

Training survey shows UK PLC leading the way with more innovative practices

This article first appeared in Personnel Today.

Corporate UK is leading the way in training practices, according to a comprehensive pan-European survey published today by Europe's largest training provider Cegos Group.

The survey found that UK organisations are training more staff and have embraced innovative practices - including e-learning, blended learning and mobile learning - to a greater extent than their European counterparts.

The move reflects the time and budget pressures of today's workplace.

The training function in the UK is also significantly more focused on measuring the effectiveness and return on investment (ROI) of training, the survey reveals.

The independent survey examined training practice trends during 2007, and was carried among training managers from 1,000 companies employing more than 500 staff, across the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

Key highlights include:

- Corporate UK trains more people: UK companies are leading the way in providing training to the majority (61%) of their employees.

In Italy, France and Germany, less than half of staff receives any form of training.

- UK companies use more innovative training practices: More employees in the UK are benefiting from technology-driven training programmes than in any other European country.

Corporate UK is the European leader in 100% e-learning and blended learning (mixing face-to-face learning with e-learning). More than half of all UK employees now take part in 100% e-learning based training (55%) and blended learning (51%) courses.

Spain is just behind the UK in terms of e-learning and blended learning techniques with 51% of Spanish companies adopting e-learning and blended learning.

Mobile learning is also more popular in the UK with 17% of employees using this method.

- Time and budget pressures increase demand for shorter, more cost-effective programmes: While the UK is training more people than any other country, it is running shorter programmes and spending less on professional development than its European counterparts.

Tight funding and the need to fit training in around day-to-day work are driving a trend towards shorter, bite-sized training programmes with the rise in e-learning and blended learning playing a pivotal role in reducing costs, says Cegos.

The survey found the average European corporate spends Euros 580,000 on professional development. France spends the most, around three times more than UK corporations.

The UK and Spain both spend around 40% less than the average European budget, reflecting in part their greater use of blended learning and e-learning says Cegos.

- Training is more accountable among UK plc: UK corporations are more focused on providing direct feedback to the balance sheet in the effectiveness of training than their European counterparts.

Almost half (47%) of UK companies measure ROI and 65% have measures in place to assess the impact of training on their people.

The UK is 20% better than any other surveyed country in measuring ROI with France second, where 26% of companies measure ROI.

“It’s good to see so many UK training departments are leading the pack in accessibility, content delivery and accountability,” said Jeremy Blain, Joint Managing Director of Cegos’ UK operations.

“Technology is playing a crucial role in driving down the cost of training, speeding up learning and making training more accessible to a wider audience. This trend will continue to be driven by today’s time-pressured workplace and current economic conditions as companies strive to get more for less.”