

LIFE SCIENCE TRAINING

eLearning Solutions for
Healthcare Professionals

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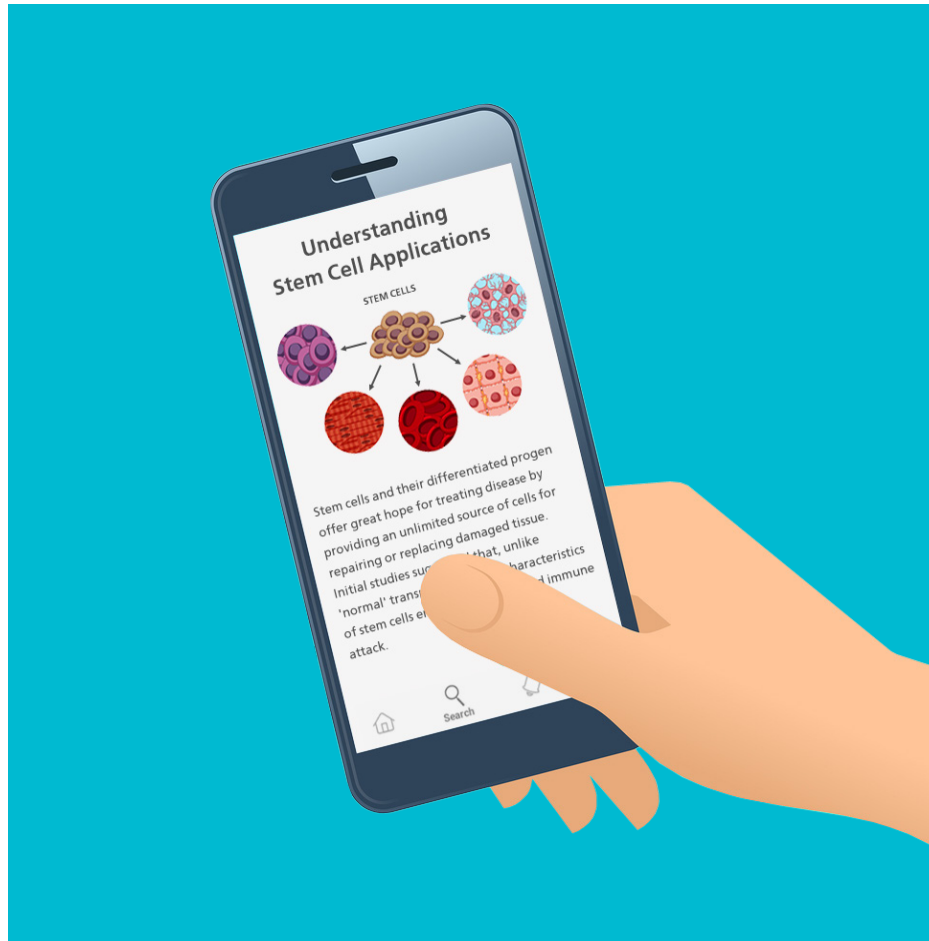


EBOOK

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INTRODUCTION



As of 2017, there's hardly an industry that hasn't been deeply transformed by changes in technology. With the prevalence of mobile devices, advancements in AI, and enhanced communication across the world, one thing is clear: nowadays, every industry is the tech industry.

Healthcare and life science are no different. Healthcare professionals, physicians, and sales reps in this industry have to keep up with technological advancements in order to be successful at their work. New clinical studies, therapies, and treatments come available regularly, meaning physicians and others must take time out of their busy schedules to stay ahead of changes in their field. If they don't, mistakes can literally be deadly.

So how can you, as a trainer or manager, ensure your staff and sales reps are up to speed on the most recent industry information in order to provide a positive outcome for patients? It starts with understanding the unique learning needs of healthcare professionals.

