



ALLENCOMM

# MICROLEARNING TECHNIQUES

Driving Results by Empowering Learners



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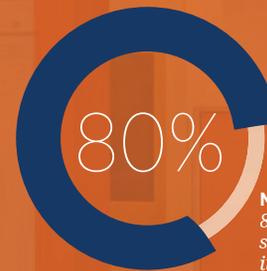
# INTRODUCTION

As technological changes transform our everyday lives, we must address the influence technology has on how we learn and work. Whether it's simply new habits or a total overhaul in the way we think, technology has changed the way we do our jobs and the way we look for information to help us do those jobs.

That is why companies need to adapt the way they train employees. Microlearning can help organizations adjust to this change in the way employees learn. AllenComm's CEO Ron Zamir says microlearning is more than a trendy buzzword. "It's a response to growing learner and workplace complexity," he says. "As technology changes more quickly, it's allowed us to incorporate microlearning faster than any other transformation in our approach to education."

As learners become more informed, and have more control over when, where and how they access information in their day-to-day lives, your employees and customers expect a similar level of access and control in their training. Employees also have expanding job responsibilities and are being expected to do "more with

more." Microlearning can serve more personalized and relevant information closer to the point of need. By using micro elements in your curriculum, learners are able to choose only what is most relevant to their job and experience level – ultimately creating a personalized experience.



**More with MORE**  
80% of employees  
saw their workload  
increase.<sup>1</sup>

- CEB

Microlearning is an important modality for you to consider when developing your training strategy. You can empower learners and drive productivity by expanding access to focused, relevant content. With the large amount of information we are expected to know to be effective at work, microlearning helps by letting learners engage with what they need to and easily look up the rest.

# WHAT IS MICROLEARNING?

## 3 critical components

There are three elements that define microlearning. With rare exceptions, these three criteria will guide your creation of training with a big impact. We'll use the example of one of our clients, [Domino's](#), to demonstrate how the three should be intertwined.

Perhaps the characteristic most commonly thought to be essential to microlearning – brevity – is a result of the first two elements. When you ensure that a module is strategically designed to focus the activity to achieve a specific objective, you will create something shorter than traditional training.

# 1

### Microlearning is targeted to a specific performance objective.

Microlearning is, by its nature, specific in what it is trying to accomplish. One microlearning module is aimed at introducing one concept, changing one behavior or exploring one idea – in short, it is linked to one performance objective.

Domino's has created micro courses that are each targeting something specific, such as food waste reduction or a decrease in pizza remakes.

# 2

### Microlearning includes a focused learning activity.

To accomplish that specific objective, microlearning uses a single learning activity. It might be a game, a discussion or an interactive video, but that activity is focused on just one behavior or concept.

To meet their objectives, the Domino's courses were designed as games, with each game helping employees learn one aspect of how to quickly and accurately make pizza.

# 3

### Microlearning is usually part of a larger strategy.

Finally, microlearning does not typically exist on its own. It should be part of an organization's broader strategy. Rather than simply slicing and dicing a 2-hour course into shorter segments, those microlearning elements should be used strategically to complement a broader learning strategy.

Although the Domino's games are all microlearning courses, they contribute to a larger vision for how to improve performance and use training to support and help drive the future of the brand.



## IS MICROLEARNING RIGHT FOR YOU?

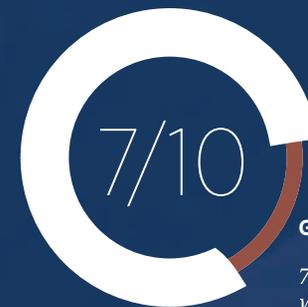
Microlearning may be right for your organization if:

- Your company's products or services are updated frequently,
- You are introducing new systems or processes,
- Your goal is to manage change,
- Your employees have different levels of knowledge or skills, or
- Completion rates are key to success.

However, even if microlearning will work well for your organization, don't jump into design thinking it will also be a quicker,

cheaper version of traditional training. CEO Ron Zamir says, "Microlearning is not so much about short versus long. It's about distinct content pieces versus broader training." While microlearning is great for flexibility and agility, being able to create great, targeted content can take just as much or more development time than longer, but broader, training.

At Allen Communication, we find microlearning especially helpful for customer education and change management projects. Because of client and learner needs, we now have microlearning or micro elements in roughly 70 percent of our projects, up from 20 percent just five years ago.



### GOOGLE IT

*70% of workers say when they need to learn something for their jobs, they first Google it. Fewer than 12% turn to their learning organization first.<sup>2</sup>*

*- Degreed*

# MICROLEARNING IN THE LEARNING LIFECYCLE

## READINESS, DISCOVERY, REINFORCEMENT

The beauty of microlearning is not just in its focused nature. When considering what role microlearning should play in your curriculum, you have a lot of flexibility. Micro assets can be used anywhere along the learner lifecycle – sometimes as a standalone piece, sometimes to augment a larger piece of training.

As your learners progress through the learning lifecycle – from readiness to discovery to reinforcement – microlearning can play a helpful role in any or all of these stages. You can use an asset like a video or game to engage learners before the training ever begins. Microlearning can be helpful when you're explaining the purpose of training, motivating employees to get

involved, providing helpful assets that will be useful in the larger curriculum, or all of the above.

Once learners have moved into the discovery phase, your courses can help them focus on specific behaviors that need to change or information they need to know. Using these assets alone or with traditional training helps you impact and track change better. Finally, microlearning is most commonly associated with reinforcement, and for good reason. By increasing the frequency of short training reinforcements, your learners will retain information and good habits much longer.



