birth of At Home, the organization completely reinvented itself in less than 24 months and became one of the top retailers in the US.

With the swift establishment of more than 100 At Home stores across 28 states, and plans for continued rapid expansion, there was an immediate need to get more than 3,000 employees trained quickly. Even though many retailers were implementing learning management systems (LMSs) to train their associates, At Home knew it needed a more modern training solution that was lean, scalable, and effective. The LMS wasn't any of those things. So, the company chose Axonify to become the backbone of its entire training process.

With the Axonify Microlearning Platform, At Home can train 2,500 associates—with no field support—in 4 weeks, which would have previously taken 6 months. (A 90% reduction in onboarding time). The company has also achieved significant improvements in safety and compliance: Axonify has contributed to a 36% drop in safety incidents among associates who are active on the platform, and within 2 weeks of pushing out annual Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance training to 3,200 associates, At Home reached 78% completion—an incredible turnaround rate!

Read the full case study at: axonify.com/athome-story



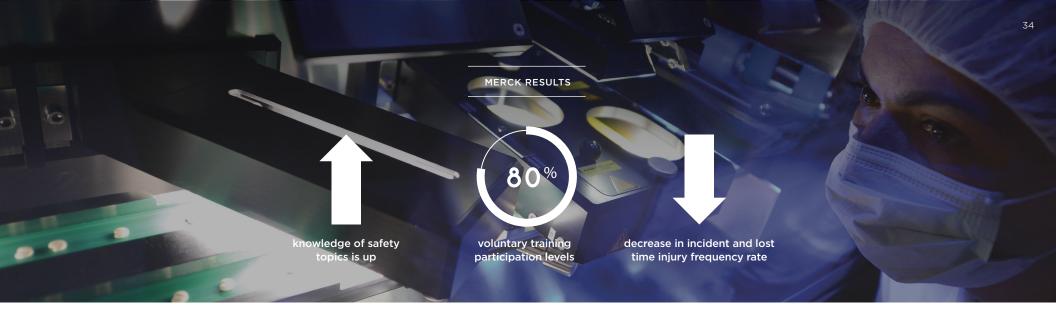
#### ETHICON PART OF THE Solution-Solution Family OF COMPANIES

Sales associates at Ethicon, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, need to keep a ton of information top of mind. They're not only responsible for managing a complex product portfolio consisting of hundreds of surgical devices, but they're expected to remain up to date on ever-changing healthcare policies, reimbursement, and procedures too. Basically, they have to be medical dictionaries!

The traditional, one-size-fits-all classroom-based approach just wasn't cutting it anymore for the company's globally dispersed team. Ethicon needed an innovative solution that would continuously engage the sales staff to keep product knowledge at the forefront of their minds, help retain the information they learned while building confidence in their ability to represent products effectively, and flag knowledge gaps so additional training could be provided.

After learning about the Axonify Microlearning Platform from a colleague at Johnson & Johnson and conducting a successful pilot, Ethicon launched Axonify to more than 1,000 professional sales reps who now use the platform regularly for ongoing product training. Knowledge increased in some topic areas by as much as 49%, with 90% of reps participating in training voluntarily via Axonify. Furthermore, 79% of reps claim Axonify has made them more knowledgeable, and 81% say they prefer the Axonify learning method.

Read the full case study at: axonify.com/ethicon-story





Merck has always put safety front and center. However, Merck's Manufacturing Division's safety record wasn't where the company wanted it to be. Leadership saw areas for improvement and set a new goal of Target Zero which meant even one incident was one too many.

In early 2016, Eagle's Flight, an industry leader in the development and delivery of practical training programs, helped Merck implement its program *Safe by Choice™* (*SbC*). The program was aimed at boosting safety awareness and reducing incidents across the company's manufacturing network of approximately 24,000 full- and part-time employees and partners. It consisted of classroom sessions, additional training for people managers, and weekly *SbC* tools that were used throughout the year. (Tools such as, print material, digital signage, and the Axonify Microlearning Platform which leveraged safety questions and reminders at each weekly group meeting—from the highest levels to the shop floor).

In just a 12-month timeframe, adoption of the *Safe by Choice* program and the Axonify Microlearning Platform skyrocketed. Merck has sustained more than 80% voluntary training participation levels (on a monthly basis). Additionally, across 52 global sites, knowledge of safety topics is up, the recordable incident rate is down, and lost time injury frequency rate is down compared to 2013.

Read the full case study at: axonify.com/merck-story



Telecom giant, BT Consumer (a division of the British Telecommunications Group) knows firsthand the importance of delivering exceptional customer service. In a competitive market where options are plenty, the customer experience plays a critical role in driving business success.

