

CASE STUDY

Change Management and Motivation for Online Immunization Training

This article is authored by Bull City Learning, a digital learning agency managing the development and communication of the Immunization eLearning Initiative.

The Situation

In an effort to increase the capacity of Immunization field staff, UNICEF and WHO partnered with learning agency, Bull City Learning, in 2014 to lead the development of a comprehensive collection of digital learning courses. Sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the courses focused on skills and knowledge in areas of high training need, including supply chain management, communications for generating demand, data management, and microplanning. As with any such effort, the courses needed to be embraced by staff at all levels of the organization, especially in the field, if they were to achieve the desired impact. A program of change management, including key motivational strategies, was applied to help grow interest and participation in the curriculum.

The Approach

In order to optimally support the success of the online learning initiative, Bull City Learning has worked with WHO and UNICEF project teams since early 2015 to develop and implement a change management strategy for each organization.

Change management, by definition, is a plan that uses tools and approaches to manage transition and change among individuals in order move from a current organizational practice, culture, or belief to a future desired state.

The change management strategy had several key goals:

- Increasing awareness of the accessibility of the new online learning
- Strengthening leadership's support and advocacy of the online learning curriculum
- Growing staff members' enthusiasm and interest in participation
- Making progress toward the establishment of an online learning culture

The Role of Motivation

Motivation methods were central to change management efforts as both intrinsic and extrinsic drivers would be necessary to achieve high organization levels of online learning awareness, advocacy, and participation.

Intrinsic motivation is evident when learners complete an action or behavior because they find enjoyment or have a personal interest in the activity.

Extrinsic motivation occurs for the sake of some external outcome, such as professional development goal attainment, or attaining the skills for a promotion.

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The Program

A comprehensive plan was developed to accomplish change management, using several different strategies to motivate learners:

- **Building Excitement and Interest:** The program was named the “Immunization eLearning Initiative” and branded with a logo and color scheme to help capture interest and build awareness of the program. The initiative was also labeled a “digital learning opportunity.” During the course development phase, promotional videos, flyers and posters were shared to build anticipation of the learning program to come. The communications focused on two important intrinsically motivating factors: 1) the courses would be based on areas of highest-need training (as deemed by a survey of WHO and UNICEF Immunization staff conducted in the fall of 2014), bringing them quickly up to speed; and 2) the courses would use leading-edge instructional design, offering an engaging and memorable learning experience. The courses and promotional communications were developed in both English and French to engage and accommodate as many learners as possible.

Branded Promotion Examples:

The promotional materials feature the Immunization eLearning Initiative logo, which consists of a stylized globe with a laptop and a person. The main text on the posters reads: "IMMUNIZATION eLEARNING INITIATIVE A DIGITAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE".

Ready, Set, Reach! poster highlights the mission: "As UNICEF and WHO staff members our mission is to reach all children with immunization. We must work together, regardless of our role, to enhance the knowledge and skills needed to achieve national, regional, and global immunization goals. The immunization eLearning Initiative will provide interactive, engaging, and valuable training right at your desk." It lists five eLearning courses: Immunization Staff Orientation, Immunization Supply Chain Management, Communication for Immunization, Immunization Programme Planning, and Immunization Coverage Data. It also lists upcoming topics: Supply Chain Management, Communication for Immunization, Immunization Programme Planning, and Data Management, Analysis, and Use.

JUMP IN! poster says: "Communications for Immunization course now available."

