

Report
Abstract

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MEASURING SUCCESS

**Aligning Learning Success with
Business Success**

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The eLearning Guild Research Pledge

It is our goal to provide the best research based on the best data. Indeed, with well over 25,000 e-Learning professionals – designers, developers, managers, and executives who are passionate about the art and science of e-Learning – The Guild has an unmatched and enormously rich and varied pool from which to gather data.

But let us be very clear that this data represents one thing and one thing only: the preferences, opinions, loves, loathings, trials, and triumphs of eLearning Guild members. Does the information represent the e-Learning industry as a whole? Probably, but we cannot – and will not – make that claim.

And anyone else publishing articles or research that makes that claim – and makes it using a much smaller data set than we would ever consider using – is presumptuous at best.

Here are the five articles of practice that drive eLearning Guild Research:

1. **Live, interactive, always-up-to-date.** In addition to providing members with truly useful visual analytics tools, the underlying data is *always* up to date and displayed in real time.
2. **Number of respondents.** Our research reflects the opinions of *thousands* of e-Learning professionals. The Guild has more, and better, data than is available any place else. *Indeed, we will never publish results from a survey unless we have received at least 750 fully-vetted responses.*
3. **No reliance on outside sources that will bias our reports.** With thousands of members updating their profiles and completing surveys, the Guild does not need to rely on outside sources for contacts to complete surveys.
4. **Funding.** The eLearning Guild funds its own research. We do not accept any form of sponsorship from vendors and/or suppliers for public research activities.
5. **Guaranteed Fresh.** Every 90 days we remind members to update their profiles and survey information. If a member goes a year without updating information, that information is filtered out of our live reports.

For the Guild's 360° Reports we carefully review respondents' data for accuracy and consistency. If we detect an anomaly, we contact that respondent and ask that he/she clarify his/her responses. If any issue cannot be resolved, the data from this respondent is discarded and is not included in our report.

The Guild is truly an amazing organization and I feel privileged to be a part of it. It is my goal to leverage the depth, breadth, and spirit of the Guild's members to produce the gold standard in e-Learning research.

Sincerely,



Steven S. Wexler
Director of Research and Emerging Technologies

Abstract

This report is one of the longest (and most fun) reports the Guild has published. But despite its formidable girth, the report is about answering two just questions:

1. When you test, are you truly able to show that someone has learned something; and,
2. Are you able to show that your learning interventions benefit your organization?

Note: If you are not able to answer the second question, being able to answer the first may be a waste of time and effort as it is tantamount to applying resources to win a battle without knowing if winning that battle will have any impact on winning the war.

If you're flummoxed by the questions above, take comfort in knowing that you have a LOT of company, as our survey of over 900 eLearning Guild members shows that only 20% are able to do the measurement they want to do and only 11% have data that shows that their measurement approach provides value to the organization.

So, what is it that these 11% of survey respondents do differently from the other 89% that adds value to their organization? How do they measure learning and how do they show business impact?

We will closely examine what these organizations do, as well as pick the collective brains of some extraordinary people to see how to conduct effective assessment and measurement on both the micro and macro levels.

Our survey of over 900 eLearning Guild members shows that only 20% are able to do the measurement they want to do.

How the Report is Organized

Market share, satisfaction results, and Guild members-choice awards

In this section we offer a “snap shot” of results from the Guild’s market share and tools satisfaction Direct Data Access portfolios as of October 7, 2007.

Survey results

In this section we review and analyze the over 900 responses we received from the Guild’s Measuring e-Learning Success survey. Key findings include:

- Only 20% of Guild members are able to do the type of measurement they want to do and only 15.8% of members in heavily regulated industries are able to do the type of measurement they want to do.
- 10.9% of Guild members have data showing that their measurement approach provides very high value to their organizations.
- The major reasons why Guild members measure varies widely by industry and region.
- In comparing the practices of those that have data showing high value with those that don’t, we found that
 - 56% of those reporting high value are able to do the type of measurement they want (vs. 20% for all Guild members).
 - 81% of those reporting high value meet with business line leaders and stakeholders before beginning work to define success criteria vs. 69% for all Guild members.
 - Members reporting high value from their measurement approaches use high-fidelity simulations and scenarios at least 50% more often than those reporting a low value.
 - Members reporting high value indicate that they use formal criterion-reference testing procedures 60% more often than those that don’t have data showing high value.
 - 41% of those reporting high value indicate that they have people on staff trained in process improvement methodologies vs. 26.5% for all members.

Aligning measurement methods with measurement goals

Will Thalheimer sets the tone for this series of essays from learning and measurement experts and makes the case that effective measurement need not be elusive and unattainable. Will further stresses the importance of aligning measurement methods with measurement goals, and shares a practical approach to doing so.

Point/counterpoint: Line leaders versus learning professionals

In this truly engaging debate, two passionate professionals argue the why their seemingly diametrically-opposed approaches to measurement are essential and then find themselves in violent agreement on many issues.

Note: Special thanks to Will Thalheimer for suggesting this approach, and to both Will and Roy Pollock for delivering, as their dialog really gets to the heart of the micro/macro issue.

What does fundamental learning research tell us about measurement?

In this essay Will Thalheimer shares years of research, articulates best practices, and steers you clear of the common pitfalls of the “train, test, forget” mentality that plagues so many organizations.

Measuring learning — Evaluating level II assessments within The eLearning Guild

Sharon Shrock and Bill Coscarelli, perhaps the world’s leading authorities on criterion-reference testing procedures, analyze several measurement instruments from Guild members and explain which ones achieve, and which fall short of, effective measurement of learning.

Documenting level III and IV results in real time

In this essay Roy Pollock practices what he preaches and explains how it is possible – and practicable – to measure both behavior change and business impact in real time.

Beyond multiple choice

Jim Ong takes us beyond true/false and multiple-choice tests and shows how to track, measure, and provide effective feedback in real time within high fidelity immersive learning simulations.

Transforming the field by doing more and better measurement

In this final essay, Will Thalheimer argues that e-Learning professionals have the opportunity to make a significant, measurable, difference in how organizations test and assess, and strikes a clarion call for those who want to see this change happen to convene through The eLearning Guild's Community Connections.

Interviews

In this section we interview Mike Echols of Bellevue University and Dorothy Martin of Verizon Wireless. These two engaging leaders explain how they are making great strides in showing how to measure the investment in – and not just the expense of – corporate training and development.

Case Study: Certifying task readiness at Georgia-Pacific's paper mills

Paul Lorenz shares his experience at Georgia Pacific and shows how that company typifies an organization where there is a strong learning culture and conducive transfer climate by stressing ongoing and repeated learning and assessment.

Resources

Maggie Martinez has assembled an incredible cornucopia of assessment and measurement resources comprising Web sites, books, organizations, events, and articles.



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