

thin*o*i

A Recipe for Success:

How to Use Marketing to Boost Your L&D Efforts



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2. About Thingi & CDSM

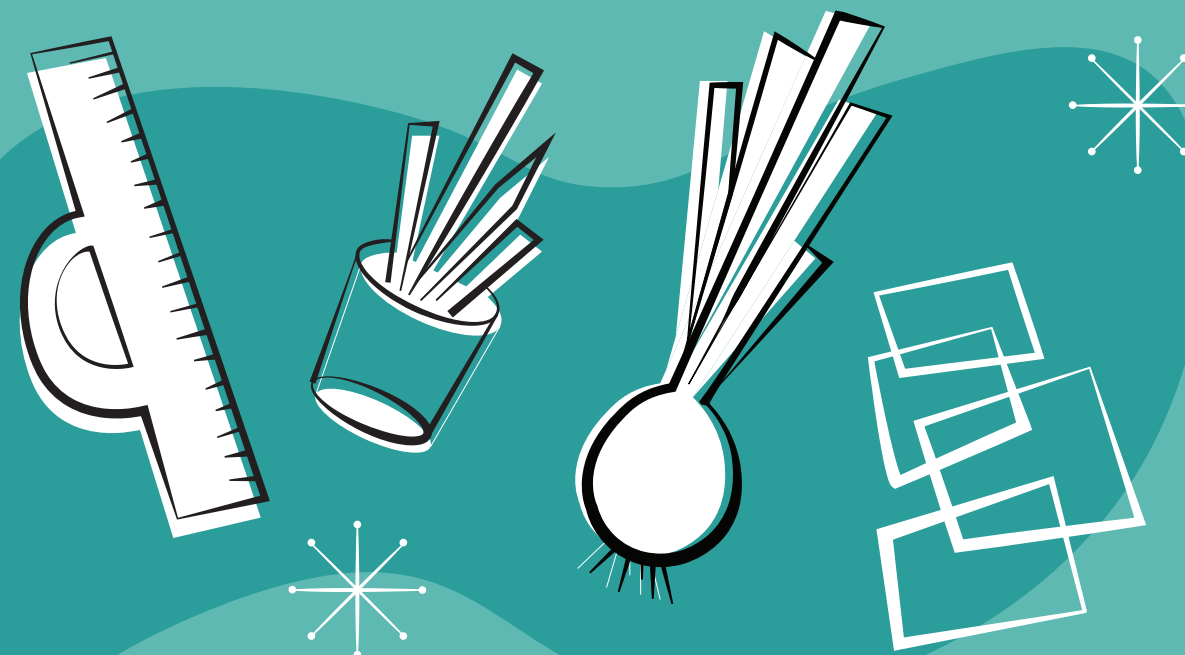
CDSM are an award-winning UK-based learning technology company. We harness contemporary technology and apply science to solve learning challenges.

Thingi is our blended learning ecosystem, a learning experience platform encompassing our vision for modern learning.

More and more learning and development (L&D) managers are turning to Thingi to achieve greater success by taking a more contemporary and accountable approach to L&D.

Thingi is helping organisations who are:

- Under pressure to prove greater ROI in their L&D programmes
- Striving to gain greater support and trust for L&D activity from their leadership team
- Struggling to engage learners with digital content and platforms
- Having difficulty proving the benefit of modern learning activity in their business



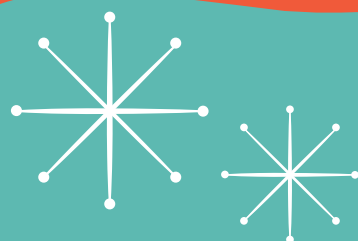
Our background in education and CPD means we focus only on learning strategies that provide measurable improvements. Our scientific approach focuses on empowering your staff to reach their maximum potential, thus creating greater value and commitment to your organisation.

Tailored to the needs of your business, our specialists will:

- Support your existing team and respond to learning needs
- Share their expertise in delivering blended learning that gets results
- Help design a roadmap for sustainable L&D delivery in your organisation

This approach is proven to deliver measurable business improvement for our customers across the globe including Cambridge University, Oxford University, Honda Motor Europe, Boots, BMW and Anglian Home Improvement.

Together, we'll drive engagement for blended learning, helping you to grow a community of happier, more engaged and more capable staff.



3. Welcome

When serving up your L&D offerings, how can you encourage an appetite for learning in your organisation? When rolling out your training and development, how can you ensure a full table of knowledge-hungry learners?

Done right, using marketing tactics for promoting your L&D not only boosts learner participation, but can also raise the profile of learning in your organisation.

The aim of this guide is to give you the key ingredients, along with the step-by-step methods, to help you overcome the common challenges of today and keep the momentum going around your L&D projects in the future – and keep your learners coming back for second helpings.



4. Learning Outcomes

Any good learning activity should have clear learning objectives. Here's an outline of what you should come away with from this guide.



LIST

Different tactics you can use to market your L&D.

DESCRIBE

How each method can be used to boost engagement.



FORMULATE

A suitable plan for employing your marketing campaign.

EVALUATE

The impact of your marketing campaign by measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of different strategies.

