

5 Ways to Increase Learner Engagement with **Custom Content**

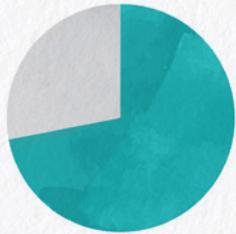


Introduction

As a talent developer, one of your top priorities is consistently providing engaging and relevant learning content to help employees succeed and grow in their roles.

But it's tough to get employees to make the time—so tough that talent developers named it their #1 challenge in 2018.¹

Custom content could be your way in. Custom content is the unique content you create in-house or curate from favorite resources to compliment your scalable off-the-shelf content.



72% of employees say they would be motivated to engage with relevant online learning content featuring company leadership or management

With custom content, you can offer even more relevant learning experiences. Think outside the traditional full course model—what messages can your organization deliver to compliment off-the-shelf learning? How can you unlock internal subject matter experts to help employees overcome challenges, feel more engaged with your unique business, and excel in their roles?

This may sound daunting, but it's easier and simpler than you think.



What is Custom Content?

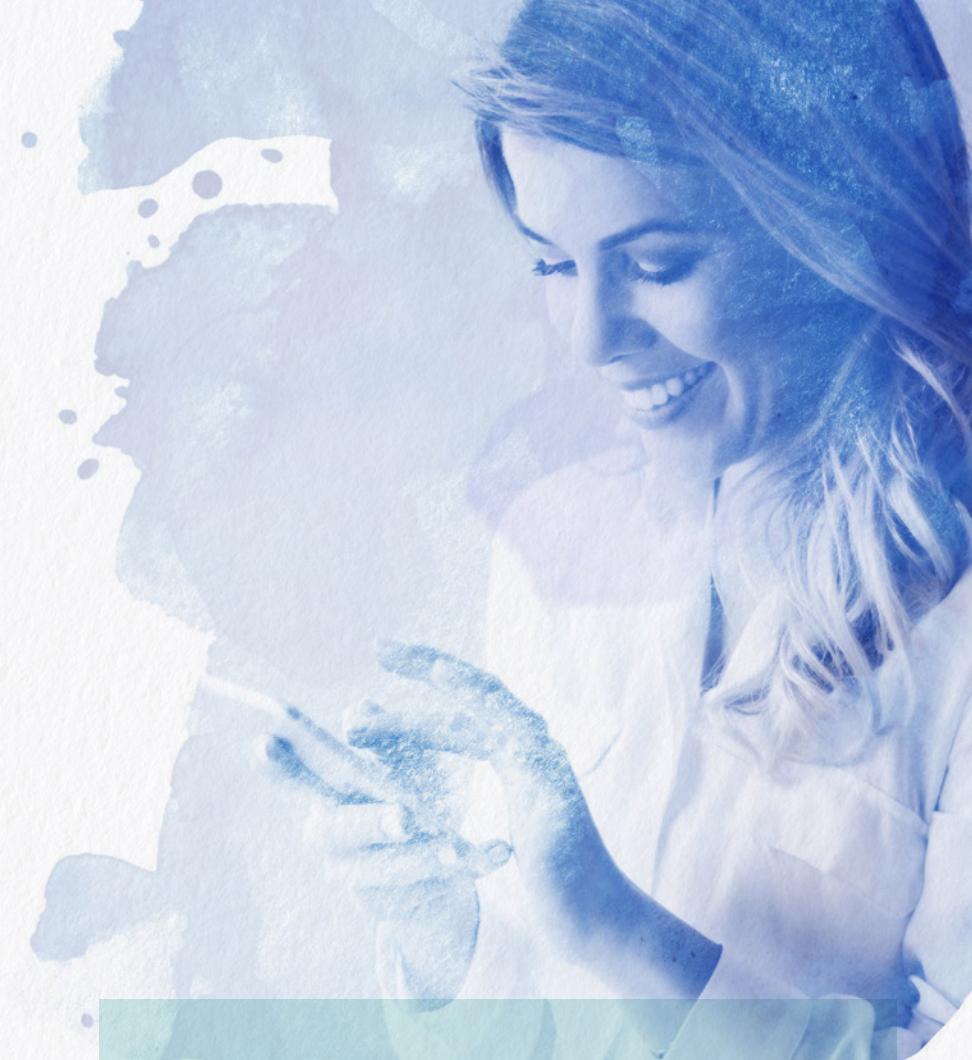
Custom video content grounds off-the-shelf learning into the unique reality of the learner—her heroes, her challenges, her growth path.

