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**Five proven tips**  
to boost employee  
engagement in a  
language training  
program.

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# Introduction

**Driving higher engagement is a consistent challenge for everyone involved in developing talent in an organisation.**

And it has never been a more relevant challenge than it is today. Covid-19 has rapidly accelerated emergent shifts towards blended and fully online learning approaches, and these transitions to new ways of working and learning are likely to be the new paradigm in Japan.

But how do you know if a training programme is effective if you are not in the room when learning is taking place? Why do some training programs work well, and others fail? What are the levers you can pull that ensure your people stay focused and motivated when they have so many other distractions in a remote working environment?

In this post pandemic context, a recent global survey<sup>1</sup> suggests that the most pressing strategic priorities for learning

and development (L&D) professionals right now are to:

- better evaluate the impact of learning
- increase engagement
- enable self-directed online learning

Clearly then, driving higher engagement is key to the success of a training program. And whilst there is no one silver bullet, there are engagement strategies L&D professionals can employ that will help them, and their learners – to reach their goals faster. After all, investing in the right training requires time, effort, reliable research, and an ability to show a return on investment (ROI). With these factors in play, it is important engagement does not fall to the wayside. And kindling the fire of employee engagement need not be an uphill battle.

<sup>1</sup> 2020 Workplace Learning Report (LinkedIn Learning)

High engagement is important especially when the focus is on improved outcomes, productivity, and employee satisfaction.

Recent research from Harvard Business Review finds that employees who are satisfied with their work environments are more productive, more likely to stay, and more attracted to their company over competitors.

In this eBook, we offer insight into factors that contribute to higher engagement in language training programs. We'll define engagement and dive into five proven ways for managers to boost learner engagement once a language training program is implemented.

Only  
**13%** of employees are engaged at work<sup>2</sup>

Only  
**21%** of employees report being totally committed to their employers<sup>3</sup>

Only  
**10%** of organisations measure engagement continuously<sup>4</sup>

Only  
**15%** of a manager's time is spent on promoting employee engagement<sup>5</sup>

Yet  
**50%** increase in engagement occurs when microlearning is added to a training program<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gallup: State of the Global Workforce; 2017

<sup>3</sup> Association for Talent Development: Latest Stats on Global Employee Engagement Trends

<sup>4</sup> HR.com The State of Employee Engagement in 2019

<sup>5</sup> LinkedIn 2019 Workplace Learning Report

<sup>6</sup> Shift Learning Numbers Don't Lie Why Microlearning is Better for Your Learners (and You too)

# Defining language training program success through employee engagement

**Employee engagement is the level of enthusiasm, willingness, and commitment an employee feels to carry out their work and achieve organisational goals.**

For language training programs, more intrinsic factors also impact engagement including diversity and inclusion, industry-specific training, and content that is interesting and reflective of the real world. Nothing impacts a company's financial health and profitability like employee engagement. Once a language training program is implemented, the most successful organisations offer instruction that is personalised and adaptive to the needs of learners to sustain motivation. For Human Resource Managers and other L&D professionals, setting your employees up for success means ensuring your company's success too.

Let's explore five ways to boost employee engagement...



# 1. Begin with the end in mind

**There's an old saying by renowned psychologist Fitzhugh Dodson that still rings true today – “Without goals and a plan to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail without a destination.”**

No company should launch a language training program without an end-goal in mind. And perhaps more important than an end-goal is a plan to get there. Put another way, it isn't enough to say that your employees should learn English.

First, think about your organisational goals and then build a step-by-step plan to get employees there. As an organisation, team leaders should reach a consensus about which metrics will determine the success of a language training program. Examples of success metrics include a minimum

number of predetermined study hours, whether or not expectations on proficiency level improvement were met, average scores on satisfaction surveys, and evidence of on-the-job language use.