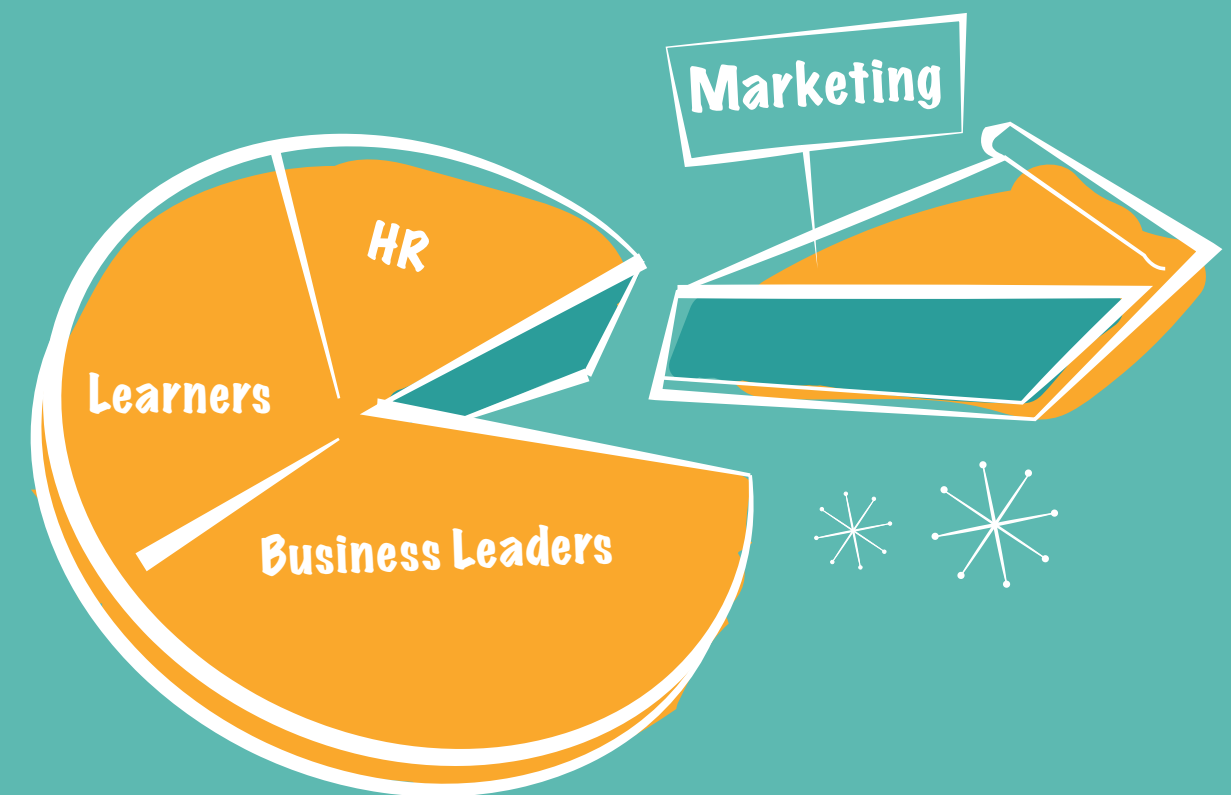
5. Where Can L&D Look for Inspiration?

Before we get started we need to understand why we should look to other departments if we want to fill our training courses.

If we told you that a staggering 65% of L&D professionals say their learners aren't aware of the learning opportunities available at their organisations, who would you look to for ideas on how to change it? Your business leaders? HR? Line managers? The learners themselves?

While collaboration with all of the above can help establish a thriving learning culture in your organisation, there's another department we can look to for tactics when boosting awareness of learning opportunities.

And that's marketing.



You might be reading this because you can't draw enough learners to your training programs. Perhaps you've already done all you can to boost engagement, such as those demonstrated in [our previous blog](#).

You might have implemented all the right technology, talked with your business leaders, HR team and line managers, and sent round an email to all staff to make them aware of the course you're offering.



And yet, when it comes down to training, the seats just aren't getting filled.

“Success leaves clues. Study people you admire or want to be like.”
– Tony Robbins



What Does a Marketer Do?

First, we need to understand exactly what it is that a marketer actually does.

According to Business Dictionary, a marketer is “a person whose duties include the identification of the goods and services desired by a set of consumers, as well as the marketing of these goods and services on behalf of a company.”

So, what are some of the key ingredients we need to make a great marketer? Some of those listed on Iron Paper include:

- A dash of analytical skills
- A generous dollop of communication
- A pinch of understanding about buyer needs (and the sales process)

- A drizzle of storytelling
- A sprinkling of writing ability
- A drop of critical thinking
- A splash of technological skills
- A whole block of passion for continuous learning

What's the Connection to L&D?

If you stop and think about it, marketing is concerned with a similar set of challenges to L&D:

- Connecting with the target audience (in your case, the learners)
- Providing a 'hook' to hold their interest (desire to learn)
- Influencing behaviour (enrolling on the course)

Just as a marketer influences people to 'buy' something, we want people to 'buy' into learning and development. The major difference is that marketing targets an external audience, whereas L&D markets internally.

Let's take a look at the five key 'recipes for success' you can use to successfully promote your L&D and make sure every table on your course is 'fully-booked', so to speak.



