



Next-Gen Associate Training: iPad-Based Videos Boost Employee Productivity And Engagement

The iPad is a terrific tool for mobile payments, mobile POS and much more – including infrastructure-free, app-based, non-streaming video that moves your training into the future.

Next-generation app-based training videos are *instant-on* – as if by light switch. Since the video content resides in and is retrieved from the iPad, not a network, users experience no streaming or buffering... just instant and persuasive education. Engaging HD videos play immediately and smoothly, regardless of onsite bandwidth, and are simple and inexpensive to modify.

In between customer time, associates click on/off of bookmarked, two-minute training segments for continually increasing product/procedure knowledge. iPad-based videos are fast, flexible and interactive, all of which enliven, speed and advance associate learning.

Customized learning apps work with retailers' current software and

hardware, and leverage existing training libraries. The next-generation app-based strategy is ideal for IT and training leaders dedicated to innovation, simplicity, low-cost digital solutions, and highly productive training methods.

“The benefits of using video to train have been proven,” noted Greg Buzek, founder and president of IHL Consulting, a global research and advisory firm specializing in retail technologies. “In the industry’s next stage of digital training, a video stored locally on a mobile device eliminates the network as a point of failure, which is huge. In addition, the size of the videos that dwell within the mobile device are crucial to best managing the frequency and number of store and chain-wide training updates: By dividing modules into short segments, only those segments affected by a change require modification. Store and corporate-wide procedures can be revised easily and cost-effectively across every device in every store, region and/or country, without the need for expensive video servers.”

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App-based training is “interesting stuff!” asserted Katherine Jones, VP, HCM Technology Research, Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP. Jones covers the underlying HCM technologies and services that support the management of a global workforce. “Application-based video learning provides multiple benefits: These include the ability to download the content for consumption offline or away from access, enabling more reliable access to the content; the ability to push or pull content as needed; and better security, as it provides the ability to lock or delete content remotely as in the case of lost equipment.”



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*Katherine Jones, Bersin by Deloitte,
Deloitte Consulting LLP.*

Novel Approach to Time-Honored Solution

Video training isn’t new, but making video instantly available, without buffering/streaming, from an iPad, in the store aisle, certainly is. Among the many benefits, associates stay on the selling floor, accessible when needed, to access a training module whenever they find as little as two free

minutes.

Some retailers hoping to leverage iPad video training erroneously believe that limited onsite bandwidth will constrain video implementations – but not with app-based video programs retrieved from iPad software.

Streaming and app-based video solutions initially look the same – but there’s a huge difference in how quickly and how well the content plays.

App-based learning programs provide HD video to each store without streaming – from any device, on various platforms, without any delays – even in stores where bandwidth is limited. Locally installed apps residing in the iPad software already contain the video content, so no buffering or streaming is required. The desired video already is in the palm of the associate’s hands, unleashed instantly with just a few swipes of a fingertip.

Conversely, mobile-enabled websites that call for video to stream from the internet and intranets will constrain video performance. Sourcing video from the inter/intranet causes the bothersome, time-consuming buffering many people experience at YouTube, NetFlix and other excellent sites that stream great video content. Even at store locations with high-speed WiFi, bad weather conditions, high data demand and other everyday circumstances affect the quality of video download and play.

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Many learning management system vendors that market video training products blame retailers’ disappointing results on poor onsite bandwidth. But app-based videos take bandwidth out of the equation.

These and other vendors also provide a DVD

presentation followed by comprehension tests. But with standalone DVDs, retailers never know if the video actually was viewed...or which version. But app-based modules hosted in the cloud provide two-way communications with the app in real-time. These capabilities provide significantly more than basic LMS functionality: They drive the menus; control local content; and host quizzes, language options program releases via XML over https secure protocol.

The Value of Video Training

Retailers have been using backroom learning videos successfully for many years. In 1962, Sears retained Vincent Price for an internal sales training video, which helped sell 50,000 individual pieces of art.¹



This video was an internal training video that Vincent Price made to help train the sales staff so they could sell fine art to customers.

Today most retailers use video-based training materials – but primarily in backroom and corporate environments. App-based video training modules, viewed in snippets, one at a time, allow new and longtime associates to remain where they are most productive – on the sales floor.

Today's workforce wants to be engaged and entertained. Video *shows* associates how to be successful by demonstrating correct selling, service and leadership behaviors. For example, upcoming product lines and new floorsets are much easier to convey through video. Furthermore, the use of video reinforces learning with highly-interactive exercises and assessments.

Video also replaces the volumes of expensive, paper-based training materials that become

outdated quickly in today's fast-moving retail environment.

Interacting with video content now is mainstream: 189.2 million Americans [nearly 42% of the U.S. population] watched 47.1 billion online content videos in November 2013, according to comScore.² That's a remarkable two-month increase from September 2013, when 188.7 million Americans watched 46 billion online content videos.³

Current and future associates are accustomed to this medium: Video is consistent, visually engaging and communicates much more than speech and/or print. For these reasons, video works extremely well for employee training, especially in retail, where turnover is high; most associates are young and digitally savvy; and retailers need quick, efficient ways to on-board.

“Video is quickly becoming essential for both on-demand and mobile learning because it is flexible, self-governed, and self-sustained,” according to a Bersin by Deloitte research brief, entitled “Using Video to Impact Learning Initiatives,” November 2013.⁴ “On-demand videos allow learners to consume knowledge that is personalized, highly accessible, and can be rapidly applied to their work effort.”

Video Shifts To The Future. Will You?

The iPad was built to provide a rich media experience – particularly ideal for video – and will be the future of mobile communications: Today there are 80 million tablets in use throughout the U.S. That number is expected to grow – *by 250%!* – to more than 280 million tablets in use by 2017, according to a report released January 2014 from The Yankee Group.⁵

As iPad implementations continue to catapult, you may be among the forward-thinking retailers empowering sales associates with this game-changing technology. If so, why not incorporate a next-generation training solution that moves you into the future with fast, flexible, digital and interactive video content?



References:

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