For example, with a structured plan, program administrators can help employees accomplish the goals of feeling more confident when giving presentations or error-free emails, for instance, through better English language skills. When clear goals are set, employees are more likely to stay engaged in the program and meet those goals.





## 2. Offer employees an incentive

**Incentives can help employees or other language training program participants to stay for the long run.**

Consistent regular check-ins with participating employees allow you to garner firsthand feedback on the types of incentives that may work better for individual employees.

Consider tying employee progress in with a program that includes performance reviews, company-wide recognition, certificates, and/or awards. Visible leaderboards in the office are a positive way to encourage friendly competition among learners. Offering a health and wellness program is another way to fire up engagement. Depending on your organisation, also consider

financial rewards and opportunities for promotion as successful ways to incentivise employees.

In a recent case study, we shared the success of CENIBRA, a leading global pulp manufacturer with high employee engagement in its language program. To encourage employee engagement, CENIBRA consistently tracked employee performance and acknowledged the top five performing employees in a monthly company newsletter. To help other employees strive to work harder, the top 5 learners each month also received credit for a one-hour private lesson which led to improved proficiency levels.

### 3. Innovate your language program with microlearning

**In its simplest form, microlearning is a method of learning that delivers information in a smaller and easier-to-digest format. Yet, microlearning isn't just bite-sized training.**

Microlearning is hyper-personalised and offers the right amount of information in the right amount of time to help learners achieve specific goals. Microlearning activates our working memory capacity and gives only enough information to help learners achieve a specific objective.

For L&D managers looking to make a big impact, microlearning makes use of shortening attention spans, encourages employee engagement, and helps demonstrate a ROI through improved employee productivity with efficient, personalised instruction.

In language training programs, microlearning has the ability to make a significant impact on employee engagement. In fact, according to a report by Software Advice, microlearning increases employee engagement by up to 50%.



## 4. Choose a flexible program

**The inconvenience of not being able to study any time or any place is one challenge that inhibits employees from excelling in language training programs.**

In many global organisations, employees are spread across varying time zones which puts a hamper on all employees studying at the same time.

For true success, employees need individual time to practice as they progress through their language learning journey. Similar to the benefits of microlearning, Forbes reports learners that had access to virtual instruction had better control over their own learning, enabling them to work at their own pace when compared to face-to-face only classes.<sup>7</sup> According to a survey conducted of nearly 400 employees, 50% indicated they would use their company's learning tools more if the courses are shorter.

Program administrators and employees also need to be on the same page about the duration of English practice time. Allocating a dedicated space and carving out time for employees to learn is imperative. And even more than that, ensuring your language program is available offsite, though web and mobile applications, is a clear way to increase engagement. From there, learners can practice at a time most convenient for them – during lunch, a commute or other downtime.

Virtual live instruction, as well as language practice that happens online, can be more accessible than traditional models, making it easier for learners to stay engaged, and, therefore, be more effective than in-person classes.