6. Recipe for Success: Get to Know Your People

Let's face it, you wouldn't open a burger restaurant outside a gym if you knew the demographic who attended were far more into their kale smoothies and quinoa salads, and no savvy marketer would embark on a marketing campaign without first understanding the target audience. The same is true when promoting your learning opportunities.

Really getting to know your workers involves more than just knowing their names, job roles and learning preferences. What drives them to want to learn? What do they want from their jobs? Where would they like to be in the next year? And why are they working in that particular role, for this particular organisation?

In other words, you have to really know what makes them tick.

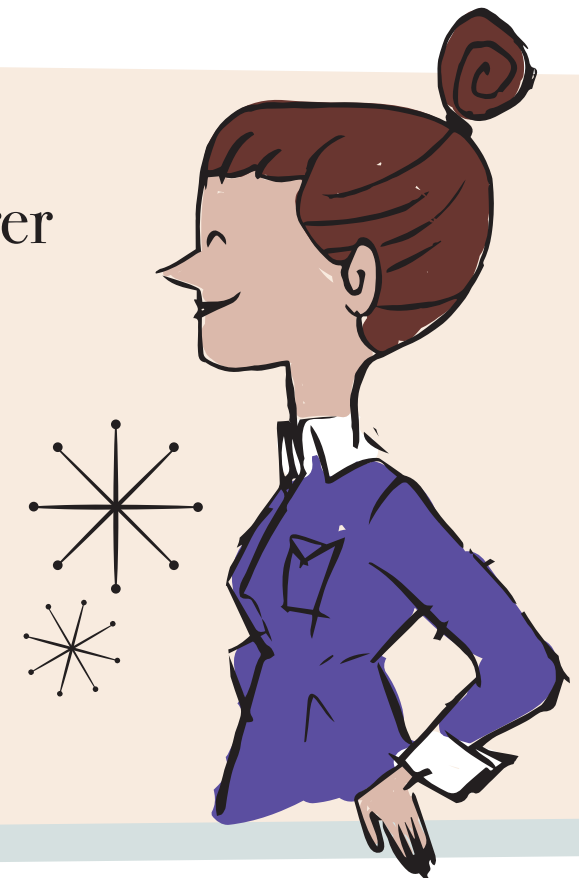


Let's take a look at some of the motivations for learning that could prove effective for each individual person with these example profiles:

Name: Susmita Chaterjee

Job role: Customer Service Manager

Motivation: Susmita's job depends on her hitting targets for resolving customer issues and making sure that the right level of service is being provided in order to increase customer satisfaction scores. Susmita would therefore be attracted to learning that can promise improved communication for a better customer satisfaction score.



Name: Ben White

Job role: Sales executive

Type of organisation: Call centre

Motivation: As Ben has sales targets to hit, his bonuses depend on how well he manages to exceed these targets. Ben would therefore be attracted to learning that can promise improved communications or productivity in order to increase sales and earn more bonuses.



In marketing, you would carry out your research by conducting surveys and questionnaires with different groups, interviewing individuals, sitting down with focus groups, and examining secondary data such as official figures, market share and competitor performance.



The beauty of marketing L&D is that your audience is internal, meaning you can really get to know your learners through the simplest of methods, as shown below.



People Knowledge Pavlova

Difficulty: Easy

Ingredients

A generous dollop of communication
A handful of understanding about learner needs
A drizzle of research
A dash of analytical skills
A splash of judgement and decision-making

Method:

1. Identify how you want to categorise segments of learners. For example, you might want to categorise by department or age range. Chop these up into separate segments.
2. Prepare questionnaires, surveys, interviews or even just throw in an informal chat.
3. Spread research methods evenly amongst segments, before leaving learners to stew over the answers.
4. Once ready, collect your data.
5. Boil data down to individual learner pain points, their motivations and their goals.
6. Tailor your marketing depending on the wants and needs revealed in the previous step, ensuring that you present your learning as an effective solution.

Voilà! Entice your learners with marketing courses that are relevant to the group you are targeting and enjoy greater interest, uptake and engagement.

7. Recipe for Success: Demonstrate the Relevance of Learning

Have you ever attended a training course only to ask 'what was the point?' at the end of it? If a learner can't see how the learning will improve their life at work, they are unlikely to sign up to a training course they consider irrelevant.

Especially not when we consider that research by [Bersin by Deloitte](#) reveals the modern learner is overwhelmed, distracted and impatient, with a mere 1% of a typical work week dedicated to training and development.

