USING SCENARIO-BASED LEARNING TO BUILD COMPPELLING ELEARNING SOLUTIONS
Introduction

This eBook introduces the key challenges that L&D teams face today when deploying workplace learning, how scenario-based learning could help resolve them, and relevant use-cases to deploy scenario-based learning.
Challenges that L&D teams face

We have all experienced workplace learning programs that have bored us. We have also participated in training programs that have really helped us improve our skills and held our attention. In a survey report shared by Statista, these are the most common problems that L&D teams face in the USA.

The small size of the team remains the number one challenge. Lack of budget and time and demonstrating RoI to the budgeting teams follow. Now if a team
manages to surmount all these challenges and deploy a training program, the lack of learner engagement haunts them. This renders the whole process ineffective. So how do organizations address the 'elephant in the room' and create training that delivers results? Here's where scenario-based learning could help organizations create and deliver eLearning and training content that meets their L&D requirements. In the subsequent sections, we will share some key insights about scenario-based learning, where it would work, how to create scenario-based learning, and its benefits.

What is scenario-based learning?

Scenario-based learning is defined as a method to teach someone a new skill using different types of problem-based contexts. In a white-paper published by Massey University, New Zealand, scenario-based learning is defined as follows – "Scenario-based learning (SBL) uses interactive scenarios to support active learning strategies such as problem-based or case-based learning. It normally involves students working their way through a storyline, usually based around an ill-structured or complex problem, which they are required to solve."

One of the easiest ways to teach someone a new task or skill is to make them perform the task several times till they are clear how to do the task without any guidance. How does one learn to cook? Or to play a musical instrument? You just don't read a book and become an award-winning chef or a proficient musician. You spend hours of practice in the kitchen perfecting dishes or playing a musical instrument to become an expert.

Now replicate this strategy in the context of workplace learning. By creating a scenario-based learning program that simulates real world learning scenarios, the learner is offered a chance to apply their learning. This boosts their confidence and improves the retention of learning. As a learning design strategy scenario-based learning is an excellent option that can be used in different training scenarios.
Scenario-based learning (SBL) can be used in a wide variety of learning scenarios. Placing learners in simulated learning environments that replicate the actual working experience is the best place to use SBL. Ideal training implementations include creating eLearning for medical practitioners and nursing students to handle emergencies, eLearning solutions created for aircraft and locomotive engineers, and workplace harassment education courses. SBL works best when learners are motivated to apply decision-making and critical thinking skills to solve issues.

**Primary areas where SBL works**

Scenario-based learning solutions can be the perfect fit for:
Confucius said, “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.” Scenario-based learning takes this philosophy forward and is a good fit to train adults at the workplace. Employees prefer to learn on their own and self-paced learning that is autonomous is a good place to deploy SBL. By building on previous experiences, be it at work, school or college, or family, one connects better and learns with SBL that focuses on such experiences. Goal-oriented courses that have relevant learning content always score better. When it is made in the format of an SBL program the odds are better for the success of the program. Hence using scenario-based learning for workplace learning and training is a good option.

Why SBL is good for workplace learning?

How to create SBL?

The initial steps are like any form of eLearning training content that you would create.

- Analyze all the requirements thoroughly, get a clear picture of the target audience, define learning outcomes, and then work towards creating the course content.

- Once you have the basic structure in place, decide what kind of scenarios you would incorporate into the storyboard that would convey learning with maximum impact.

- Is it a routine task that needs a scenario built around it or is it a specialized task for which you need to create a scenario?
The next crucial step is identifying the trigger point that will initiate the learning program.

Once you have all your inputs work on the storyboard. Peer-reviewing the storyboard before it goes for internal review by the senior ID manager.

Then send the updated storyboard to external / internal client for review.

Once the storyboard is frozen, commence development using a relevant tool like Storyline or Articulate Rise.

Complete internal quality reviews and feedback incorporation and then share the final course files with the client.

Incorporate client fixes – share final files and secure client sign-off to complete the entire process.

**Benefits of SBL**

The key benefits of using scenario-based learning are:

- Better learning experiences
- Higher rate of course completion
- Retention of learning – learning ‘sticks’
- Improves problem-solving and decision-making
- Gain mastery on the topic by putting learners in a simulated environment
- Allows learners to make mistakes and then find the correct solution
- Can be cost-effective if it is done right
New employee training is an important aspect of modern workplace learning. The new employee could be an experienced professional or a recent university graduate, either way training and induction holds value. Scenario-based learning could be used to put the new employee in different scenarios and guide them on how to resolve issues. For example – The company could be using a dedicated portal to handle all IT-requests, a scenario could be created where the employee is taught to request for a new email password or log a ticket to resolve a malfunctioning computer. Organizational hierarchy can be tricky. SBL can be used to give employees a clear picture of how the company is structured and who to reach out for any request or task allocation.

