

Four Ideas to Make Space for Learning

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Despite the hectic pace of modern work, many organizations take an additive approach to learning initiatives. Participants are expected to develop new skills while also keeping up with their many day-to-day responsibilities.

How can employees, whose plates are already overflowing into evenings and weekends, greet a new training program or initiative with enthusiasm?

1. CLEAR THE TABLE

Examine programs you've delivered to this audience of employees in the past five years. Lay out a mental map of all the threads of these programs that are still taking learners' time or mental energy.

Retire practices that are no longer critical to your success and may only be hanging around due to inertia.

2. FIND SACRIFICIAL LAMBS

Next, if your course takes an hour a week, take the time to think of where learners will find the time in their schedule. Instead of viewing learning as an additive, it's good to think reductively first.

Working together with your leadership team, find something the learn-



ers can let go of—even just for a little while. Prime candidates might be a monthly meeting or a report that provides little tactical value.

In your launch communications, show your target audience that you respect their current workload, and you've freed up space for learning.

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3. TAKE LESS THAN YOU GIVE

Make it your goal to eliminate more time than your training program will consume. Do the rough math of what your reductive work will save versus what your initiative will consume for learners.

Be generous in your timeframes because tasks often take longer than expected when lifted from the paper into action.

And don't keep this ratio a secret.

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4. CREATE FEEDBACK LOOPS

In a new initiative, it's important to have an ear to the ground to be able to make the necessary course correction. Make sure learners are given the time and opportunity to share their feedback and ideas with you about how the program could support them more.

Don't assume that folks will go out of their way to give you these thoughts; they really are too busy. Build the feedback space into your instructional design, so it's an integral part of the process.

Finally, take time before your teaching to create space. In so doing, you maximize traction and you pre-solve some of your learner engagement issues. Best of all, you set learners up for the things we all hope for: self-generating enthusiasm that yields successful and sustainable outcomes.

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Juliet Funt is the owner and founder of WhiteSpace at Work (www.whitespaceatwork.com). It is her mission to unearth the potential of companies by unburdening their talent.



Julie Funt

She helps executives, managers and teams to answer the critical question, “What thoughts deserve my full attention today?” Funt has been a speaker at the ACUMA Conference. She has given permission to reprint this article in the Pipeline.