Promotional video example: http://www.bullcitylearning.com/iei/english_video/

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- **Establishing the Value of the Program:** Frequent and sustained initiative communications also focused on educating both the organizations' leaders and staff about the benefits of online learning and the curriculum itself. The new digital curriculum was an opportunity to receive vital training in a flexible format. Staff could learn at their own pace by starting and stopping as schedules permitted, and by choosing which courses to take first based on their own learning interest and learning need. The curriculum would also provide staff with the ability to get up-to-speed on the latest systems and protocols, deliver better support to agency partners, and satisfy professional development goals. In addition to messages of ease and relevance, the communications also focused on fostering the vision that everyone is working together to align their knowledge and make progress in achieving EPI goals. Communications also informed learners that they could include the curriculum as part of their professional development goals.
- **Securing and Maintaining Stakeholder Support:** An important source of motivation is the endorsement and support of learning from leadership and supervisors. This can include providing communication of a learning initiative's importance and necessity, and well as providing encouragement and recognition along the learner's path. Ensuring that regional officers and the direct supervisors of immunization staff, such as country immunization and health officers, understood and advocated the Immunization eLearning Initiative would be integral to its success. In the fall of 2015, through a dedicated call and during major immunization meetings, time was allocated to inform officers about the vision, expectations, and details of upcoming online training offerings. Communications staff and materials were made readily available to provide communication support for managers via flyers, presentations, and other information. Leaders have been informed of program progress in monthly emails updates with continuing reinforcement regarding what they can be doing to support the learning initiative. The program is now entering a phase where it will keep leadership and supervisors informed of how their staff is doing in terms of utilization progress and gaps—a strategy employed specifically to motivate the stakeholders.

A Motivation Example from the Field: *A country officer with higher-than-average course utilization said in an interview that making the steps easy and clear was key to his staff's successful participation. Specifically, he assigns his staff members one course to take at a time and one month to complete it. He has found that offering more time tends to enable procrastination, while one month is reasonable to complete a two- to three-hour online course. While staff are busy and usually complete eLearning on their own time (outside of work), he tries to motivate them by pointing out that doing so is necessary for excelling in their chosen career field. The course is also required as part of their professional development plans.*

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- **Recognizing Participation:** A lack of recognition for completing online learning can be a deterrent. One way to overcome this is to acknowledge course completions. This is achieved in a number of ways, such as a basic “job well done” from a supervisor to a staff member, a leader commending a group during a call, or even a course communicator reporting good utilization progress. While it is not easy to see what others are doing across organizations, regions, and countries, data-sharing has been prioritized within the Immunization eLearning Initiative so that good utilization is known and can be recognized. The project team has considered, and even sampled, tactics for incentivizing course completion, such as awarding the first 100 course completers with giveaway (like a mug or T-shirt). This is effective in terms of utilization, but these tactics have been seen as cumbersome from a management and budget perspective and less of a fit with organizational culture, but may be valuable for motivating learners. Further, an organized recognition system has been encouraged to help transform learning culture, such as managers recognizing learning progress in professional development conversations or during team meetings, or project teams and learning champions sharing learning success stories within internal news updates and articles.

Key Considerations

Developing a pervasive digital learning culture requires the deliberate management of an implementation process. To do so effectively, several considerations are necessary. [Here is a link to a list of key questions](#) that will help training development leaders to be certain that all of the necessary elements of change management are incorporated, and that key motivators are identified, within your plan to support change.

Conclusion

Following two years in development, the program has just arrived at a point where a comprehensive suite of core eLearning courses as well as rapid modules are available to WHO and UNICEF staff. At this stage, 1,300 WHO and UNICEF staff are actively enrolled in nine courses with more than 400 full course completions. Motivational strategies within the change management plan – including the approaches to build excitement, demonstrate value, secure stakeholder support, and recognize participation – have demonstrated value in generating enrollment and participation among staff, as well as support among stakeholders. This effort has demonstrated that taking deliberate steps to evaluate the factors that are necessary to achieve intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is vital to successfully engage learners. Further, ensuring the ongoing repetition of communications that reinforce these motivators is key to realizing high learning initiative participation.

Access the Immunization eLearning Initiative

Immunization eLearning Initiative courses are now available to everyone working in support of immunization and the Global Vaccine Action Plan. To access the courses, visit UNICEF’s online learning portal, Agora, at <https://agora.unicef.org/>. Select login. Register as a “guest.” Enter the keyword “Immunization” in the search window to locate all the courses in the curriculum. The system will store your credentials and you may start and stop coursework without losing progress.