# READINESS

## ENGAGE LEARNERS BEFORE TRAINING



*Client: Zions BanCorporation*

Microlearning can engage learners before training even begins. It's not just about telling employees what they will be learning in the training; it's also about motivating them so they want to take the training. This pre-training engagement can be done through videos, diagnostic quizzes, infographics and other micro content that primes learners.

Zions Bancorporation is in the midst of a major transition as it modernizes and simplifies its banking systems. Zions understands that a successful transition will depend in part on its ability to clearly communicate with its employees through all phases of the transition. To do this, Zions partnered with Allen to create two motion videos that inform and excite learners about the coming changes in an open, straightforward way.

This short video tells the story of the transition, and explains how the banking systems will be updated while the bank continues to do business. Using a racecar analogy, the video not only helps employees understand what the change entails, but helps them embrace the transition by seeing how it will create a stronger, better future for the company.

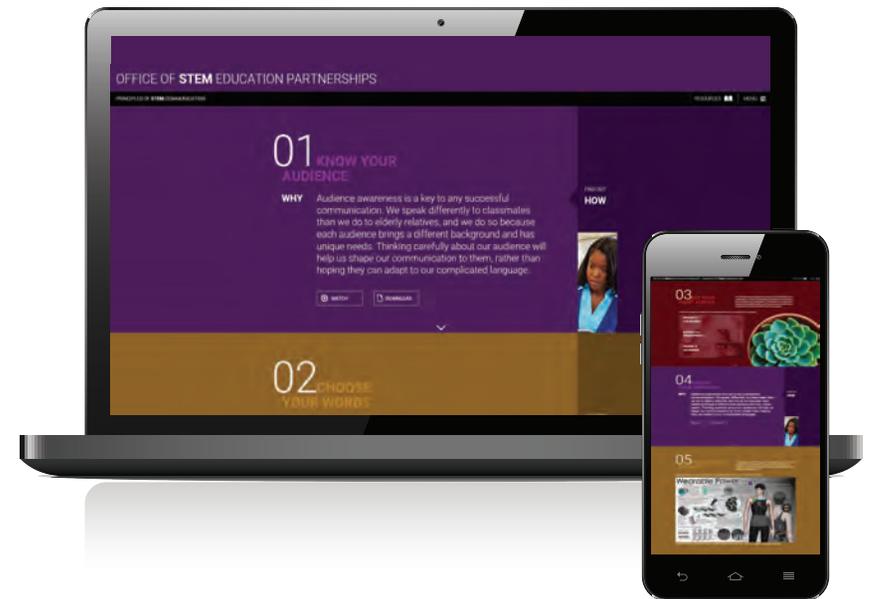
# DISCOVERY

## SHORT, FOCUSED CONTENT

In discovery, microlearning provides short content that focuses on one performance objective. This creates targeted behavior change where it's needed. A 5-in-5 model can be a useful method in which five activities are conducted in five minutes, each focused on changing a specific behavior.

At Northwestern University, they wanted to help high school students and teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) understand how to communicate information that is often thought of as too technical. With Allen, Northwestern created a microlearning course called the [Principles of STEM Education](#). The course needed to be helpful, but streamlined and understandable so it could easily be taken into any classroom

Using short modules, this course helps learners understand easy ways to communicate more complicated ideas. Each module contains “why” and “how” sections to give learners a fundamental understanding of STEM communication and tools to use. This course will empower students to better communicate their ideas and facilitate future STEM grants.



*Client: Northwestern University*

# REINFORCEMENT

## PERSONALIZE AND REVIEW



Client: Corporate Executive Board (CEB)

Trainers can use microlearning to personalize and review learning, provide reference tools, or develop performance dashboards. Without reinforcement, information can be quickly forgotten, but learners do not want to repeat a longer course only to get the specific information they needed. That's where microlearning comes in.

For example, Allen Communication worked with the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) to develop a tool to reinforce what call center employees learned about different caller communication styles. This 5-in-5 tool included five skillbuilder modules that reinforced prior web-based training the learners had taken.

Using the 5-in-5 piece, employees were able to review the information, see it again, try to get the best response, then demonstrate and discuss the behaviors. These simple microlearning tools made the overall curriculum far more effective.



# DEVELOPING A MICROLEARNING STRATEGY

Use these four steps to guide your development of a microlearning strategy.



## 1. ASSESS

Assess your organization's needs and determine what behaviors you are trying to change with microlearning.



## 2. EVALUATE

With which courses or modules are your learners typically less engaged? What specifically is causing this disengagement?



## 3. MAP

Choose a design that can be used in a variety of different ways and for a variety of topics. Broad applicability can save time and money.



## 4. DEFINE

What are your budget, timeframe and internal resources? Invest more on the initial design, because you will probably reuse it later.

If you're new to microlearning, Ron recommends starting with a prototype that can provide a "wow factor." A successful first microlearning initiative will help you obtain buy-in for future projects.

It's also a best practice to manage microlearning content outside your LMS – perhaps on a website or portal that can be used on other systems. Doing so will allow you to use Google Analytics to gather data to demonstrate the return you're getting on your investment.

And you will get a return on that investment. Whether you have a small budget for a simple series of short discussion activities or a larger budget for more complex content like games and interactive videos, microlearning can drive results by empowering your employees with the access to and control over information they want in a 21st-century workplace.

# WHO WE ARE

As a training company, Allen has a proven record of helping companies improve employee engagement by creating custom training for all types of training needs and industries worldwide. Learn more about our award-winning custom training solutions.

Get in touch:

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