



SAFETYNOW

A Division of Bongarde Media

HOW TO BUILD **BETTER REFRESHER** SAFETY TRAINING

UTILIZING MICROTRAINING & OTHER SOLUTIONS TO
ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

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SAFETY SHOULD
NEVER BE A PRIORITY.
IT SHOULD BE A
PRECONDITION.



Paul O'Neill

Workforce safety training is required, regulated, recurring, and really boring if it isn't done effectively. No wonder why over 80% of safety managers don't think their safety training is sticking.

OSHA, CalOSHA, other States and Canadian Provincial regulators have more than 20 standards that REQUIRE annual recurring training for employees exposed to hazards like bloodborne pathogens, excessive noise, benzene, and asbestos to name a few. In addition, regulators use language like "regular recurring" for some hazard specific standards to emphasize that refresher training is a requirement, but the

timeline is dependent on other factors like seasonality and exposure limits.

In addition, annual training is required for employees who have specific responsibilities, like being a designated first aid provider, or where workers may be in confined spaces or trenching. If new machinery and/or equipment arrives in the workplace, new processes are implemented, or employees take on new jobs with exposure to different hazards, new or refresher training is required.

But there is more to it than just the law...

Human Beings Are Fallible

The human brain is very efficient at offloading information we don't 'need' – in other words, information that we don't use on a regular basis. So we need to find ways to let our brains know that the information we have stored is still relevant.

Ignoring knowledge gaps in areas such as policies and procedures, can lead to expensive mistakes for your business, possible miscommunication, or even, in the case of missing safety knowledge – physical injuries. So, conducting retraining to refresh knowledge and

cover new topics in the workplace is essential.

Besides, learners themselves often report being unable to retain key learning points after a training session concludes, and being unable to recall these concepts when they are needed. And this is not surprising, it's our biology.

Employee refresher course training can reduce the impact of the forgetting curve on an organization's time, resources, and ultimately the bottom line.



ACCORDING TO EBBINGHAUS'
FORGETTING CURVE, WE CAN ESTIMATE
THAT EMPLOYEES FORGET:

- 50% OF WHAT THEY LEARN WITHIN
ONE HOUR
 - 80% OF WHAT THEY LEARN AFTER
TWO DAYS
 - 90% OF WHAT THEY LEARN AFTER 31
DAYS
- 



IN ADDITION TO THEIR SOCIAL COSTS, WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON AN EMPLOYER'S BOTTOM LINE. IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT EMPLOYERS PAY ALMOST \$1 BILLION PER WEEK FOR DIRECT WORKERS' COMPENSATION COSTS ALONE.

WHY REFRESHER TRAINING IS IMPORTANT

Refresher training is important for the employee, the employer, and the organization to improve the quality of work outputs. The following reasons are why a refresher training program is ESSENTIAL.

BUILDING LONG TERM MEMORY IN EMPLOYEES

To keep the memory strengthened it needs to be challenged, human

beings generally forget information they haven't heard in a while hence the need for them to be constantly taught information frequently to build long-term neural networks – basically, muscle memory.

REDUCING MISTAKES AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF WORK

Taking refresher courses is like a fire and mental drill for employees. They

would be required to repeat steps and methods until they become second nature, leaving little room for mistakes. Practice makes perfection which is the structure of a refresher training program.

PROVIDES EFFECTIVE WARM-UP FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE RETURNING FROM A BREAK

Employees who have taken months off the job for different reasons, be it maternity leave, sick leave or any other leave and are returning to work may find it easier to reacquaint themselves with their job responsibilities with a refresher training program.

IT CREATES CULTURE AND CONSISTENCY

It allows co-working and keeps

employees on the same page with the same goal. If a company makes constant learning and development their culture, whereby all employees are being exposed to the same upgrade in practices, techniques, rules, methods, it would reduce conflict of interests and ensure that the whole company, new and old staff are on the same page.

IT IDENTIFIES AND BREACHES KNOWLEDGE GAPS

The results of a refresher's training course would show the part of employees' weaker area of knowledge and their strengths. So, results would help the employee to receive more training in the identified areas to prevent a potential problem and encourage their productivity.

BENEFITS OF REFRESHER TRAINING

Refresher training for employees can benefit an organization in several ways. Some direct advantages include:

- Increased efficiency
- Reduced mistakes
- Fostering a culture of continuous learning
- Creating parity in employee knowledge
- Promoting excellence
- Keeping employees safe in the workplace
- Achieving compliance
- Helping to identify training needs and skills gaps
- Increased employee confidence
- Increased employee retention (less turnover/churn)

- Increased awareness of new products, trends, and marketplace information

*Source: Helen Colman, Refresher
Training: Keep Your Staff Fresh*

WHEN WOULD WE CONDUCT REFRESHER TRAINING?



