



“Innovation through social interaction”

Renewable energy company Innogy is adding an innovative range of informal training initiatives to its learning mix



“How will my work become easier, how can I answer questions quicker and solve problems better.”
Digitizing corporate learning is not the end goal. It’s an enabler that helps us work smarter.

INNOGY has 45,000 employees, but it was established just a few months ago: Created as an offshoot of RWE, the renewable energy company operates in a relatively new, technology-driven market. The company’s focus on innovation is reflected in the learning opportunities it provides staff. Social tools like Yammer and video tutorials sit at the heart of INNOGY’s learning strategy, ensuring that knowledge support always meets employees’ needs.

Streamlined, fresh and constantly re-inventing itself – that’s how Christian Böhler sees his company Innogy. Set up in 2016, the renewable energy subsidiary of power giant RWE takes a fresh approach to service delivery, and is always open to innovative new learning ideas. Recognizing the importance of supplementing formal learning initiatives with informal formats is at the heart of the company’s learning strategy. Christian Böhler is a qualified carpenter and graduate computer scientist. In his role as Senior Learning Technologies and Methods Manager, he’s become a major driving force behind this transformation. For Christian, face-to-face seminars are a “waste of time”. In his view, too little of what is learned is actually retained. It’s a belief

that academic studies like Ebbinghaus’ “forgetting curve” and the 70:20:10 concept back up (but, until trusted measurements for informal learning are established, it can never be disproved).

70:20:10 describes how people learn

Formal proof of the merits of 70:20:10 may be lacking, but Böhler remains convinced of the model’s merits. Here’s a short reminder of the model’s principles: 10 percent of all learning is acquired via formal training, 20 percent via social interaction and 70 percent via informal “on-the-job” training. For 70:20:10 advocates, this is how people learn. To illustrate, Böhler uses the analogy of a toddler learning to walk: “Instinctively guided, we learn with the help of others, but also by trying things

out – or in other words, via an error culture. A child stands up, falls over and tries again. In doing so, people are driven by a desire to make life easier: the easier, the better. This is what drives further training.” The incentive behind corporate learning is not a requirement to “become digital”, but rather “how will my work become easier, how can I answer questions quicker and solve problems better.”

Underpinned by accepted theory

At the heart of Innogy’s training model we find: the learning and forgetting curve; the 5 moments of need; learning by doing; change and adaptation; peer exchange; and Performance Support. Action, exchange and learning opportunities make up the model’s three main thematic building blocks, powered by a mixture of self-initiated casual learning, coaching, self-directed formal learning (WBT) and training.

Adapting established methods for a new context

Innogy’s agile training infrastructure means pre-existing training methods can adapt to meet changing needs. To

succeed, knowledge management must become a framework. “We tap into knowledge, prepare it and transfer it to deliver clear, concrete benefits in the workplace”, explains Böhler. Performance Support sits at the center of this knowledge management model, building on formal and informal training processes. Formal aspects include the Content Management System, populated with resources created by an authoring tool. Support for informal training comes via a Virtual Learning System and a social learning platform powered by user-generated content.

New source of knowledge: 20,000 users in social learning

“Social learning is generating huge buzz right now,” enthuses Böhler. The social network Yammer attracted 15,000 users within one month. Now it has 20,000. Enabling discussion “from the management board to trainees, Yammer has opened up communication at Innogy like never before.” Employees have a new-found confidence and lively innovative knowledge exchanges and ideas are expressed freely: “Inno-

vation grows from social interaction”, proclaims Böhler, evangelizing on the potential of this unmoderated platform which, thanks to proactive initiatives from country managers, now nurtures many self-organized groups.

The three Cs of HR development

Today’s HR experts are reassessing their role in the workplace. They are developing more mentor-style, collaborative approaches. They’ve come to value the content curation process more. They’re nurturing learning communities and devising tactics that inspire these communities to share knowledge. Eager to establish innovative sources for informal learning, Innogy is also auditing workers’ experiences with the learning sources they use. Google was an obvious knowledge platform for many, but other platforms (offering, for instance, free eBooks) generated surprisingly little acceptance. The online learning platform Lynda.com fares well and has already notched up 300 bookings for video tutorials. Fuse and SuccessFactors are still being used – and are as reliable as ever.

Facts & Figures

- Renewable energy subsidiary of RWE, 45,000 employees
- Innovation as business model
- More informal learning with social networks
- Intensive exchange of knowledge via Yammer
- Video tutorials as self-initiated learning

To succeed, knowledge management must become a framework. “We tap into knowledge, prepare it and transfer it to deliver clear, concrete benefits in the workplace.”

