

INCREASING THE VALUE OF ENTERPRISE TRAINING

Enterprise training in the Government sector has always been a necessary if often overlooked function. Every aspect of an agency has policies, processes, procedures, and systems that need to be deployed to employees, and it can be a challenge to ensure that a common interpretation and a wide-spread distribution of information are achieved. The most efficient way to accomplish this is to hold a formalized training session. Unfortunately, in recent years, training and education has become a lower budgetary priority and is usually one of the first line items to be slashed during fiscal turmoil. When training budgets are cut, necessary, and in some cases mandatory, information may not be conveyed to key personnel in an efficient and timely fashion. Training becomes fragmented and uncoordinated as the enterprise program is downsized and decentralized. Individual programs provide training focused on their individual silos, but may not recognize and account for the interconnectivity between subject areas. As a result, the mission suffers.

Training programs may also be damaged by unrealistic expectations. Properly configured, compliant, and effective training sessions, regardless of the approach used, take a considerable amount of time to develop and deploy. These sessions may rely on traditional Instructor Led Training (ILT), more asynchronous methods such as CBT (Computer Based Training), or a blended approach using web based training (WBT). However, both training professionals and the agencies that hire them tend to underestimate the challenges of producing and delivering quality training services.

The Challenge of Quality Training

In 2009, the Association for Talent Development (ATD) released a matrix comparing the average time to create one hour of instruction using the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) method. The table below presents the range of hours to create a one hour training course in 2003 and 2009 for each of four different types of training delivery. While the information is somewhat dated, the challenges of fiscal and time budgeting when creating content becomes obvious.

TYPE OF TRAINING	2003 RANGE (PER HOUR OF INSTRUCTION)			2009 RANGE (PER HOUR OF INSTRUCTION)		
	Low	High	Average	Low	High	Average
Instructor Led (Classroom)	20	70	45	43	185	114
Self-Instruction (Print)	80	125	102.5	40	93	66.5
Instructor Led, Web-Based	30	80	55	49	89	69
Computer-Based (Limited Animation or Interaction)	40	100	70	118	365	241.5

(SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.TD.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/NEWSLETTERS/LEARNING-CIRCUITS/LEARNING-CIRCUITS-ARCHIVES/2009/08/TIME-TO-DEVELOP-ONE-HOUR-OF-TRAINING](https://www.td.org/publications/newsletters/learning-circuits/learning-circuits-archives/2009/08/time-to-develop-one-hour-of-training))

Taking an average of the “High” and “Low” hours from this chart, we see that the average time for developing an hour of ILT is approximately 114 hours – almost three work weeks. To develop a simple CBT training course for live release takes an average of 241 hours – approximately 6 work weeks of time. These examples provide a highly useful exercise in

understanding the level of effort that it requires to develop training programs and recognizing that it is not always predictable.

Given these numbers, it is no surprise that many training projects get off track and behind on both their delivery and their deliverables. Customers simply do not believe that it takes this much time to accomplish something that, to them, consists of a power point presentation and a few hours of delivery in a conference room, but during this development period, an experienced trainer can be expected to execute the following tasks:

- Front end analysis
- Design Plan
- Lesson Plans
- Handouts
- Workbooks
- Power Point

In the Federal environment, additional consideration must be given towards policy compliance, permissions, delivery, training coordination, maintenance, and project management. These Federal-specific factors may add additional time and complexity to the training development. The situation becomes more complicated because training is never a static proposition. Changes to policy, leadership, content, threats and innumerable other factors enter into the field, adding time, effort and cost to the courseware.

The Training Team

eMentum takes the position that people should focus on what they are most passionate to derive the greatest focus and collaboration on the task. Training is no different. Separation of responsibilities is a key factor in organizing and implementing a highly productive training program. To that end, we recommend a blended team of experts in project management, training, and training administration, each of whom is focused on differing responsibilities. These roles may or may not be full time assignments on the training program, depending on the amount of training and the timeline for delivery, but by working together, each of these roles supplement and complement one another to deliver a product that is stronger and more resilient than any one person working alone.