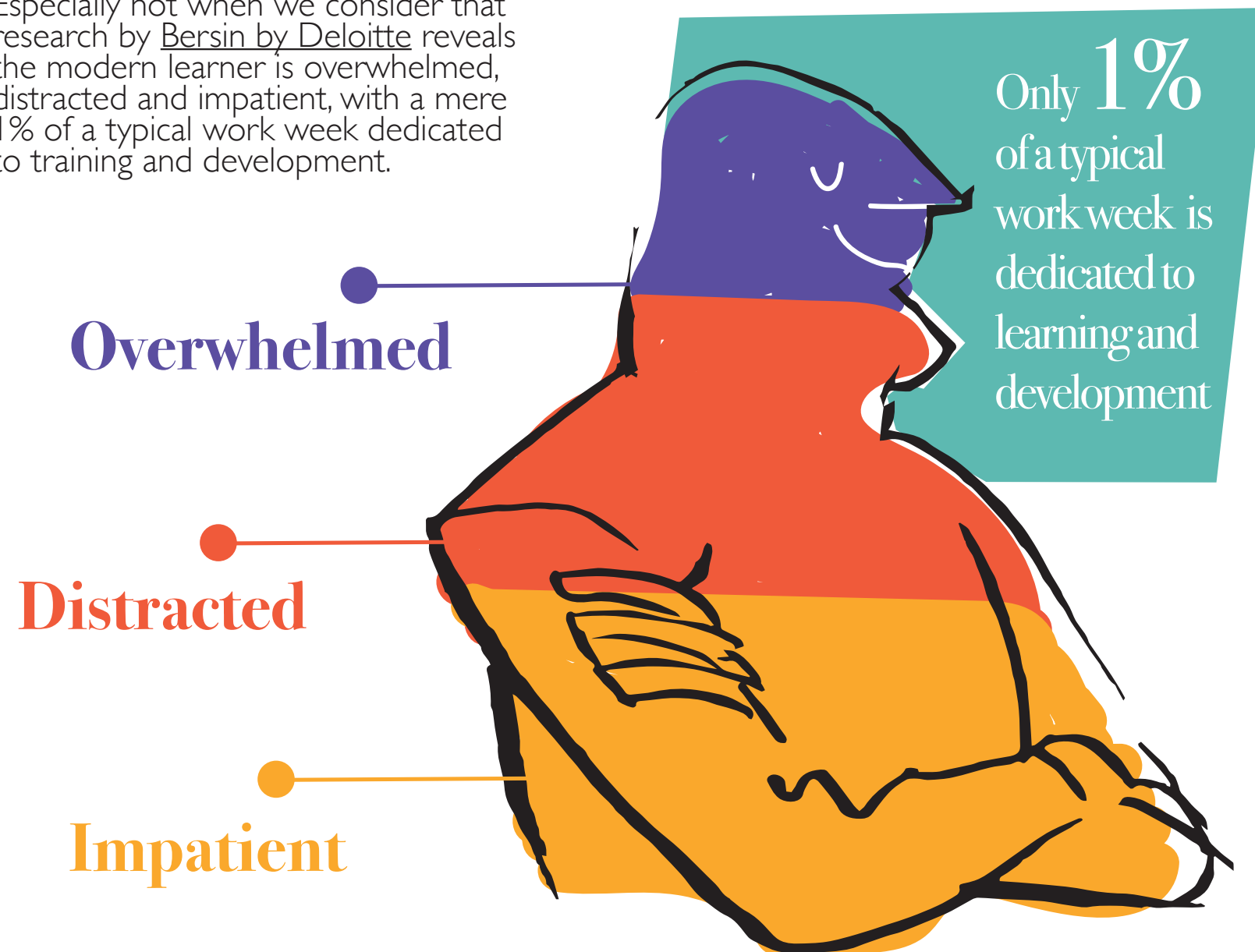


It is crucial, therefore, that you construct a strong case for your learning programs; after all, such time-poor employees need to know that any precious hours invested in training and development are really worth it.

You need to be able to answer the question every learner is thinking: 'What's in it for me?'

Jo Cook, in the November 2018 issue of [Training Journal](#), sheds light on the fact that marketing your L&D internally "is about helping other people understand that investing in themselves is more than a face-to-face class. It can also be about changing people's perception of a system or process."

In other words, you need to change the way people see your learning and development. Communicating to them exactly how training will benefit them will change perceptions and increase the likelihood of your staff getting onboard with learning.



Only 1%
of a typical
work week is
dedicated to
learning and
development

Overwhelmed

Distracted

Impatient

Let's say, for example, you have an older member of staff who refuses to get on board with a new customer booking system because "the old way works just fine and technology will just complicate things" and who does not wish to learn how to use it. How would you go about demonstrating relevance in order to change their mind?



Let's take a look at a method you could use below.

Learning Relevance Linguine

Difficulty: Average

Ingredients

A generous dollop of communication
3 tablespoons of persuasion

A slice of active listening
A drizzle of storytelling
A whole block of passion for continuous learning
A pinch of social influence

Method:

1. Identify learner pain points by having a conversation with your learner and employing your skills of active listening. In this case, the pain point is "technology is too complicated".
2. Add a little persuasion to demonstrate exactly how the new system can make records easier to store, locate and amend.
3. Toss in a success story or two with a drizzle of storytelling to prove how the new system has allowed other staff members more time for tasks they once used to struggle to cram in.
4. If you like your persuasion a little stronger, you could get another member of staff to advocate the benefits of the system and how it has made their working life easier and more efficient.
5. Serve with a whole block of passion for continuous learning.

Bon appetit! Is there anything that tastes sweeter than another place filled on your training course?

8. Recipe for Success: Personalise Your Communications

Anyone can send out a stream of emails and plaster the coffee machine in garishly bright posters, but how do you ensure you're not just making a load of noise into the void?

Just as people have their own preferred ways to learn, people will also have their own individual communications preferences. This is exactly why, when filling out online forms, you're probably familiar with a 'marketing preferences' section which will look something like this:

Yes, I would like to receive offers, updates and marketing by Email, Post and SMS

Email Post SMS

If someone doesn't like receiving marketing via SMS, they are not going to be happy about you texting them to remind them of a course which will soon be running. This is not a great way to start if you want to encourage them to sign up. Likewise, sending emails to somebody who barely checks their account at home is not the most effective way to market.