<sup>7</sup> Forbes : Online Education: From Good to Better to Best

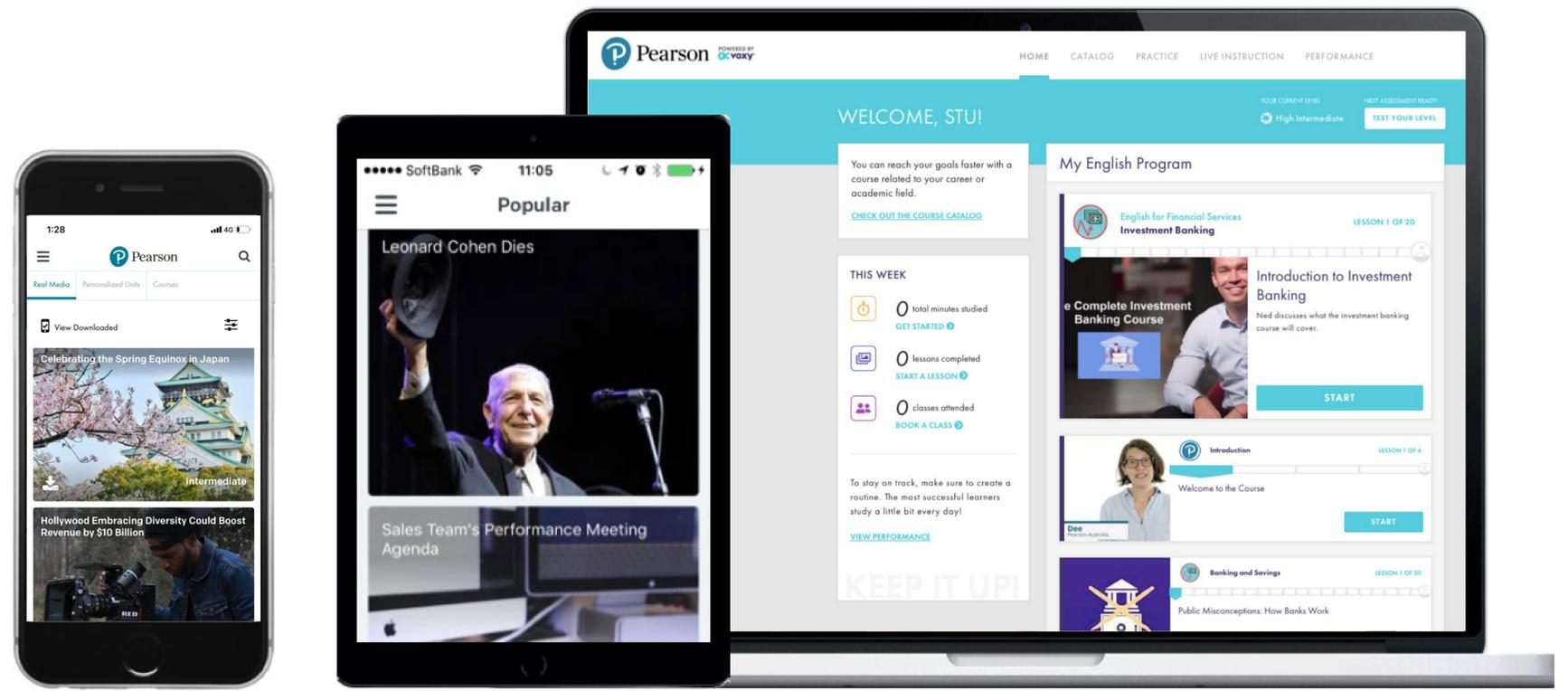


## 5. Provide personalised and real world content

**Practice makes perfect. And to keep engagement up, the content offered to employees should also apply to real-world scenarios.**

Boost employee engagement by providing relevant and personalised content that is specific to employee roles and goals. Language training works best when learners can practice with content that is interesting, relevant and can be immediately applied. When learners have a heightened interest in learning English, they are more likely to stay engaged than those who do not.

Content offered in your language training program should be adaptive to the needs and interests of each learner. *Pearson Online English* has a focus on this element. One example is its ability to utilise media that learners regularly engage with in their daily lives (news articles, videos, tweets, etc.) and transform them into English lessons.



# Transform the way you deliver language learning

You now have five proven tips to make your language training program a success.

Now what?

Put them to the test with *Pearson Online English*, an innovative web and mobile language learning platform that gives people the real-world skills they need to be successful in their real-world careers.

Backed by machine learning algorithms, it enables employers to:

- provide personalized learning experiences for each employee, with a wide range of authentic English content from Technology to Finance to Hospitality,
- support their employees to retain a clear sense of achievement with virtual instructor-led training and in-built assessments,
- have full visibility into cohort and performance data that help them drive better business decisions,
- drive better engagement, higher proficiency gains, and increased overall productivity at work.

*Pearson Online English* is an all in one solution for transforming English skills according to your organization's needs.

**REQUEST A DEMO**