- Many regulations have specific refresher training requirements
- Many industry/voluntary guidelines have specific training requirements
- Check your company policies and engineering for refresher training requirements
- If it's been an extended time since an employee has performed a task, common sense would indicate they should be trained before performing the task

SIGNS YOUR WORKPLACE NEEDS REFRESHER TRAINING

1. REPEATED MISTAKES/NEAR MISSES/ MINOR INJURIES

Perhaps you have noticed common errors that occur repeatedly. Or maybe you started to notice that products on the manufacturing line aren't being assembled properly, or are passing through QC inspections, but aren't meeting your company's quality standards? Maybe employees are citing an increasingly frequent number of near misses. Mistakes happen in every industry, but if you see

that the same mistakes are being made repeatedly by multiple employees, or the same mistake multiple times by a single employee, this is a strong indicator that refresher training is needed.

2. TECHNOLOGY/EQUIPMENT UPDATES ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD OR USED

If your organization uses technology and/or equipment that is updated from time to time, you may notice that it is consistently being used improperly, not at all, or that

is being underutilized and employees are not making use of its new features. This is likely because you aren't giving refresher training on how to use the tech each time it's updated. This is equally true for machines and systems used in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and almost any other type of industry you can name.

3. NEW AND RENEWED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE NOT FOLLOWED

You may start seeing mistakes every time that renewed policies are published and that may indicate the need to send out refresher material a few times before employees latch on to the new policies. This is especially applicable to the healthcare sector, where new policies are often pushed out weekly in response to incidents, and in conjunction with authorities like the CDC and the WHO.

4. PRODUCTIVITY DECREASES AND EMPLOYEE CHURN INCREASES

This is the nightmare metric that no organization wants to see. If employees are not confident in their abilities to perform a task or are not sure what is expected of them in terms of KPIs or targets, they'll stop being productive. If the situation remains unresolved, employees may start to quit in sizable numbers. If you notice that employees' work output is waning, or the quality of their work is lower, it's probably a great time to provide refresher employee training on key tasks and performance metrics.

Source: Helen Colman, Refresher Training: Keep Your Staff Fresh

SIGNS REFRESHER TRAINING IS NEEDED



- Employees constantly fail to complete assigned tasks on time
- Training fails to improve performance
- Productivity level goes down
- Accident/near miss level increases

REFRESHER TRAINING METHODS

1. FACE-TO-FACE/CLASSROOM TRAINING

This is traditional classroom-style training delivered by an instructor. The main benefits of this method are interactivity between instructor and trainees and the ability to ask questions and tailor the structure of a course depending on the group being taught. The disadvantages are the expense, logistics, and the potential health implications in the current global pandemic.

2. VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

This is classroom style training is delivered by an instructor, but virtually, using web conferencing software. The main benefits of this method are that it maintains the interactivity between instructor and trainees, plus it allows employees to attend remotely from home or any other location. Depending on the software used, the trainer may have access to additional interactive elements such as whiteboarding, surveys, and on-screen drawing that can help spice

up the sessions and retain engagement. The disadvantages are possible technical issues and the fact the training still has to be scheduled – it is synchronous training.

3. ONLINE COURSES (ELEARNING)

Online courses have gained a great deal of popularity, especially over the last 6 months, and with good reason. There are huge benefits to selecting eLearning as the primary method of delivering your refresher training. With the right tools, content creation is quick and can be updated frequently with little effort. It's easy to deliver self-paced training at a scale ranging from a handful of employees to 10,000, and it is also easy to track results to measure the effectiveness of your program and, ultimately, your refresher training's ROI.

3.1 MICROLEARNING

While microlearning can be considered online training, it probably deserves a mention of its own, as it can be a particularly effective method of delivering refresher training to employees 'on the job' via bite-size pieces of content that don't require them to take time off from the machine room or shop floor. It is definitely not suitable for everything, but is certainly worth considering as part of a blended solution.

4. HANDS-ON TRAINING

You're probably already familiar with this refresher training method whereby employees are trained directly at their job site as they perform their work. This method of retraining is especially suited to manufacturing and industry roles that

involve the operation of machinery. The disadvantages of hands-on training are mainly the costs involved in both employee and trainer time.

5. BLENDED LEARNING

This simply implies any combination of the above, possibly mixed with other training methods like coaching or employee shadowing. Most refresher training ultimately ends up being a blended learning solution, often with the major component being online training. The key advantages of a blended approach are flexibility in both content and scheduling.

6. JOB AIDS

Job aids are quick one or two-page guides that address a specific function or task. They can be great as part of a course as

they reinforce new or altered systems and processes until the employee has embedded and retained the knowledge. Job aids may be used to supplement online training or any of the other methods we've discussed.

Traditionally, job aids were either printed documents or digital PDFs. But these days, there are several easy ways to create digital job aids you can include in your refresher training. For example, you can transform any Word documents, PPT presentations, or PDF files into digital flipbooks in a couple of clicks.

Source: Helen Colman, Refresher Training: Keep Your Staff Fresh

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE REFRESHER TRAINING COURSE

Nail down the what, when, and why of your training course for best results.

Now that you understand the why of investing in refresher training, it's time to cover the how. In many ways, refresher training is like any other course. You have to establish learning objectives, offer feedback, and build a community around the course—even if that community is a subset of your larger office culture.