This is why personalising your communications can really make a difference.

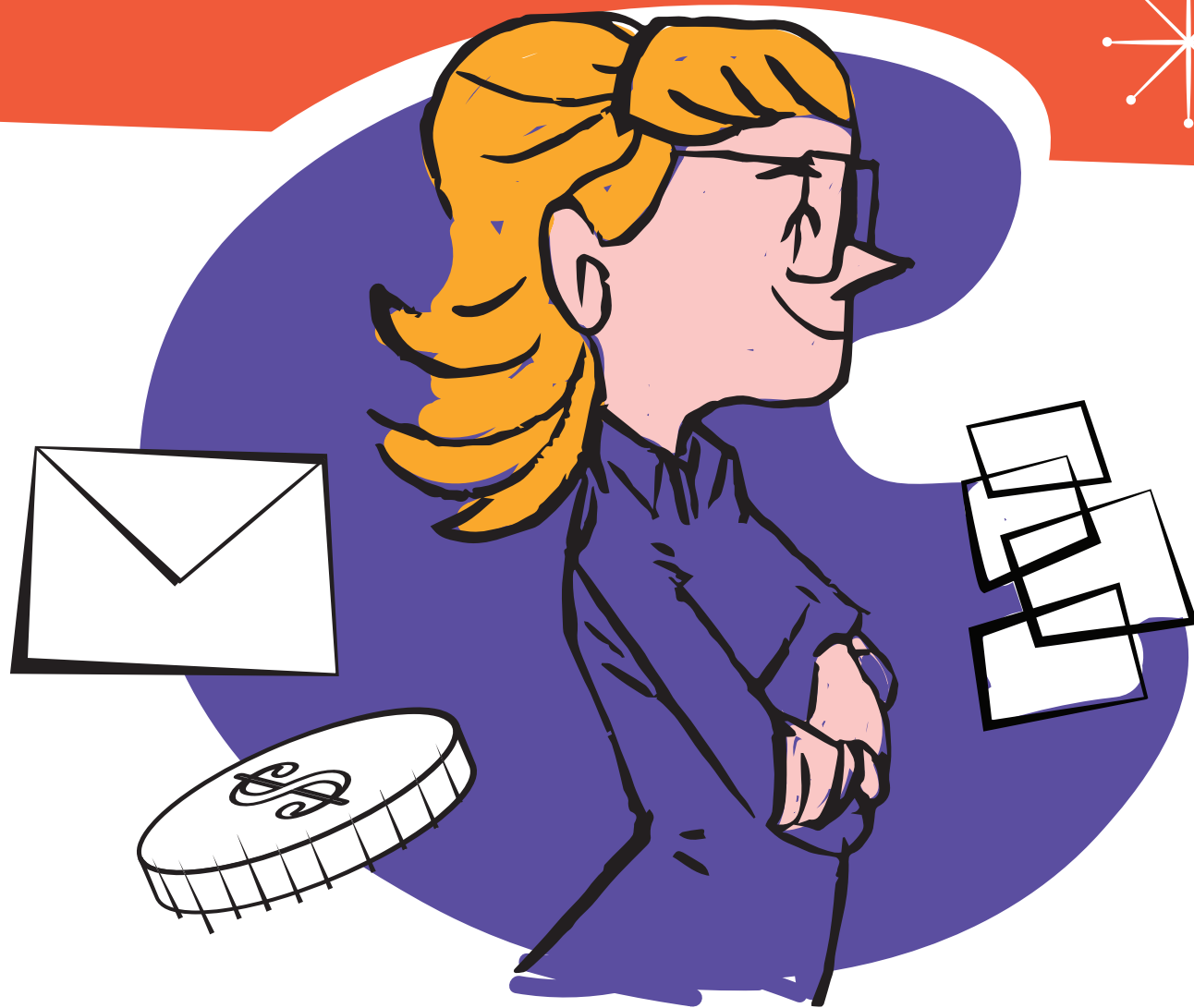


- Let's take email, for example. Despite the advances of technology and social media, email marketing is still as powerful as ever. Did you know that for every £1 spent, email marketing generates an average £38 in ROI?

This is precisely why, in the same report, 9 out of 10 marketing professionals declared email as either 'important' or 'very important' to their business.

So, how can you make sure you're communicating in the right way?

Surprisingly easily, actually. We've outlined a simple example process here.