When BT Consumer learned its customers wanted to speak to contact centers located locally in the UK, and they wanted their concerns dealt with by the first advisor they spoke to—the company took immediate action. A 2,200 new advisor recruitment effort that spanned 12-months meant that onboarding had to be quick, but also thorough. The new recruits would need a broader skillset on a wide range of products and services to achieve its objective of providing a better customer service experience.

After researching the most effective strategies on how people learn and retain information, BT explored a number of providers that offered gamification, microlearning, and continuous and repetition-based assessment. However, not one of these other solutions encompassed the full package BT Consumer was looking for—except the Axonify Microlearning Platform. Following two successful pilots in the Sales & Retention and Connections departments, Axonify was rolled out to 2,500 employees. The results were phenomenal!

Read the full case study at: axonify.com/bt-story

#### **SALES & RETENTION TRIAL RESULTS**

91%

knowledge growth increase

2.3%

reduction in repeat customer calls

14 second

reduction in call-handling time

24%

reduction in training duration



Wondering if you should take the leap and implement microlearning in your organization? Let's find out.

Now that you have a good understanding of what microlearning is and what it is not, you should have enough info to answer this survey and determine if microlearning is right for your organization.

#### Take the microlearning readiness assessment

Complete this assessment by answering "yes" or "no" to each question. Then, review the summary to determine if microlearning is a good fit.

	YES	NO
1. Are you trying to solve specific, measurable business problems (e.g. reducing safety incidents, increasing sales, improving customer satisfaction scores, increasing product knowledge, decreasing turnover, reducing onboarding time, or something else?)		
2. Do your employees have limited time for training?		
3. Do employees often forget much of the information presented during training?		
4. Are you looking for ways to respond more quickly to business changes?		
5. Do you have problems getting employees engaged in training programs?		
6. Are you interested in using data to improve your training and business strategies?		
7. Does your organization have compliance and regulatory training requirements?		
8. Do you believe your employees deserve better support to do their jobs?		

If you answered "yes" to 5 or more questions, microlearning is right for you. And you're not alone. As you saw in the previous chapter, leading organizations across a variety of industries are embracing this transformational business strategy.



Now that you've read all about microlearning, and determined it's the right fit, you might be thinking to yourself, "Gee, I'd love to implement a microlearning technology platform in my own environment, but I have no idea where to start."

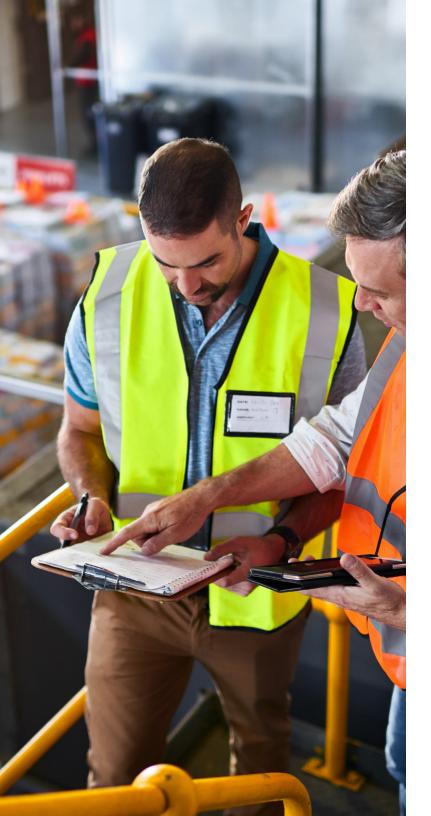
With a deluge of vendors and consultants touting their wares, it can be pretty overwhelming.

To help you weigh your options, we've put together this mini checklist so you can ask the right questions to determine if the offering matches the solid, evidence-based microlearning principles we've talked about.

The more "yes" answers you get, the more likely the solution will provide value to your organization.

MICROLEARNING METHODOLOGY	YES	NO
1. Does the vendor position their value based on business results rather than learning and development outcomes?		
2. Does the vendor focus on identifying measurable business goals before building content?		
3. Does the vendor focus on behavior change rather than learning or completions?		
4. Does the vendor consistently apply evidence-based learning science principles, such as spaced repetition and retrieval practice?		
5. Can the vendor provide case studies that demonstrate proven, measurable business results?		
6. Will the vendor provide (free) enablement support to help your team develop their skills to execute a microlearning strategy?		

MICROLEARNING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP	YES	NO
<ol> <li>Is the vendor active in the workplace learning community (besides sales and marketing)?</li> </ol>		
2. Has the vendor made a meaningful contribution to microlearning thought leadership?		
3. Does the vendor reference respected thought leaders and solid research?		
4. Does the vendor avoid using trendy terminology and unsubstantiated theories?		



