

Sharing Knowledge Tidbits as Low Cost Learning Alternative

by Shirley Fine Lee

I have been developing training programs, user manuals, and step-by-step instructions for many years using the idea of presenting learning in small bits in order for it to be absorbed more easily. Offering smaller nuggets of information as needed not only helps the learner, but it saves the company time and can reduce the strain on the training department budget. There are a lot of ways to offer learning in small chunks in a classroom type environment. If we use current instructional design models, we already offer training in modules based on learning concepts. We have already discussed low-cost classroom alternatives such as [in-house symposiums](#) or [lunch and learn sessions](#) in other Perspective articles this year. Now you are probably wondering “what some non-classroom alternatives that may be low or no cost?”

Some outside the classroom options include:

1. Computer Based Training (on your server, over the internet, on individual PCs, etc.)
2. Other Self-Paced Training (videos, audio tapes and pod casts, books – paper-based or e-book versions, documented procedures, reference guides, etc.)
3. Knowledge Sharing (database of knowledge, mentoring, article copies, company newsletters, etc.)

Since many corporations may already have a computer based option set-up as part of their learning management system or blending learning program, I will not cover that in this article. If anyone needs information on that type of program, I suggest checking the ASTD website for a local consultant directory to find vendors. Or to do an internet search, use various mixes of these words: e-learning, computer, based, training, aided, instruction, or learning. Also, you may want to check out the articles Bill Brandon wrote for [Perspective in 2006-2007](#) on e-learning before you make any calls. To search the older newsletter archives, from your browser select menu option EDIT and then select FIND. To find articles by a specific person search for their name or you can search for a single word in the article title to see all related articles.

For corporations, the same may be true of self-paced training options – something exists or is already known about. Video and audio options are abundant and may even be found on Amazon along with many book options. Most trainers already know about Crisp Publications, Get To The Point, and Idiot or Dummy Guides for self-paced training books. Some of these offer lots of space for making personal notes but too little instruction and others offer too much information unless used as an as-needed reference. Consider supplemental information may need to be offered with these options. Another option to consider is the ASTD bookstore or that many ASTD members have written great self-paced guides in their area of expertise. To find local expertise, check the consultant directory and review individual websites for book titles.

This leaves us with knowledge sharing to discuss in this article. Knowledge databases were in vogue during the quality revolution and the good ones are still in use today. Non-database options would be mentoring and sharing through relevant articles. George Hendley wrote a series of articles on mentoring in [Perspectives April-June of 2006](#). Many consultants write articles they would be happy to share. For instance, I write [business and productivity](#) related articles that may be linked to or reprinted, as well as how-to instructions and tips for using [MS Office](#) applications (updated and different from the articles I wrote for [Perspectives in 2001-2004](#)). It may seem like I'm harping on the local consultant directory, but consultants do write articles on their websites, blogs, and newsletters. Many of those consultants would be pleased to have you reprint one of their articles in a company newsletter as long as you give them a byline and state the original source. However, be sure you ask permission before printing anyone's copyrighted materials. If the article is on-line, you typically can share the original URL for readers to link to it without permission rather than reprinting an entire article. If you want a custom article for your newsletter, most consultants would also be willing to

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Newsletter?” which covers formatting options and the advantages/disadvantages of both paper-based and electronic newsletters for employees or customers.

About the Author: Shirley Fine Lee is the author of “[R.A!R.A! A Meeting Wizard's Approach](#)”, a guide to planning and conducting meetings for productivity and effectiveness, and smoothly run. She has considerable training and expertise in leading effective meetings herself, as well as training others to do the same. Shirley has worked as a training and development specialist since 1986, and an independent consultant since 2000 when she joined Dallas ASTD. She has extensive experience helping organizations with their team building, training development, meeting facilitation, presentation delivery, and other communication needs. You may read many business articles by Shirley (some of the e-articles may be reprinted in company newsletters) from her website or on the multi-contributor productivity tips blog at <http://2bproductive.blogspot.com/>. If you want to find out

more about Shirley, sign up for her newsletter, or contact her, please see her website at www.ShirleyFineLee.com.