Personalised Communications Platter

Difficulty: Easy

Ingredients

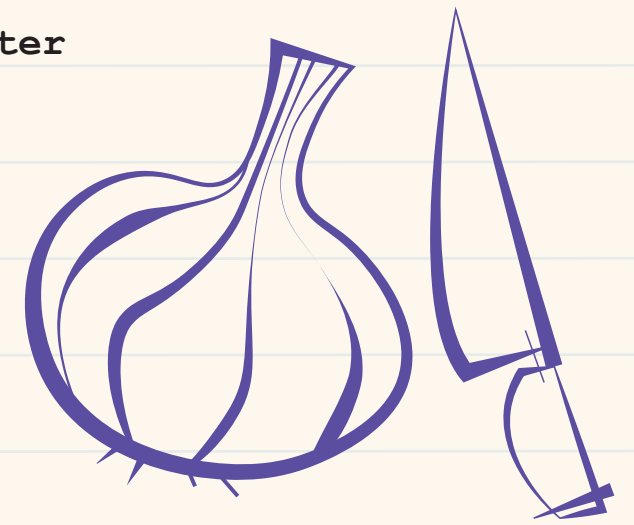
A generous dollop of communication
2 tablespoons of persuasion

A slice of research
A drizzle of storytelling
A splash of judgement
A sprinkling of writing ability

Method:

1. Find out your learners' tastes when it comes to marketing communications by conducting research (for example, you could whip up a survey or poll).
2. Make note of the preferred options. If most people use the staff intranet or look to the staff noticeboard, for example, then email and posters might be the two options that get you the best results.
3. Consider your organisation's brand. This is important for communicating the right message, creating loyalty and showing plenty of credibility. This is where you'll need to apply plenty of communication and persuasion - as well as include a sprinkling of writing ability.
4. For an added punch, send out news about past success stories (see p.16 for more details on how to do this) or send out 'teasers' to keep your audience hooked.
5. Spread your message - whether that's via newsletter, email, flyers or SMS. Make sure your marketing materials clearly reflect the brand and communicate the benefits and solutions that the learning can provide.
6. Don't forget about past learners when sending out communications. To "re-engage" your past learners, a simple reminder email along the lines of "Hey, it's been a while since your last class..." with a recap of all the skills they've learned (and how they have been applied since), can put learning firmly back in the forefront of the recipient's mind - and increase the chances of them coming back for more.

Success! You now know your audience well enough to know what communications they prefer, and when they prefer to receive them. Dazzle them by serving up your message on time, done just how they like it.



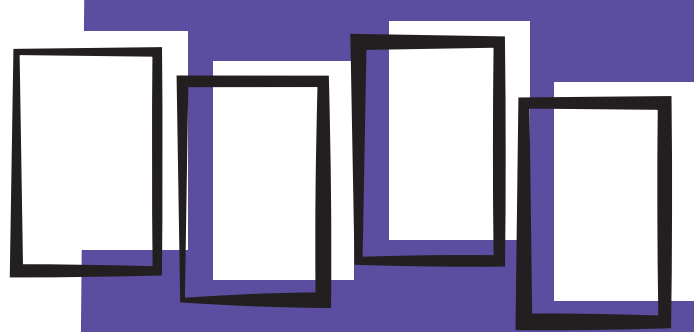
9. Recipe for Success: Champion Your Ambassadors for Learning

This is why we can't overemphasise the importance of championing those who are already successfully employing the skills they've learned.

Those in more senior roles are particularly powerful ambassadors for learning, as their stories will prompt your staff to start joining the dots between a good learning programme and career success.

As the people who your staff know and trust, leaders can act as social influencers to drive positive behaviour change – which is why, with the rise of technology, influencers are such powerful means of marketing today (and the reason why you can't scroll for more than a few seconds on Instagram without coming across a well-known figure promoting a particular brand or product).

“How many of you are thinking about taking the Level 3 course in Customer Service? I did it a year ago and it was great! A year ago, I was never this confident resolving issues with difficult customers – and yet, here I am, managing. If you want to go further with your Customer Service career, I'd say this course is pretty essential!”



“The bottom line is that Humans are easily nudged by other Humans. Why? One reason is that we like to conform.”

– Thaler and Sunstein (authors of ‘Nudge Theory’)



People do not like to stand out as odd or unusual, which is why we have a natural tendency to see what others are doing, and then go with the majority.

How many times have you looked for official reviews of a film or product before watching or making a purchase?

How many times, during your school years, did you nag your parents for the same trainers that all your friends were wearing? According to ‘nudge theory’, social influencers can play on this in-built psychological need to conform.

And the more respected the source, the greater the influence.

So how can you champion your ambassadors for learning? Take a look at the following method.

● **Champion Chowder**

Difficulty: Average

Ingredients

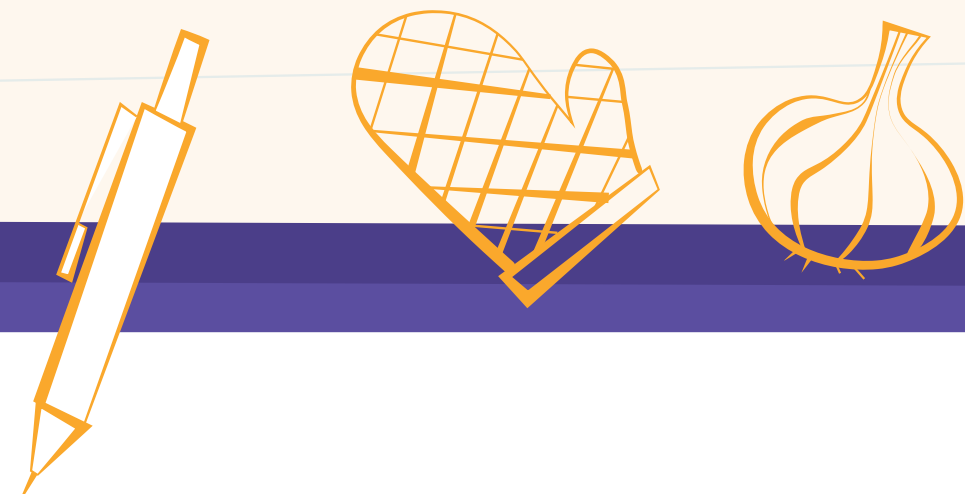
One influential leader
A gallon of storytelling

A splash of persuasion
A pinch of social perceptiveness

Method:

1. Pick out your past learners with the juiciest storytelling abilities.
2. Ask them what they learned, how they learned it, why they wanted to attend the course and how their working lives have improved as a result.
3. Get your learner to speak to other staff to relay this information to them, whether that's through standing up and speaking to them as a group, or just bringing up the subject when passing or chatting informally.

