

Cisco's ISBG Horizon Study of 600 US IT and business leaders indicates that by 2014, the average number of connected devices per knowledge worker will reach 3.3, up from an average of 2.8 in 2012. Cisco's findings also indicate that 3 out of 5 employees do not see the need to be in office to be productive.

These emerging trends are significantly impacting business. With the workforce going increasingly mobile, training interventions will need to move from the classroom to the field. L&D has to therefore go beyond providing intermittent training interventions and deliver performance support, just-in-time, whenever the employee 'needs' it.

For any employee, especially in sales, time is money. Each moment wasted may impact revenue generation in an unfavourable manner. It becomes critical for sales persons to access important information whenever and wherever they are. This manifests especially in sectors like Consumer Packaged Goods & Retail; Pharma; and Banking, Financial Services & Insurance. Also, for employees on the shopfloor, in the manufacturing sector, just-in-time performance support is critical to achieve higher productivity.

For instance, sales persons in pharma must know key benefits of their products, benefits over each offering by a competitor, and any other information the doctors may demand. On the shop floor, employees must be able to decrease downtime and improve productivity by installing new products faster and lowering maintenance and repair time.

A well supported work force – on the shop floor and in sales – manages to keep inefficiencies at bay. These inefficiencies can creep in due to various factors, some key ones being:

- Suboptimal use of tools and technologies
- High dependency on managers to provide training
- Poor adherence to process compliance
- Inability to cross sell/upsell portfolios and services

The challenge to L&D is therefore to provide performance support, at the moment of need. And to ensure that productivity is not hampered by the workforce stepping aside and waiting for training or learning interventions to happen.

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How should L&D gear up to tackle this situation?

L&D must conduct a business, workforce and workflow analysis. Based on findings from this analysis, L&D should create a sound strategy for performance support.

Need for Business Analysis:

- To identify gaps in the existing sales processes
- To ensure that learning is delivering expected value and meeting its business objective

Need for Workforce Analysis:

- To define a sales competency and sales effectiveness measurement framework
- To align success metrics with the overall business goal

Need for Workflow Analysis:

- To ensure process compliance
- To ensure improved customer experience
- To increase sales closures
- To improve productivity

This analysis would identify specific areas where support is required. These would pose as 'learning problems'. At this stage, it then becomes critical to deal with the nature of the learning problem.

Conducting a business, workforce and workflow analysis assumes critical importance before L&D can create a strategy for performance support.

Mosher and Gottfredson, in the book **Innovative Performance Support**, have put forth a model called '**Five Moments Of Need**'. This model identifies 5 phases during which learners require support to perform successfully.



Together, these phases are referred to as 'The 5 Moments of Learning'.

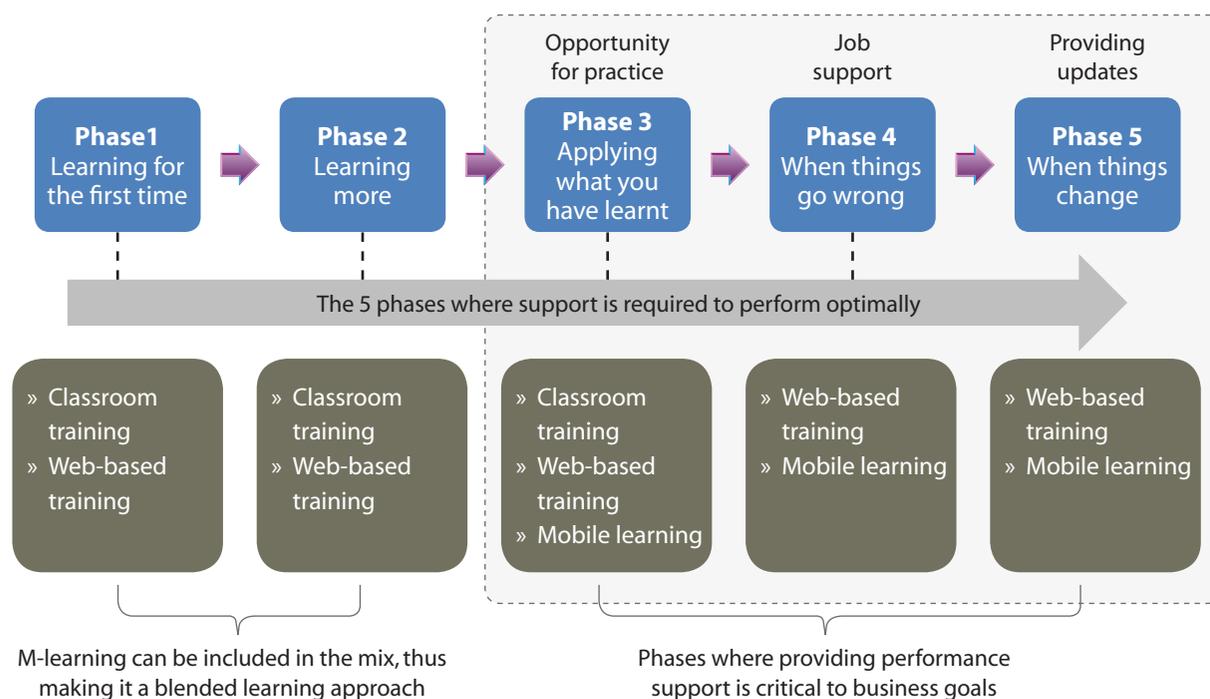
Phases 1 and 2:

The first two phases call for a more structured approach to learning and a higher degree of 'teaching content'. This typically involves detailed information and makes greater demands on the learner's attention-span.

Phases 3, 4 and 5

The next three phases involve the reinforcement of basic knowledge and skills. These three phases focus on the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of concepts or practice skills, access just-in-time information, and receive updates. A lot of 'informal' learning happens during these phases.

The shift from phases 1 and 2 to phases 3, 4 and 5 necessitates provision of performance support.



Adequate performance support from phase 3 to phase 5 helps employees apply knowledge and information in real time to solve problems and resolve situations. At these phases, the employee may demonstrate low retention rate and may not be able to recall information fed earlier.

L&D must therefore step in and use innovative formats to provide just-in-time performance support. Deploying simulations, animations, **short learning 'nuggets'**, step-by-step guides to processes, product updates, maintenance and repair information, customer guide interactions and guides to regulatory and statutory compliance can help improve performance and increase productivity.

On the shop floor, performance support may also be provided by tagging machines or components of machines with QR codes. The employees then merely have to scan the QR code to access relevant information just-in-time.

Thus, a robust performance support system will help employees achieve acceleration in time-to-competence, reduction in errors, improved compliance ratios and customer experience, higher productivity, and increased sales closures. And it will do all this, while the employees are still on field, at the task!