SIMULATION TRAINING FOR CORPORATE TRAINING:
The Practical and Profit Benefits
INTRODUCTION

Simulation training is a growing demand within the eLearning industry. Its popularity is due to the significant value of providing learners with hands-on access to systems and applications with the opportunity to perform learning tasks in a simulated environment.

WHAT IS SIMULATION TRAINING?

Simulation training is a virtual learning medium providing a safe practice ground for users to acquire new skills. Simulations are commonly used in corporate training to teach new systems, processes, or software or to re-create situations and experiences, for example, an interactive sales interaction with a customer.

COMMON TYPES OF SIMULATION TRAINING

There are many types of simulation training, from basic interactions to complex, simulated experiences, for example, flight simulators.

The common types of simulation training useful in corporate training include:

- **Show Me simulations**: Learners watch tasks or system procedures being completed within a virtual mock-up of a system. The simulation can be accompanied with conceptual text and audio voice-over describing what is happening and the reasoning behind each transition. A Show Me simulation is a good way to introduce an interface and teach navigation pathways.

- **Teach Me simulations**: Learners are guided through how to complete tasks or processes as if interacting with the real, live system. Text panels, labels, or audio provide instructional guidance for task completion. If learners make a mistake, they can immediately receive feedback and guidance to enable them to correct their mistake. Teach Me simulations give learners the opportunity to make, and learn from, mistakes without the associated impacts.

- **Test Me simulations**: Learners have the opportunity to review real-life scenarios and complete system tasks or processes to assess understanding and application of knowledge. Learners generally receive feedback at the end of the test simulation and are given the chance to review and retry tasks completed incorrectly.
A MULTITUDE OF BENEFITS

Simulation training provides impressive practical and profit benefits for the organization and learner audience. These include:

- Reducing training time, which promotes efficiency, maximizes training budgets, and increases ROI
- Providing a safe environment for learners to practice skills without error implications
- Mimicking real-world situations and challenges to make content immediately relatable
- Eliminating the need for additional software dedicated to training
- Ensuring regulatory requirements are met by allowing a risk-free practice ground
- Increasing training engagement through an immersive experience
- Improving productivity and workplace performance

Throughout this eBook, we’ll explore the most valuable benefits in more detail. These key advantages show how simulation training can provide the ultimate educational experience while increasing the ROI of your training materials.
HOW SIMULATION TRAINING CAN REDUCE LEARNER SEAT TIME

The cliché is true; time really is money for your organization. Because saving money is synonymous to saving time, it is essential for competitive businesses to look for efficiencies in developing a capable, effective workforce.

Simulation training is one such efficiency that can assist in maximizing your training budget by reducing the time required for employees to become proficient in new skills, tasks, and processes. By providing a learning environment that replicates the real-life experience, simulation training ensures employees can hit the ground running in their daily roles.

Although the initial investment of simulation training can be more than traditional training, the ROI gained through associated benefits can be much greater. In addition, some of the investment will be counter-balanced by the reduction in training duration.
Simulation training can reduce training time for your employees in these ways:

1. **BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN TRAINING AND APPLICATION**
   
   By the time many employees get to put training into practice, vital knowledge details can be forgotten. By bridging the transition between the training experience and application on the job, simulation training significantly reduces the need for follow-up training or ongoing coaching and mentoring programs. Often, after training, an experienced employee would need to be paired with the learner to observe them as they demonstrate the new skills.

   Let’s say your simulation training is teaching employees a new sales process and system. Learners could actually interact with the system while video segments play to simulate the customer interaction. At pivotal moments, content pop-ups or audio narration can present key learning messages in alignment with the sales simulation.

2. **SUPPORTS ASSIMILATION AND RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION**
   
   A key advantage of simulation training is that it caters effectively for different learning styles. Most of us learn best by doing because action helps forge new neural pathways critical for committing key training messages to memory. This is what makes the kinesthetic nature of simulation training its most powerful aspect in supporting assimilation and retention of knowledge and information. The duration of training can be reduced because most people assimilate information faster through action rather than simply reading or observing a theoretical scenario.

3. **INTEGRATES THEORY AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE**
   
   If your training focuses on teaching skills, knowledge, or theoretical information without clear links to practical application, it is likely the information will remain conceptual for your learners. One of the key benefits of simulation training is its ability to integrate theory, practical information, and knowledge in a single training experience, freeing up employees post-training to focus on applying what they learned in their daily roles.

4. **PROMOTES IMMERSIVE ENGAGEMENT**
   
   Engagement sets simulation training apart from most traditional training. The combination of audio, visual, and interactive media immerses learners in the experience, ensuring the skills and knowledge taught are successfully imparted. The immersive, integrated experience of simulation training removes the need to present theoretical information first before moving to practical application, and because these things occur simultaneously in simulation training, seat time can be reduced.
SIMULATION TRAINING BENEFIT: VIDEO FOR INCREASED ENGAGEMENT

Simulation training is a virtual learning medium providing a safe practice ground for users to acquire new skills. Simulations are commonly used in corporate training to teach new systems, processes, or software or to re-create situations and experiences, for example, an interactive sales interaction with a customer.