Off-the-shelf content is a great way to deliver the depth and breadth of expert content to meet the needs of your organization. But you can't buy the bridge between external expert content and the unique reality of your employees—the organization must build it (or record it) with custom content.

Employees demand uniquely relevant content experiences. Not just unique to their career path or interests that we can serve up with data or AI. They want insights and access to internal leaders that can speak to the unique challenges they face, the management culture they want to grow in, and the products and technology instances that only they have access to.

Your internal leaders don't have the time to create comprehensive courses, but they can create unique content to engage learners and tie off-the-shelf content to what's happening in the organization today.

Here are a few scenarios to help you envision how this might play out in your organization and provide resources that show you how to quickly and easily create your own custom content. →

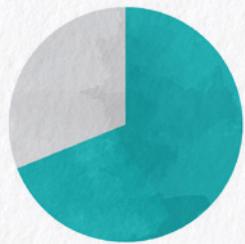


Pro-tip

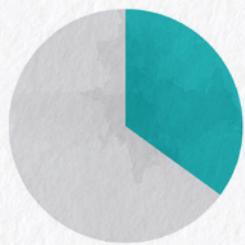
These videos do not need to be a major production with a film crew. This is a light lift opportunity for a major impact. An L&D pro can record these on her smart phone or encourage managers and leaders to create them themselves. Videos are easily uploaded into your learning solution and sit alongside curated off-the-shelf courses to support employee development.

1. Personalize the Onboarding Experience

Once the paperwork is signed, the real talent development work begins—with onboarding. Data shows that the onboarding process is crucial to employee retention, productivity, and success.²



69% of employees are more likely to stay with an organization for 3+ years with a great onboarding experience.³



Best-in-class companies are **35%** more likely to provide onboarding resources before an employee's first day.⁴

Help your new hires get acquainted with your business and company culture before they walk in the door for their first day.

Picture this...

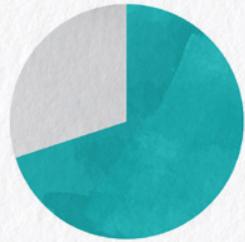
A new employee completes her 2-day in-person onboarding. She gets home, very excited for her first day on the job and receives an invitation to a learning path.

In that learning path she finds a message from the CEO about the importance of culture. There is a message from her department head about the goals of the team, and from her direct manager about her management style and the exciting challenges they'll tackle together—maybe you even include a TED Talk. Each of these custom messages introduce off-the-shelf courses from experts in their fields.

The new employee walks into the first day on the job feeling confident in her understanding of the culture, team, and how her role contributes to team goals. She recognizes a few faces and has a solid launch point to help her ramp and acclimate quickly.

2. New Manager Training

One of the most exciting employee moments is joining the ranks of people managers, but managing people is new territory for most, and the stakes are high.



According to Gallup, managers account for at least **70%** of employee engagement scores.⁵

Management training foundations are usually based in external expert content and best practices, but your organization likely has a secret sauce to help the business and your individual contributors thrive under new middle-managers.