CHALLENGES WITH TRAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



As experts in life science eLearning for over two decades, we at KDG have identified three things that set healthcare professionals apart from other types of learners. These three challenges make it difficult, but not impossible to create effective training programs:

- **Their expertise is varied.** Unfortunately, a “one course fits all” model doesn’t quite work when it comes to life science! A learner’s needs will vary depending both on their level of experience (intern, staff, or physician, for example) and their area of specialty. You’ll need to design each course with your specific target audience in mind, or face costly miscommunications.
- **Healthcare sales reps face a steep learning curve.** Sales teams need to understand two different things in order to sell products in the life science industry: they must understand how products solve patients’ problems and how the product actually works when it’s used. For example, a pharmaceutical sales rep must understand the properties of a particular medication – but they must also know the oncologist’s process for diagnosing patients in order to recommend products that meet those needs. This can get very technical very quickly.

CHALLENGES WITH TRAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



- **They don't have much time.** Workdays are busy and stressful for physicians, healthcare professionals, and sales reps. As technology empowers healthcare institutions to service patients faster while maintaining quality care, more patients are being treated - leading to an even bigger workload for healthcare employees. Training and education need to fit into their work schedules, not detract from it.

The key to getting results from your training courses with these learners is to employ the three Ms: education must be motivational, meaningful, and memorable. One of the best ways to hit all three is with interactive eLearning.

WHY eLEARNING?



Healthcare professionals are already engaging in eLearning – whether they realize it or not! Smart phones, tablets, and laptops are ubiquitous at work and at home. Pew Research states that as of 2017, 95% of Americans own smart phones, with tablet ownership skyrocketing up to 51% from only 3% back in 2010.

Healthcare professionals are already comfortable communicating and obtaining information using these devices. eLearning meets them where they already are, educating them in a format that's engaging and convenient. Here are a few more reasons eLearning is ideal for busy physicians, sales reps, and other healthcare professionals:

- **It's cost-effective.** There are no raw materials to print, instructor salaries to pay, or travel expenses.
- **It's always there.** Unlike one-time training or classroom sessions, eLearning is available from anywhere, 24/7. Learners can pause and repeat courses until they achieve mastery.
- **It saves you time.** Templates allow you to customize eLearning elements for different audiences and topics. When there's a quick news update or product release you need to share, you can update and distribute a module almost instantly.

If you're not using eLearning already, there's no better time to start.

TOP 4 eLEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES



In our experience, we've found the following four things are especially helpful when educating life science professionals. Keep these in mind as you plan your eLearning course:

#1: INCORPORATE MICROLEARNING

Microlearning provides relevant, small chunks of content that the learner can review quickly before moving on to a busy day. Because physicians, HCPs, and sales reps face demands from every direction, their attention spans suffer. Microlearning remedies this by presenting only the most important information in a succinct way.

#2: BE INTERACTIVE

When you think of eLearning, you probably imagine multimedia – video, images, and text delivered together in a digital format. While this is the first step to designing an engaging eLearning course, the magic happens when you use multimedia to illustrate real-life interactions. Here are a few ways to do this:

Make a step-through guide. These are great for introducing new products or providing IFUs (instructions for use). For example, imagine your course is showing how to conduct a follow-up visit with a patient to adjust a pacemaker. The step-through guide would show the pacemaker software screen and guide them on what to select during each step of the process. The effect? The learner will feel as if they've actually conducted the follow-up visit, which enhances their retention of the new material.

TOP 4 eLEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES



Try role playing scenarios. Remember those “choose your own adventure” books? Interactive role play in eLearning is structured in a similar way, where each decision the learner makes will guide them toward a unique outcome. Here are some examples:

- **For the physician or healthcare professional:** Present the learner with a “patient chart.” Using the information on hand, the learner should be able to make a diagnosis.
- **For the sales rep:** The sales rep is conversing with a customer. The customer asks questions about a product, and the rep must answer questions about features, benefits, and how the product works. Alternately, you could design a consultative sale scenario in which the rep must ask the customer questions to determine which aspects of the product would be most interesting to the customer.

Add gaming elements. The best eLearning uses gamification to hook learners and improve retention, providing fast-paced, immediate feedback as the learner interacts with the module. These are most effective when presented as mastery challenges or knowledge-checks after presenting the initial training material.

