How to Build an Effective Workplace English Program

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Making an investment in language training requires time and financial resources. If you are going to do it, make sure you are set up for success!

Learning and development is only one of the many competing priorities that Human Resources (HR) managers face. Ensuring that training programs are effective is important, and some courses are easier to implement than others. For example, it is straightforward to measure ROI on a short course when completion is the only objective, such as an online compliance course on how to avoid harassment. However, when tasked with implementing and measuring the success of a workplace English training program, many HR professionals are overwhelmed with how to begin.

FIRST

There are some easy-to-follow guidelines that can help HR professionals assess the quality of their current English training programs and, if necessary, bring in more effective, efficient, and innovative tools to help their employees develop their language skills. First, it's important to realize that teaching a language is not the same as teaching other workplace skills, such as how to deliver more effective presentations. Learning a language is one of the most complex, difficult things we ask adults to do, and we need to make sure that they are set up for success. Dozens of years of research have demonstrated that **adults learn languages best whenthey have a clear need and individualized instruction.** Because learning a language is learning a skill, one-size-fits all programs are not likely to be effective.

SECOND

Because learning a language doesn't happen overnight, workplace programs must be flexible. **Employees need tools that let them access lessons from their computers and mobile devices, and they need the ability to attend virtual classes** at times that fit the schedules of today's busy professionals. Research shows that virtual, individualized classes are more effective than small group, in-person classes, and, even better, learners cancel them far less often than in-person classes. In addition, virtual classes often let learners have access to teachers with superior qualifications. It's much easier to find an expert to teach negotiating skills in English if time and space aren't barriers to instruction.

FINALLY

Language programs need to track and measure learner performance to ensure that they are meeting employees' needs. And those metrics must be easily accessible to the HR manager. If managers don't know what employees are doing, it's impossible to evaluate their performance. **A successful program needs to go beyond an end-of-course satisfaction survey and have clear goals, measurable outcomes, and metrics for success that the HR manager can easily track against.**

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The most effective language training programs follow these three guidelines—needs-based personalized instruction, flexible delivery, and clear, easily-tracked objectives. If yours does not, it might be time to revisit how you are teaching your employees English. A well-designed, modern language provider will offer you all of this and more, as well as easy implementation and access to customer and learner support. Teaching your employees English is one of most valuable things you can do to improve your existing talent and future-proof your company for the global economy. Revisit your approach to make sure your employees are set up for success.

Interested in learning more about teaching English in the workplace?

- Research review: Online versus face-to-face learning outcomes
- How to launch an English training program in the workplace: Part 1
- How to launch an English training program in the workplace: Part 2

To learn more about English in the workplace, or to ask any questions, please contact sales@voxy.com or request a personalized demo of Voxy.

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