



Mather LifeWays Orange Papers are provided as a resource on topics related to the growing fields of aging, wellness, and workforce development. Their content reflects the expertise of Mather LifeWays researchers, educators, and other professionals who are leaders in creating Ways to Age Well.<sup>SM</sup>

# The Bottom Line: How e-Learning Can Reduce Expenses and Improve Staff Performance

*An Orange Paper from Mather LifeWays  
By Jon Woodall*

# The Bottom Line: How e-Learning Can Reduce Expenses and Improve Staff Performance

---

*With the world's economy in flux, cost savings are a major concern for directors, managers, and business owners. One of the prime ways to address budgets is by reducing the escalating costs associated with traditional training.*

---

In today's hyper-connected world, the value of the World Wide Web to the world of business is no secret. So why do so many companies and organizations fail to fully utilize the potential efficiencies and cost savings of e-Learning to retain its staff? Perhaps the biggest problem is not having learned all the benefits that this educational tool can provide.

## **WHAT EXACTLY IS E-LEARNING?**

In general terms, e-Learning is any instruction that utilizes digital technologies as a means of distributing and delivering educational content to participants. While the Internet is not the only digital medium, it is among the most popular.

Over the past few years, e-Learning has evolved with demand from an increasing number of countries that rely on Internet services. A study published in the September 10, 2008 edition of *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that Internet-based training's effectiveness "compared favorably" to traditional training methods, and it also offered more "unique advantages, including flexible scheduling, adaptability of instruction, and readily available content that is easily updated."

## **HOW THE ADDED BENEFITS HELP REDUCE COST**

With the world's economy in flux, cost savings are a major concern for directors, managers, and business owners. One of the prime ways to address budgets is by reducing the escalating costs associated with traditional training in a brick and mortar setting, including travel expenses, facility costs, and employee time.

Additionally, the cost associated with printing materials and the management of traditional training sessions can be extremely high compared to the cost associated with producing the same information online and giving staff members access via the Internet. Not only can an organization save work hours, dollars, and the facility's energy, but the information is maintained and updated much more effectively online as well.

Ideally, e-Learning is the least costly education/training option. It involves virtually no physical space and many of its components, services, and operations can be outsourced, meaning you can employ a significant number of independent contractors without extending benefits, while also paying very little for the delivery of the electronic programs. This reason alone is why so many organizations each year make the switch from traditional training to e-Learning.

# The Bottom Line: How e-Learning Can Reduce Expenses and Improve Staff Performance

---

*You have created an online training tool that becomes a resource for content that is current, readily available, and with fixed costs—a feat that cannot be accomplished through quarterly training meetings at a central location.*

---

## **E-LEARNING SAVES THE ENVIRONMENT, TOO**

e-Learning is also a supreme version of ecological accountability since it economizes energy and pollution through the elimination of lengthy commutes and the maintenance required for an elaborate training center. Likewise, e-Learning has the potential to reduce the amount of paper and printed materials associated with traditional classroom instruction, saving organizations hundreds of dollars while simultaneously impacting the environment and the local community.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF E-LEARNING ON PERFORMANCE**

Consider this: Your staff is already trained and very good at their jobs, hence the reason for hiring them. But yet, even the best employees need enhanced training throughout the course of their employment. As the world changes, so too the abilities and knowledge of your staff will need to change, and without taxing the budget.

Each quarter the staff should learn more about the customer, each other's activities, and outside competition. A prime solution is an e-Learning course facilitated by a website designed to introduce new quarterly data about customers, competition, products, budgets, and proposals. Here, staff members can interact with the website material and use the data, analysis, strategy, progress reports, and discussion tools to create a community of knowledgeable staff members.

In this regard, you have created an online training tool that becomes a resource for content that is current, readily available, and with fixed costs—a feat that cannot be accomplished through quarterly training meetings at a central location.

## **E-LEARNING IS A “WIN-WIN” RESOURCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS**

While the outcomes of e-Learning, as discussed above, reveal direct and indirect cost savings, we shouldn't lose focus on the act of training itself.

Trainers must be held more accountable for the ways in which they can positively impact worker performance to grow the bottom line. The savings outlined are easily wasted if there is no increased business value from your e-Learning curriculum.

A second transformation in job training focuses on access. Widely-distributed employees who are busier now than ever, are calling for delivery solutions that meet their needs and are on their schedules.

Time emerges as the most critical factor in learning (if it hasn't already), and employees continue to express the need to learn on their schedule, not the schedule of the training organization. You can increase cost savings exponentially

## The Bottom Line: How e-Learning Can Reduce Expenses and Improve Staff Performance

by providing your staff with 24/7 training access and convenient delivery to their home, office, or mobile environment.

Your managers also want to save downtime from training, and increase overall organizational mobility. Managers and employees can work better together with a training solution like e-Learning that positively reduces communication deficiencies, increases morale, and shows support for workers across all levels: a cost savings that is priceless.

---

*Managers and employees can work better together with a training solution like e-Learning that positively reduces communication deficiencies, increases morale, and shows support for workers across all levels.*

---



*Jon Woodall is the Online Programs Manager for Mather LifeWays. Reach him at [jwoodall@matherlifeways.com](mailto:jwoodall@matherlifeways.com).*

*Mather LifeWays is a unique nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well.<sup>SM</sup> For more information about our senior living residences, Community Initiatives, or award-winning research, please visit our website at [www.matherlifeways.com](http://www.matherlifeways.com) or call (847) 492.7500.*