**VIDEO IN SIMULATION TRAINING ENHANCES LEARNER ENGAGEMENT IN THESE WAYS:**

- Supports learner-centric design that places learners in control
- Increases retention and assimilation of learning messages
- Allows more material to be covered in less time, reducing training duration
- Decreases cognitive load by replacing text content with visual media
- Satisfies multiple learning styles and preferences

Branching interactive video is an example of a highly engaging video-based method. This could involve learners watching a video clip of a sales interaction with a customer and then at key decision points within the transaction, the video pauses and learners are prompted to choose the action the sales representative should take. Based on the decision made, the video continues with a unique, dynamically populated clip and when the final outcome of the scenario is reached, constructive feedback is presented. This is one solution of using video effectively; however, there are many more exciting and engaging ways to incorporate video into simulation training.

The next-generation media for simulation training will likely be augmented reality technology to place learners into immersive 3D environments, similar to a gaming experience. The U.S. Army is already experimenting with virtual, real-time simulations to provide a safe practice ground for training their soldiers.
SIMULATION TRAINING FOR CORPORATE TRAINING: THE PRACTICAL AND PROFIT BENEFITS

An insight into Simulation Training from Ruby Spencer, Director of Global Curriculum Development with PulseLearning.

Simulations immerse gamers inside the action and give PC users the opportunity to fly, race, or rail without ever leaving home. However, they also boast a wide range of benefits in the corporate training sector. A well-crafted simulation has the power to improve your bottom line, increase productivity, and prepare your workforce for the tasks that lie ahead. Here are just a few of the practical and profit benefits that simulation training can offer your organization.

From a Practical Standpoint...

MIMICS REAL-WORLD SITUATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Simulations give your employees the opportunity to build skill sets and acquire knowledge that they can apply to real-life situations. They can also try out new tasks and figure out the best approach, which allows them to learn through trial and error. For example, a member of your staff will be able to fine-tune their negotiating skills and learn more about your products by engaging in a true-to-life sales simulation.

PROVIDES A SAFE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

One of the most significant advantages of developing a simulation-based training program is that it takes risk out of the equation. Your employees have the ability to master tasks and streamline their work processes in a safe and supportive environment. Instead of throwing them into the thick of things, as it were, simulations allow them to experience the consequences of their actions firsthand without any real-world repercussions.

IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY AND WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE

Assessments, surveys, and interviews can give you a good indication of performance gaps. However, simulations take it a step further by putting knowledge and skills to the test because users must apply what they have learned. This reveals their true strengths and areas for improvement so that they are able to modify their performance behaviors accordingly to boost productivity.
From a Profit Standpoint...

**DECREASES HANDS-ON EQUIPMENT TIME**

Employees can simply access the simulation when they are ready to try new tasks or processes, rather than using on-site equipment or work stations. This frees up those assets for employees who need them to carry out their job duties, such as making repairs or manufacturing parts. Even the training time itself can be drastically reduced because simulations condense all the core ideas and steps into a single activity. This equates to reduced training costs and more time on the job.

**ENSURES REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

Simulations minimize the risk of compliance violation fees and penalties by providing employees with practical experience in a risk-free environment. For example, an employee can participate in a safety training simulation to brush up on OSHA regulations.

**ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SOFTWARE**

If your staff will be using software throughout the course of their workday, simulations can also mimic a live software environment. Thus, you won’t have to pay for additional software that is solely dedicated to your training program and can ensure that your employees know their way around the program and its features beforehand. This same rule applies to work-related equipment, such as heavy machinery and POS terminals.

Training simulations offer your employees a myriad of benefits, but they can also improve your profit margin and enhance your brand image. This makes them a powerful tool in the corporate world, regardless of your niche, customer base, or staff size.

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**ABOUT RUBY SPENCER**

Ruby is Director of Global Curriculum Development with PulseLearning. She has almost 20 years of experience in the instructional design world. She is responsible for the instructional integrity of all of PulseLearning’s courseware. Her leadership enables the content team to deliver solutions that are focused on the learners needs and aligned to our client’s business goals. She has a Masters in Adult Education and is a Certified Training and Development Professional.
PulseLearning has worked with a number of Clients to create innovative and effective system simulation training Courses.

Have you tried simulation training yet? PulseLearning is an award-winning global learning provider who understands the need of simulation training for the corporate world. PulseLearning can assist you in developing a simulation training strategy to suit your software needs that will provide your learners with flexibility and greater confidence. Contact us today!

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