Training Project Manager

eMentum has realized that training project management is a specific subspecialty of traditional project management that allows for the overlaying of training methodology concepts on the more traditional Project Management Professional (PMP) skills that are so familiar in the Federal government. Training project management can be considered an implementation of “Agile” development, allowing for a “Ready, Fire, Aim” methodology that requires constant revision and stakeholder engagement, and we’ve found that it can produce more effective than a more traditional “Waterfall” approach that checks off objectives and deliverables in a linear fashion. This application of project management skills allows the training program to consistently meet deliverable timelines, while still achieving the training mission objectives in a timely fashion. Examples of this include:

- Training program definition and planning
- Stakeholder status reporting
- Regulatory and compliance reporting to governing bodies
- Schedule and resource management
- Financial management

Training Manager

Working in concert with the Training Project Manager is the Training Manager, responsible for the delivery and design of the curriculum. This team member focuses on the educational side of the program, bringing curriculum design methodologies, best practices in adult learning, and new concepts in delivery and course management. eMentum has found that it can be difficult to switch mindsets between the detailed project management and the creative perspective needed to present complicated and nuanced concepts to a new audience. The Training Manager will determine the best approach for the subject matter, recognizing that this may vary on a course by course basis. Examples of this include:

- Training Design Plan
- Training Development
- Training Delivery

Training Administrator

The final key role for any training program is the Training Administrator. The Training Administrator is responsible for all logistics and administrative support to course and attendees before, during, and after the course takes place, including:

- Coordination with facilities and student body on logistics, schedule, and inventory.
- Coordination with IT resources on Webinar scheduling.
- Maintenance of learning management system content, structure, and permissions.
- Training materials, including course handouts, attendance, certificates, and other records.

The eMentum Training Approach

Training is never “one and done” and part of the challenge is to start delivery and implementation concurrently with meeting client deadlines and other deliverables. The advantage of the eMentum approach is that it is cyclical, applying the Agile-like best practices for an evolutionary approach to learning and instruction.

One of the program’s most important decisions is the recommendation of the training approach. There are two primary approaches that are typically used on enterprise training programs, each with a fierce following of advocates:

ADDIE	SAM
The traditional approach to curriculum design is the Analyze-Design-Develop-Implement-Evaluate (ADDIE) model. It is highly linear in structure with well-defined milestones and checkpoints in the development process. It lends itself well to instructor-led training, but it requires up-front investment before the first training sessions can be delivered. It also does not foster change to course content or creativity in training delivery as well as other approaches.	The Successive Approximation Model (SAM) is a new methodology derived from the software development world and the Agile approach to design. SAM is much less concerned about linear stages and more concerned about getting a product out the door to meet a deadline. SAM is a model that is focused on the result of training delivery and relies on continuous improvement based on trainer and trainee feedback, so it allows a training program to deliver new and revised courses quickly.

ADDIE is the most common approach used across Federal training programs, but our experience is that a blended approach of ADDIE and SAM provides the most effective results. We recommend that a training program is best served by ADDIE’s highly structured methodology to develop the initial versions of courses so that there is confidence in the quality of content and trainee experience before the first delivered. From there, a SAM methodology should apply so that the course content remains current and that courses improvements can be implemented rapidly and effectively. The eMentum training approach combines these two methodologies to allow new and existing courses to be delivered as needed based on the existing course catalog.



GRAPHIC 1: THE EMENTUM TRAINING APPROACH

Step 1: Evaluate the Training Inventory – Our experience is that many organizations have a repository of training materials that required considerable time and money to develop, and we consider this repository to be the baseline for the desired course catalog. This material forms the “As Is” state and reflects the current content and delivery methodology, so we start every training program by conducting a complete training inventory, which is a detailed examination of existing curriculum and artifacts in all formats to understand its content, purpose, level of completeness, currency relative to governing regulations and standards, and audience.

