



## Online Training...Watch the Quicksand!

There's simply nothing more highly touted in the training business than that magic word "online." But, why is it so much more ubiquitous than its many predecessors including classroom, film, videotape and a legion of other training methodologies? The reason is simple. For the first time, a training technology has management support.

### Why?

- Online training can be delivered "just in time" and at the learner's location.
- It's highly measurable with a central collection of records and details through Learning Management Systems. In other words, online training is faster, less expensive and measurable. This is "music to management's ears."

*However, this path has quicksand. None of these things have anything to do with the learner!*

Trainers worldwide are scurrying to adopt a technology without regard to whether it's actually good training. It can be, but it can also be next to useless. An online program that is simply text on one fancy page after another, concluded by an exam, is no more effective than a pamphlet.

Look past the technology and review the TRAINING. Even with bandwidth limitations, there are encouraging uses of online training that bode well for the future. Here are a few of the features you should look for in online training:

### It should be:

**Interactive** - The learner must be part of the process. They should make choices, select paths, decide approaches, choose how many examples, decide what to look into further, and what actions to take, etc.

**Engaging** - Does it capture the learner's attention and interest? Does it "paint a picture," not just talk about it? Is it written for interest, or is it dull and academic?

**Consistent With Learning Objectives** - Does it state specific objectives, help the learner reach them, and measure them?

**Easy to Use** - Are the navigation features intuitive and grouped logically and located where the user is likely to be looking? Can learners move backward as well as forward and see all without scrolling up or down?

**Practical in Content** - Is it really necessary to know that Reg DD was implemented by Congress in 1994? Or, is it more important to understand about APY?

**Positively Reinforced** - Do the learners receive rewards for correct approaches and answers? Even a simple "good" is a positive reinforcement. Do responses continue by reinforcing an answer and even putting it in context?

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In later articles, we will outline further techniques that you should look for in your online programs. You need to be the ombudsman for the learner. Don't accept "electronic page turning" and lifeless content. Create a win/win situation for your financial organization. Turn the quicksand into a paved highway that not only meets management's needs of measurement, improved cost, and easy distribution, but also focuses on the learner's need for dynamic, interactive learning.

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TRC Interactive, Inc. • 4200 Crums Mill Road • 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor • Harrisburg, PA • 17112 • (717) 652-3100 • Fax: (717) 652-8281