

Informal Learning: LinkedIn Learning

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Introduction

The informal learning model comes in my many forms including viewing a video, reading articles, participating in chats or forums or even attending a meetup (“Informal Learning,” 2017). LinkedIn Learning, formerly known as Lynda.com, is a well-known informal learning platform where learners go to gain further knowledge and to enhance their skills, a website that offers an enormous collection of video tutorials ranging a wide variety of topics (Baker & Settle, 2013). The following paper will provide reasons for the importance of informal learning, give a brief historical overview of how LinkedIn Learning, previously called Lynda.com formed and where the learning platform is today, the reasons for the success, and the future of informal learning.

Informal Learning

Individuals are always curious and looking to learn something new. Time, money, and other constraints give informal learning the best options for learners to explore and to check it out. Also, the demand for informal learning increased because organizations are looking to train the staff the most efficient way since many are dispersed in a large geographic footprint and technology as afforded staff to work in the remote location, but they need the training to keep their skills up to date. (“The Growth of Informal Learning & the Opportunity it Creates,” n.d.). Besides, informal learning is a perk to help retain staff as well since individuals are always looking to develop themselves and to enhance their professional development.

LinkedIn Learning is the platform of choice for any organization because it has a well-stocked repository of learning materials from subject matter experts (Porter, 2015). Also, learners determine the order of importance of what they learn and what training or focus area

they need to help them with their end goals. Besides, this platform provides the organization with the tool to be cost effective on the training budgets and to save staff time on traveling.

Motivation Theory in Learning

Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifi, Alwi, & Mat (2017) see the connection between motivation and the learning process. “Motivation is the key for human being’s aspirations and achievement, and the learning involves a lifelong process” (Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifi, Alwi, & Mat, 2017). “One of the motivation theory called self-determination, a theory developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, states the support of our natural tendencies to behave effectively” (“Self-Determination Theory,” n.d.). Individuals see learning as an opportunity to be more efficiency in their daily lives. We continue to learn to find better ways to resolve the task.

LinkedIn Learning

History

LinkedIn Learning, formerly known as Lynda.com, is an online learning platform co-founded by Lynda Weinman and Bruce Heavin. The founders launch a website in 1995 where students can go additional resources and materials and this medium of learning is before YouTube days (Porter, 2015). It began when Lynda was teaching a web design course in 1993, she went to the bookstore to find a book where students can use as guidance for her class, but she ended up finding no material suitable for her class. Lynda found a book that was too technical for an average student to understand and she decides in 1995 to start a website and to develop her reference materials for her to communicate with her students (Porter, 2015). Initially, the website is free of charge, where she generates funds through her in-person training class. The in-person training class is always sold out, but it did hit a roadblock when the economy went sour in 2001, the dot com crash and 9/11 event brought lost to the business and Lynda aids off 75% of her staff

and is fortunate to survive this crisis; retools the business strategy to prevent this from ever occurring again (Porter, 2015). She decides to put everything online and discontinues the in-person training part.

The online platform starts with a \$25 monthly subscription model. The business begins slow to gain customers, but eventually business begins to pick up and continues to grow every year afterward. The heavy competition develops in the market for massive open online courses, but Lynda determines to stay with her strategy of offering a full library of videos and having customers choose to take classes of their choices (Porter, 2015). This strategy works out perfectly for the business and continues to make substantial investments in content where the library is a collection of 6,300 courses and more than 267,000 video tutorials (Porter, 2015).

The next stage of life for the online platform that made sense for both the founders and the acquiring company in 2013; LinkedIn decides to purchase the Lynda.com for \$1.5 Billion. The synergy is a perfect match for both companies since it helps to increase the offering values. LinkedIn is looking to keep its massive customer database engaged on its website by offering a learning component to keep them more engaged, which the Lynda.com platform will address later in 2017 (Kapko, 2015). The Lynda.com platform merged with LinkedIn; the new name is called LinkedIn Learning, continues to be a top contender for learners to acquire relevant knowledge and for those who need new or stronger skill sets (Kapko, 2015). Kapko (2015) sees this positive synergy because technology is changing rapidly and keeping people current with the latest skills require a comprehensive learning database.

Corporate Success Stories

There are many success stories through the use of LinkedIn Learning and highlight two corporations who see the platform as a plus to talent development and to enhance company

culture and image. Ellie Mae offers mortgage underwriting and develops software for loan processing. Barker works as the senior director of Learning and Development at Ellie Mae, emphasis the staff need to continuous learning and to be challenged to stay on top of the competitive market. He explains “that LinkedIn Learning does a great job of curating contents that are going to be meaningful to the learners and engaging and different from any other platform that I am aware of” (“LinkedIn learning customer stories,” 2016).

Zillow Group is a real estate database company that sees LinkedIn Learning as an integral part of the staff’s professional and career development. The company mission is to provide the team with opportunities to grow and to empower them to go beyond their comfort zone. Lauren Miller is the senior project manager of learning and development. She comments “that the LinkedIn Learning platform with the ease of finding the relevant material and the convenience factor for staff to enhance their skills while on the go” (“LinkedIn learning customer stories,” 2016).

Evaluation of Lynda.com at Lethbridge College

Benoit (2016) explains that Lethbridge College is up for a renewal of its existing e-learning platform called Atomic Learning. The renewal committee feels that an alternative option called Lynda.com will be a fit for the college requirement. A research team runs a semester-long pilot program of Lynda.com to evaluate the benefits compared to its existing e-learning platform. Participants are given a survey after the evaluation period and the data collected found difference of interests with the use of Lynda.com (Benoit, 2016). A few of the open-ended feedback from students include: “Lynda helped them learn more outside of what they taught in class; was useful as an out-of-class resource when the instructor wasn’t available”

(Benoit, 2016). From this study, Lynda.com is a plus to student's learning and a tremendous additional learning resource tool.

Conclusion

Individuals continue to strive for excellence and the thirst to acquire new knowledge. LinkedIn Learning is one of the solutions for the corporation to keep their staff engaged and to help them to develop their career and professional development. Also, LinkedIn Learning will continue to exist because of the convenience factor, ease of use of the platform, and the curated contents that engage the learners.

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