We identify and interview key stakeholders, including executive sponsors, program leads, and subject matter experts and client training representatives, to understand their objectives for each course, review the evaluation methods and feedback, and perform an analysis of existing materials to determine how closely they adhere to industry standard process and practices. This training inventory provides the basis for work we will do to provide training courses and materials; develop, deliver, and coordinate training courses and materials; and promote a coordinated approach with client stakeholders.

Step 2: Develop the Training Design Plan – After the Training Inventory is complete, we develop a design plan for each courses to define the specific requirements and activities needed to adapt and optimize the inventory using the industry approved design standards. For each existing and desired course, the training design plan includes the following:

Title	Section Contents
Plan of Instruction	Course description, primary learning objectives, class length, support materials, and guidance.
Instructor Guide	Attention; motivation; secondary learning objectives; narrative transition; and a specific section by section outline of slideware, speaker notes, and key points and clues.
Conclusion	Summary/knowledge check, quality assurance, re-motivation, closure, and transition (if needed).

A design plan is an adaptive tool that can accommodate all types of training delivery, including role based, instructor led, computer based training (CBT), web conference, and any other method that would be determined to be most effective in presenting and evaluating student learning and achievement. Design plans are modular in nature and entirely self-descriptive, facilitating ease of course maintenance to ensure that the content will be of consistent quality regardless of who delivers the material. The design plan for each of the required training tasks will be the framework upon which all content is built, updated, and delivered.

The design plan is not a “one and done” effort. It is a living document that is designed to provide the maximum flexibility for changes and modifications. Review cycles should be defined for each design plan, depending on the frequency with which materials, content, regulations, technology, and student needs change.

Step 3: Iterative Training Development and Delivery – Once a design plan is approved for a course, we develop, revise, update, and deliver training according to the approved policy, standards, and requirements governing each subject area. This is driven by a calendar that includes:

- The monthly/quarterly/yearly plan of instruction to the agency or operating unit.
- The exact approach by which instruction will be presented, whether it be ILT (Instructor-Led Training), CBT (Computer-Based Training), WBT (Web-Based Training), or other delivery method.
- A structure and a process by which additional classes of instruction could be added quickly and easily.

It is our experience that the most effective training is highly interactive, regardless of the delivery method. Through exercises, case studies, and other medium, content increases in its ‘stickiness’ if the trainee is engaged and stimulated throughout the course. For this reason, we develop training courses that combine lecture, group study, practical applications, and online assignments so that there is limited opportunity for a student’s attention to wander.

Step 4: Training Administration – Each class should be followed by an evaluation sheet measuring various factors relevant to instruction. Learning engagement, curriculum design, examples, exercises, and instructor personality should all be rated on a 1-5 scale. The data is then summarized and reviewed to see where changes need to be made or if a pattern presents itself. This ensures the training continually meets requirements, goals and objectives, and customer satisfaction.

Communications and administrative tasks associated with training initiatives are critical for program acceptance and adoption. These tasks are not driven by a Training Design Plan, but rather will be coordinated and arranged using standard Project Management protocols. For an individual training course, the Training Project Manager needs to define and manage tasks to create training events, plan locations and logistics, print training rosters, coordinate of IT support, record attendance, and provide certificates of completion and/or competency. The training program as a whole needs to develop marketing materials, perform community outreach in support of the training program, maintain the learning management system and course schedule, monitor and report on compliance, support the IT Service Desk if issues are reported, and maintain access and/or registration instructions.

Conclusion

We have found that there is more to a successful training program than just creative delivery and presentation. Training programs benefit from many of the same techniques and methodologies used in software development, including project management, customer support, and continuous content improvement. Organizations that invest in their training teams and content will realize a higher level of content retention, adoption, and improvement than ones that minimize their training commitment. Skilled and qualified training teams can make a considerable difference to the participant's experience, increasing the benefit to the organization as a whole.