Colleges and universities in many parts of the world integrate campus recruitment programs as part of the benefits offered to students. Bigger institutions have a dedicated placement cell that focuses on training students, preparing them for a professional career, and arranging recruitment drives in partnership with leading companies. Scenario-based learning can be used effectively to design office etiquette and soft skills training programs for students.

The aviation industry is one of the biggest employers globally. With staff working in roles as varied as flying, stewardship, technical maintenance, ticketing, traffic control, and passenger management, every year thousands of young men and women step into a career in aviation. Scenario-based learning is the perfect way to train them. Flight simulation exercises, aircraft maintenance and repair, ticketing and customer management, each of these areas offer excellent scope for training using SBL.

The automotive industry is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise that has some key players in specific regions. Companies like Toyota, Nissan, Suzuki, Tata Motors, Renault, Daimler, Ford, Ferrari, BMW, and Tesla continue to innovate and come up with new passenger and freight vehicles. An integral part of the automobile
manufacturing process is the assembly line where the vehicle is assembled from scratch. There are numerous small and large components that go into creating the final vehicle that one drives on the road. Though automation and robotics have made life easier for the larger manufacturers there are still several automobile manufacturers and several steps in manufacturing that require focused manual intervention. Hence it becomes highly important for companies to invest in training their assembly-line workers to do their tasks efficiently. Scenario-based learning is the best way to train such employees fast and affordably.

An example of scenario-based learning

At Origin, we work on different types of eLearning projects for leading global companies. Here is a quick summary of a scenario-based learning project that we created for a client with a global presence. The client employs a culturally diverse workforce and a significant number of these employees work on multiple projects simultaneously. The challenge is for managers to get clarity on reporting
structures, the flexible team composition, understand the cultural differences of their team-members, and manage them effectively. The operational and reporting matrix includes complex dotted line reporting with many of the managers working with virtual teams for the very first time. This makes it imperative for them to be equipped with the skills to manage diverse personnel and derive the best possible results leading to a positive impact on the business. The client wanted a solution that could help managers understand the cultural differences of their team members, simplify the workflow, and help improve team dynamics.

Origin designed a blended learning program that consisted of 7 courses – with four online training sessions and three virtual instructor-led training sessions. The program is structured towards focused learning outcomes and transferability of skills to the job. The content focuses on three key behavioral aspects – agility, resilience, and diversity. The program starts with a quick introduction followed by a survey for those taking up the program. Designed as a self-awareness tool, the survey prepares learners for the subsequent sections of the program. We used a scenario-based problem-solving technique. Scenarios where managers would have to resolve an issue and participants were asked to come up with solutions. The assessment-feedback was structured to offer participants the right solution. On deploying the program, the client reported a significant improvement in the interaction between managers and their virtual team-members and overall work environment. Further, the managerial on-boarding process was simplified by the addition of this training program and offered a clear insight into the challenges of handling virtual and matrix teams.

IBM’s pioneering efforts in experiential and on-demand learning

IBM is respected globally as a technology company and has offices and employees in key cities globally. Training employees is a big task for their L&D team, and they have done a fantastic job in creating an environment that fosters learning and growth among employees. At IBM, the term experiential learning is used to describe SBL. Here’s what they say – “Experiential learning provides a
safe environment that simulates a real work scenario. Learners are encouraged to explore content—a sales process, for example—and discover through trial and error the virtues of that process. Simulated experiences should respond to learner interactions in a job-realistic fashion. In other words, if the real world provides a consequence for an action, the learning experience should also. Rewards and consequences can demonstrate the impact of a job well done or an error in judgment. Providing relevant, real-world experiences for learners to engage with content creates a rich experience with greater impact on job transfer.

Conclusion

We hope that you found this eBook useful. Scenario-based learning when done right can help companies save a tremendous amount of time and money in achieving their L&D targets. SBL helps you create meaningful and compelling learning experiences that generate ROI on training and let you reach your organizational training goals. If you would like to collaborate with Origin for a customized scenario-based learning program for your organization, write to us at info@originlearning.com.

Further Reading and References

Massey University

IBM On-Demand Learning
Automotive Value Chain
Statista