But there are a few extra factors you should

account for if you truly want your ongoing employee training to be successful. Here's what to look out for so that your learners get the most from your refresher course.

1. IDENTIFY BOTH THE TRAINING NEED AND THE FREQUENCY INTERVAL OF THE REFRESHER TRAINING.

What is the purpose of your refresher course, and how often do you plan to run it? Many organizations plan to run refresher training on an annual basis, but they may

vary the information that is covered from year to year. Maybe one year the focus is on customer service, another year it's on security practices. Or perhaps different groups need training in one area, but not in another. Know what material is important enough to warrant a refresher course, and set a timetable that ensures you will cover it at appropriate intervals.

2. MAKE THE CASE TO YOUR LEARNERS SO THAT THEY ARE MOTIVATED TO DO THE COURSE.

Nothing destroys motivation more than the word "mandatory." Sure, for compliance reasons the training may be mandatory, but that doesn't mean it can't also be something your employees are taking because they believe it's important and valuable. Don't wait till the first day of training to show your employees a slide

outlining the purpose behind the refresher course.

Instead, make the case from the moment the dates are announced. Give solid reasoning, and talk about how the training will benefit learners as well as the company. Many employees are actively seeking companies that are willing to invest in employee training. If you can frame it as something that will increase the employees skill set, that will be a big selling point in your favor.

3. SCHEDULE YOUR COURSE SO THAT IT WILL BE MOST EFFECTIVE.

Think about the timing of your training course. Are you about to launch a big company-wide change? Is the dry season for your business about to hit? Is there an annual deadline you need to meet for compliance purposes?

Your employees will retain information best if they aren't overloaded, so avoid stress by scheduling your training during traditional down time. Similarly, your employees will be at peak memory retention in the period directly following their course completion. Try to schedule training as close to any compliance deadline or major business initiative as you can, to keep their memory retention and enthusiasm at its peak.

4. DON'T RECYCLE THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S MATERIAL. RESEARCH AND UPDATE IT TO BE CURRENT.

Don't be satisfied with running the exact same training program year after year. Not only will you miss out on a chance to provide ongoing training, but your learners are more likely to mentally check out if everything is the same. And if your materials look like they haven't been

updated since the 80s, your learners may question if it's still relevant.

If not much has happened, at least take the time to update some of the images to be more current. Look for examples from recent news coverage, or tap into a cultural reference that your audience is likely to pick up on and appreciate. If your learners have to respond to a scenario, write new scenarios every year so that your learners can't repeat the same answer from the year before. Challenge your learners, and they'll become more invested.

5. ASK FOR FEEDBACK.

Be proactive in asking your learners about what they would like to see in future courses. Was there something they wanted to learn more about that wasn't covered? Did some of the information in the course

surprise them? Did they find the course ultimately useful, or were they frustrated by it in any way? Use the feedback to improve the next year's course.

A great refresher training course offers context, creates commitment, and inspires action.

It's hard for many learners to get enthusiastic about what is often considered a basic review course. But refresher training has a lot to offer learners. When your learners believe that the course will benefit them, they are much more likely not just to take the course, but to seek out extra paths toward building expertise and mastery once the refresher course is finished. That is the level of commitment that makes your investment pay off well into the future.

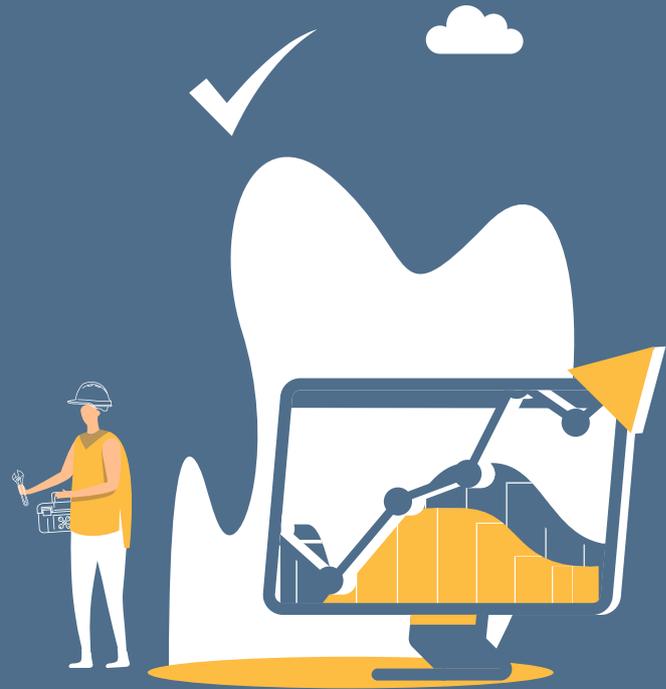
eLearning is a great way to automate the

management and effectiveness of these types of microlearning and refresher training programs without increasing the costs or resource investment.

By Mikelya Fournier

REFRESHER TRAINING is correct when...

- Individual refresher training anytime an employee is having difficulty performing assigned tasks
- There are critical safety aspects to the task
- Tasks are not frequently performed
- Regulation requires refresher training





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