You can never have too strong an influencer!
Let your potential learners stew over their words until your sign-up forms are deliciously full.



10. Recipe for Success: Share Success Stories

In the age of social media, we're all familiar with the concept of the so-called 'humble-brag'; that is, doing something well, then letting everyone know online (think A Level results day posts, or a blurry phone picture of your Auntie Jean's winning Victoria sponge, announced to the tune of ten exclamation marks and tagged at the village fête).

It's becoming more acceptable to shout about your successes online, and when news feeds are so otherwise full of angry debates and gloomy news stories, people like to hear about a happy ending or a great achievement.

And if people can see that learning is something that 'everyone else' is busy doing, that innate wish to conform socially becomes apparent again: success stories are some of the most powerful nudges.

A great example of this was demonstrated by the landmark financial company Citi, which encouraged users to use internal social channels in order to share examples of how they were taking part in their #BeMore learning campaign.

This award-winning strategy was designed to encourage everyday learning and to get others to shout about their wins. This allowed them to foster a successful culture of continuous learning known at Citi as the "3 E's: Experience, Exposure, Education".

Don't roll out your learning programs in one hit; it's good practice to ensure that your L&D really works when piloted with smaller, more manageable cohorts in the first instance. Not only does this allow you to collect feedback and work out any problems that may occur, but it also enables you to share case studies of successful projects – and encourage others to get on board.

It may take more planning and discipline than rolling out all in one go, but it really can make the difference between an average training program and a really great one with proven success.

So how can you go about doing this?

Success Story Soufflé

Difficulty: Average

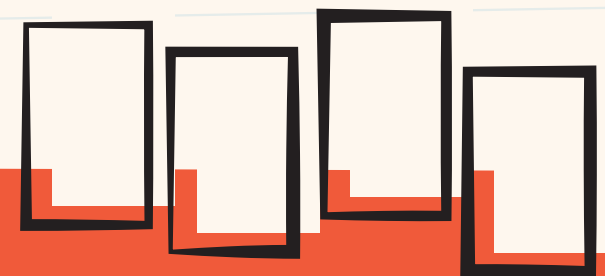
Ingredients

A selection of small learner cohorts
A gallon of storytelling
A splash of persuasion
A packet of case studies
A whole block of passion for continuous learning

Method:

1. Identify your target audience for your next course. You will have already 'segmented' your learners in 'Recipe 1: Get to Know Your People'.
2. Whip up some case studies from past learners who have completed the same course. You can reach out by using feedback forms or just by having a conversation with them. Ask them what they learned, how they learned it, why they wanted to attend the course and how their working lives have improved as a result.
3. Compile your case studies and send them to the relevant groups you want to target.
4. Like the example by Citi, you could also create a campaign with a hashtag and encourage past learners to tweet a short line on how they've benefited from the course.
5. Make sure you are also embodying the passion for learning that you want to inspire in others. Speak with enthusiasm about your own learning successes, and really show that you can practice what you preach. You're a key example to drive others to do the same!

Are we fully-booked already? Those case studies taste delicious when served up with some hashtags, a sprinkling of passion and a dollop of social constructivism.



11. Recipe for Success: Measuring Impact

Measurement and evaluation is a critical component of any marketing campaign, despite its difficulties in L&D. Testing what works and what doesn't is absolutely key to making sure your message is on point and reaching people in the right way.

You wouldn't blindly try and follow any recipe without measurement and the same is true of your marketing efforts. Get your measurements wrong with your marketing, however, and we're dealing with something a little more disastrous than over-floured pastry.

You need to be actively tracking and measuring various metrics that indicate the effectiveness of your efforts across all marketing channels.

Are people opening my emails? Are they clicking the included links?

Where are my traffic sources coming from for signing up to the training course?

What time of day do people most interact with content via social media?



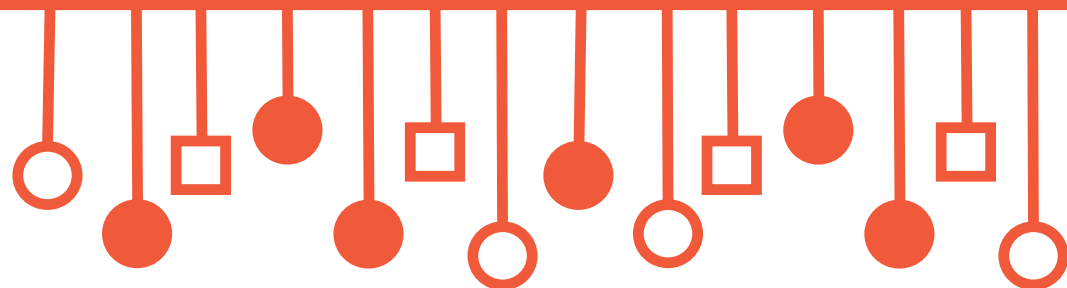
The three main advantages of evaluation are:

1. It allows you to see whether a campaign has hit its overall objectives

2. It gives you a clear insight into which marketing channels and types of messages are most effective

3. It helps you to make informed decisions for planning future campaigns

So, how can you check whether your marketing is hitting the mark? We've suggested a method to help you measure and evaluate with confidence.



