10 Informal Learning Activities to Boost Employee Engagement

By Knowledge Anywhere

Unlike structured, formal learning, informal learning harnesses a person’s intrinsic desire to learn and gives them the freedom to find knowledge from their preferred sources. Formal learning channels have largely been seen as the most effective way to train employees in the past. However, businesses have recently started to realize that employees can gain a great deal of information from less structured learning.

What is informal learning?

“Informal learning refers to learning that occurs away from a structured, formal classroom environment. Informal learning comes in many forms, including viewing videos, self-study, reading articles, participating in forums and chat rooms, performance support, coaching sessions and games... Informal learning is a style of learning in which the learner sets their own goals and objectives.”

- Training Industry
There are many benefits of informal learning:

- **Low Stress**: With no formal testing, there is no high-pressure situation.
- **Flows with Daily Work**: Informal learning activities fit easily into a work day. People continue to learn and grow according to what they need to solve a problem or get through a situation.
- **Intuitive**: People naturally learn in an informal setting, they have been doing it their whole lives.
- **Encourages Curiosity**: Without the pressure of performance, people are free to follow their interests, even if it takes them away from the original idea.

Here are our top 10 informal learning activities to boost employee engagement:

1. **Workplace Mentoring** Pair new employees with seasoned ones to give the newbies an opportunity to see how business is conducted in your company. With no exams or assignments to worry about, new employees can learn by example and incorporate the practices they observe in more experienced employees. This also gives new employees the confidence they need to do their jobs well and helps with the [succession planning process](#).

2. **Social Media Engagement** LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media outlets are full of industry information. Encourage your employees to connect online with your company and other industry leaders to stay on top of the latest news and trends.

3. **Seminars and Guest Speakers** Employees will enjoy and benefit from attending a local seminar about personal development, sales, or anything related to your industry. Without standards to meet, they are free to absorb the information that is of interest to them. Bringing a presenter into the office has is generally less time-consuming and expensive than sending an employee to a conference, however the change of pace and scenery can be a large benefit.

4. **Ropes Courses** A ropes course can be physically demanding, which can improve focus and determination while boosting self-confidence and overcoming fear. It also teaches leadership, teamwork, communication, and resourcefulness.

5. **Escape Rooms** Like the ropes course, an escape room is a recreational opportunity to improve communication, problem-solving, and teamwork among your employees.

6. **Volunteering** Helping others is rewarding, and it offers the volunteers an opportunity to learn on-site skills required for the project, reinforcing their own trust in their ability to learn quickly and act efficiently.
7. **Company Sports or Happy Hour** Joining a recreational soccer, softball, or volleyball league or attending happy hour together gives participants an opportunity to get to know each other better and encourages conversations. Employees can stay up-to-date on what's going on in other departments, which they might not have time to do during the workday. They will also be getting exercise, which comes with its own list of benefits, including increased energy and improved sleep, that can improve employee performance. Of course, it also builds teamwork and company pride.

8. **Trip to a Trade Show, Manufacturing Facility, or Company Headquarters** Salespeople will appreciate learning how their products are made, and employees in a field office might feel an increased loyalty toward the company after a visit to headquarters and a meeting with upper management. Getting away from the office and attending a trade show can spark renewed interest and innovation in the workplace.

9. **Book Club** Start a voluntary, informal book club within your organization. Choose a book each month that encourages personal growth or relates to your objectives as a company. Conduct short weekly meetings, in-person or virtual, to discuss what you've read.

10. **Allowance for Learning on Their Own Time** Provide your employees with a small allowance to be used toward an educational opportunity of their choice. This might mean an online course, or an in-person class. You don't necessarily have to require them to spend the money on a class that directly relates to their positions. The employees will benefit from anything they choose to learn; even if it simply boosts their morale and enjoyment, the company will benefit from a happier employee.

These are only a few of the informal training examples you can use to help you increase employee engagement. Informal educational opportunities encourage your employees to keep learning and growing.

You might also find the article, *The Importance of Informal Learning In The Workplace*, to be helpful.

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