TOP 4 eLEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES



#3: PROVIDE SUPPORT WITHIN BLENDED LEARNING

There's no way around it: when it comes to training in the life sciences, in-person learning will always play an essential role. No amount of digital instruction can completely replace the hands-on experience of conducting a medical procedure. For the physician, practicing these procedures with the guidance of a trained professional is integral to their learning experience. You can't commit something to muscle memory if you're not moving your muscles!

So, how can you use eLearning to enhance live training? The answer is to use pre-study training. Pre-study training happens before a live event and provides as much relevant information as possible to help streamline the live training event. This way, the live training session can focus only on tasks that cannot be learned online, saving time for everyone involved.

Here's an example. Imagine you have a new delivery method for implanting a pacing system into the heart. In an eLearning module a physician learns the parts of the delivery system and how it works. The physician interacts with the equipment in a graphic simulation and completes knowledge checks to verify their understanding. Then, when the physician enters an animal or cadaver lab, they already have a working knowledge of how to conduct the procedure - rather than fumbling to decide which knob deflects the catheter tip!

TOP 4 eLEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES



#4: USE EDUCATION PORTALS

Centralize the learning experience by using an education portal. An education portal is a website where learners can upload, download, and interact with learning material.

An education portal can contain a library of resources like workbooks, case studies, videos, and interactive training. You can issue certificates of completion when learners reach milestones. Best of all, you can track how and when users interact with different assets - which gives you the information you need to hone your coursework to provide a better learning experience for everyone.

Another great supplement to eLearning is the use of social media within your education portal. Your learners are likely already using Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter to communicate with friends and colleagues, so they'll be comfortable communicating digitally with others within your education portal platform. A word of warning about learning in an online community, however: make sure to assign a moderator to any digital space in which people are able to comment freely.

TOP 4 eLEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LIFE SCIENCES



Here are a few other creative ways to use education portals to empower your learners:

- **Patient case study submissions.** Allow physicians to upload their own patient case studies. This allows physicians to share and discuss unusual cases. Over time, these can be developed into a pool of cases that others can learn from.
- **Make an image atlas.** An image atlas is a gallery of images that can be downloaded and accessed by multiple users.
- **Create an FAQ page.** Make your “frequently asked questions” page interactive so that learners can add and answer others’ questions. This helps to build community while also providing valuable information to other learners (with little extra effort on your part!)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR eLEARNING DEVELOPMENT



You're almost ready to start development of your eLearning initiative. But before you jump into course development, there are some final considerations specific to the health and life sciences industries.

Your production team should be experienced with technical content. When it comes to learning, physicians and healthcare professionals have to digest complex concepts quickly. An eLearning course for this audience should be distilled down to only the essentials. Language should be clear and active with no "fluff" or irrelevant sidenotes. Make sure that the information you're providing is accurate, since an outdated or incorrect instruction could potentially have life-threatening consequences.

Tailor your training for multiple roles. You should be prepared to adjust your courses for multiple audiences through the use of customizable templates. Even when you're illustrating one core concept to multiple audiences (for example, a new type of medical equipment), the language you use and the information you relay should be made relevant to each specific group.

Don't forget about compliance and FDA requirements. Factor in a process and timeline for obtaining approval from regulators. Because you're providing education in a highly clinical environment, you're likely to face some unforeseen regulatory challenges when planning your eLearning course.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR eLEARNING DEVELOPMENT



Track your results. One of the best things about modern eLearning is the array of tracking tools at your disposal. If you're launching a course on how to use a new device, you should track which physicians completed the course and compare these results to physicians' performance on the job. Analytics can serve as a great source of validation for the hard work you put into your training programs.

Plan extra time for course localization. Your project timeline should always include time and budget for translation and other globalization/localization processes. Your eLearning efforts won't pay off unless your message is clear to all demographics of learners.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Developing a technical eLearning course can be a massive challenge, even for an experienced manager. Consider enlisting the help of an eLearning company. KDG InterActive has been a leader in life science eLearning development since 1991. Contact us at [contact info here] today to talk about your training project.



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