MICROLEARNING FUNCTIONALITY	YES	NO
1. Can the solution be accessed from the internet-accessible devices used by employees on the job?		
2. Can the solution be accessed from employees' personal mobile devices?		
3. Does the solution support the use of mixed content formats (video, documents questions, etc.)?	,	
<b>4.</b> Does the solution include real-time reporting on employee knowledge and behavior change?		
5. Does the solution provide actionable reporting to help managers coach on the job	?	
6. Does the solution integrate with business data sources?		
7. Does the solution integrate with your other learning and support systems?		

MICROLEARNING EXPERIENCE	YES	NO
1. Is the user experience simple (no user training required)?		
2. Is the user experience familiar (similar to everyday learning activity)?		
3. Are users able to search for information quickly in the moment of need?		
<b>4.</b> Is the user experience focused on continuous learning rather than sporadic or one-and-done training?		
5. Does the user experience include motivational tactics to drive and sustain employee engagement?		



#### Hooray!

You've come to the best part. Now, that you know everything you need to know about microlearning, it's time to make the transformation happen.

#### Here are a few tips to get started:



#### Get past the hype

Help everyone at your organization get the truth about microlearning. Share this guide with anyone and everyone who needs this information.



#### Arm yourself with backup

The more you know, the better you'll be equipped to answer the tough questions. Take advantage of the information and real examples in this guide to show how microlearning, done right, can drive organizational success.



#### Tap your network

Don't go it alone. Sometimes all it takes is a 3rd party to validate your points. Don't be afraid to ask others to help you make your case. (By the way, you can ask us too!)



#### Put yourself in your employees' shoes

Go undercover. Spend time on the frontline and chat with employees to understand the problems they face every day so you can build the right microlearning program to close the gaps.



#### Nail down top business priorities

Find out what keeps the CEO awake at night. Use microlearning to solve that problem and you'll be an instant hero.

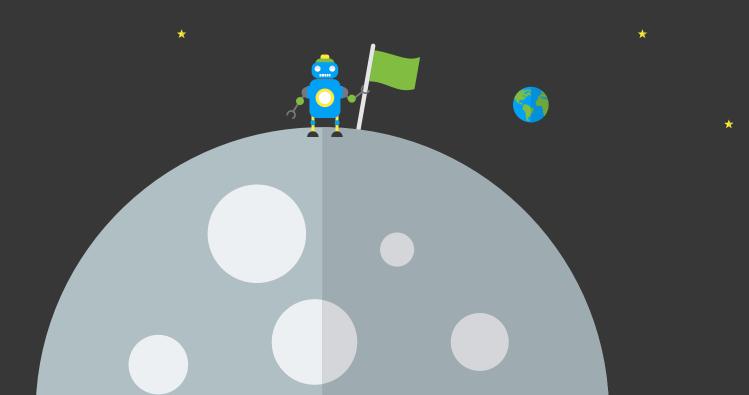


#### Think Big but start small

There's no reason why you can't start applying some microlearning fundamentals right away (like using memory-building techniques and creating results-driven content). This will lay the groundwork fast so you can work on your bigger strategy.

#### **CHAPTER 12:**

### The future of microlearning and beyond





No exaggeration, your business will succeed or fail based on the decisions your employees make every day. That's why it's so important they *know* and *do* the right things on the job. By applying the microlearning fundamentals in this guide, you'll be sure your employees have the knowledge, support and confidence they need to make the right decisions at work—every single time. And when they make the right decisions, this means your business will thrive.

Let's look at the even bigger picture. While microlearning is a power-packed strategy that will help you get solid business results, it's not the only strategy. By making the shift to microlearning, you also open the door to future innovative advancements that will take you to the next level of greatness:

**Adaptive learning** is a fantastic way to evolve your continuous microlearning experience to deliver personalized training that automatically grows and adapts to the changing needs of your employees and the organization.

**Gamification** is proven to trigger and sustain employee engagement and participation in training ongoing.

**Machine learning** provides even more advanced analytics by combining your training and business data to proactively predict potential issues and results.

As you can see, microlearning isn't just an evolutionary idea for training. It's a revolutionary opportunity for companies who want to compete and win in hectic, agile, unforgiving, exciting business world.

That's what you really need to know about microlearning.

# Are you ready to make microlearning a critical part of your businesses success?

### You can, with Axonify.

With the Axonify Microlearning Platform, you do more than train people. You drive business results by meeting the needs of each individual employee. By providing a personalized learning experience that fits into the workflow—and can be completed in minutes—we ingrain the knowledge your people need to change their behavior and achieve your business goals. What makes us different? Axonify is trusted by more business leaders than any other learning platform on the market. Why? Because our approach is proven to deliver major bottom-line results. We know because we measure it.

Contact one of our microlearning experts today to learn more.

sales@axonify.com | Toll-Free: 1-855-AXONIFY (296-6439) | axonify.com