Measurement Macaroni

Difficulty: Average

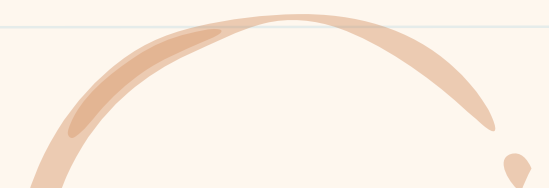
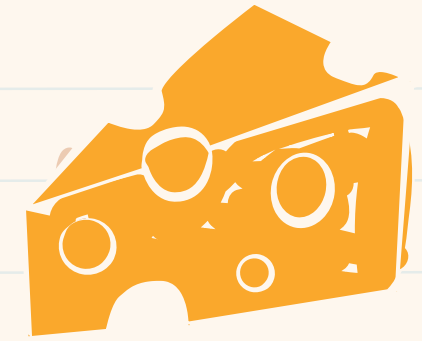
Ingredients:

- A drop of critical thinking
- A splash of technological skills
- 2 slices of monitoring skills
- A dash of analytical skills

Method:

1. Consider the initial goals of your campaign. In the context of this expert guide, that would be "getting more people to sign up to a training course".
2. Look at each of your marketing channels - did you use email marketing? Social media posts? In-house content, such as case studies and blogs?
3. For emails you could throw in some A/B testing. To do this, send one email (A) and another (B) so you can compare results.
4. Take a look at open rates, clicks and enquiries for both to see which had the most open rates and engagement.
5. For social media, most channels such as Twitter and LinkedIn have easy-to-use analytics tools that allow you to see which posts generated the most engagement. These can also be linked up to other analytics platforms to see exactly which social media sites have the greatest referrals to your sign-up forms.
6. Slice away any marketing methods which aren't working until you're left with a deliciously effective strategy for your next campaign.

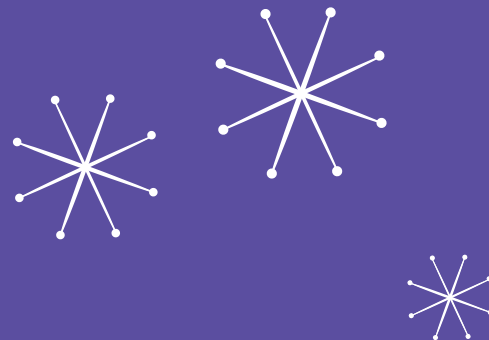
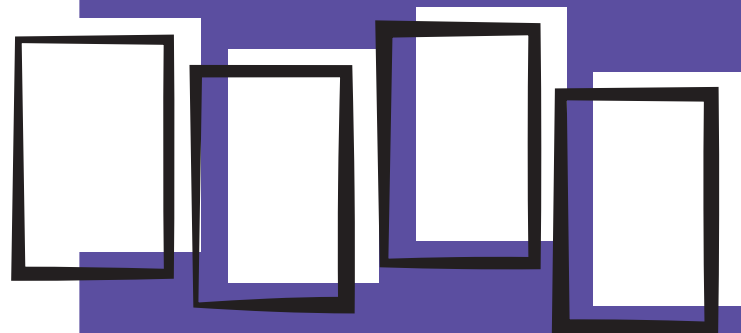
Measuring marketing impact is key to serving up the most flavoursome content for your next course! Learning is served...



12. Summary

That's a lot to take in, so here's a quick summary of what's been covered:

1. Knowing your people is essential
2. Demonstrating the relevance of learning is crucial to attracting participants
3. Personalise your communications
4. Your leaders are your learning champions
5. Successes are something to shout about (including your own)



Remember, your learners are your key. You need to reach out to them and really get to the heart of what it is that they want from the learning – and make sure that the relevance of it is clearly demonstrated through personalised communications.

And when learning is a success, shout about it! Get your learning champions to help you raise the volume and add authenticity to the success of your learning programmes. Lead by example, show positive change, and your sign-up forms will soon fill up with names of eager and engaged learners. And isn't that the point of marketing learning?

By demonstrating the importance of continuous learning in all we say and do, we can foster the sort of learning culture that truly outperforms those without one. This is precisely why 'never stop learning' is at the core of what we at CDSM Thinki do.

After all...

We never really stop learning.
That's why L&D matters.

Bon **appetit!**



Further Reading

Something to Shout About: 5 Things L&D Can Learn From Marketing

Learning in the Modern Workplace Part 1: What Does Modern Learning Look Like?

The Changing Role of L&D Part 1: What Do Practitioners Need to Be?

The Changing Role of L&D Part 2: The Power of Collaboration



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