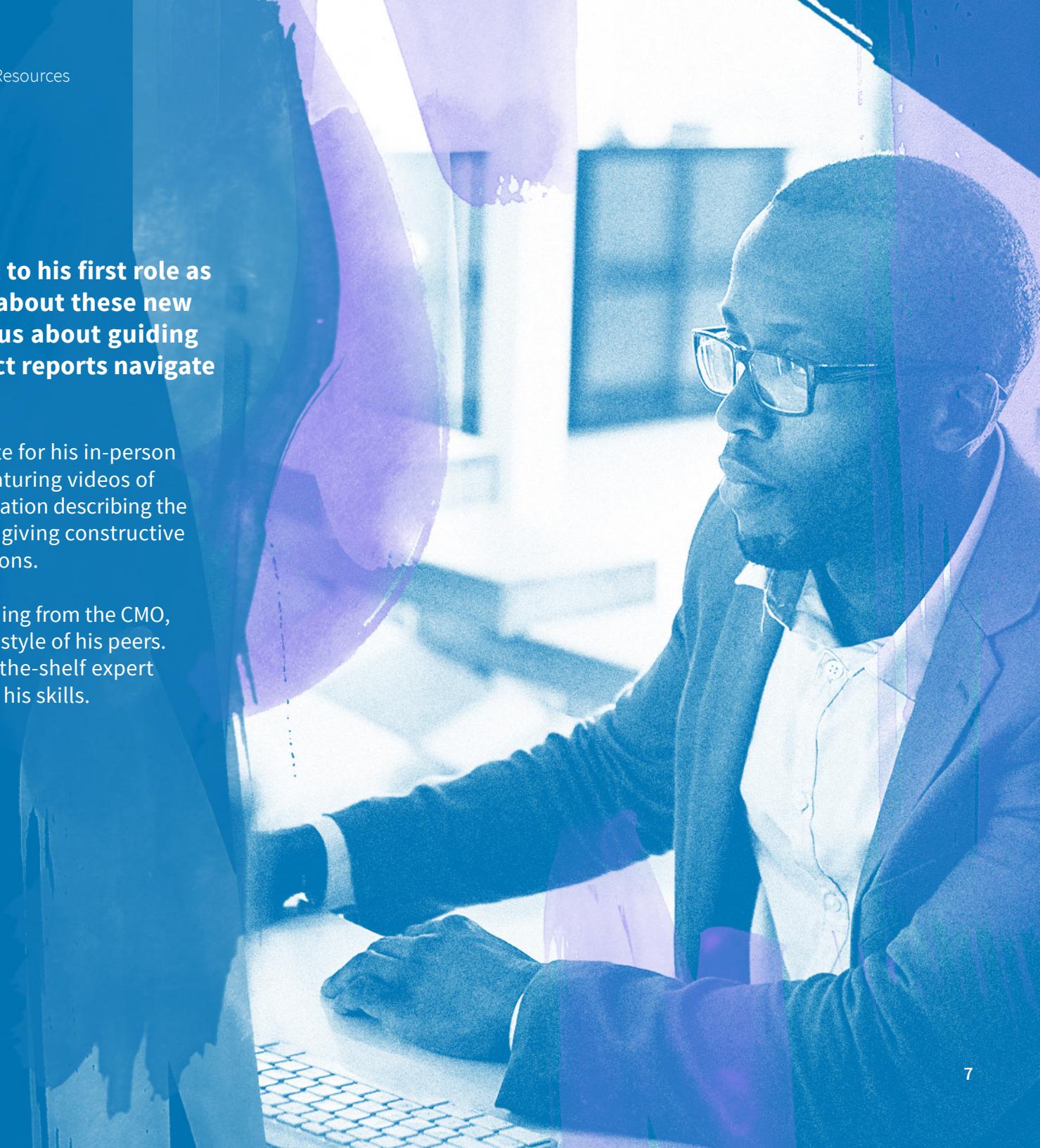
Give your new managers access to internal leaders and management rockstars at scale. Include welcome messages, overcoming management horror stories, and common scenarios.

Picture this...

An employee was just promoted to his first role as a people manager. He's excited about these new responsibilities, but he's nervous about guiding a team and helping his new direct reports navigate career paths.

In his inbox, along with a calendar invite for his in-person training, he receives a learning path featuring videos of leaders and managers within his organization describing the management culture, career coaching, giving constructive feedback, and handling difficult situations.

He laughs at an early management learning from the CMO, and gains insight into the management style of his peers. This custom content is followed by off-the-shelf expert courses to help this new manager build his skills.



3. Leverage Managers to Scale Team Learnings

According to the data in the [2018 Workplace Learning Report](#), people managers may indeed be the most impactful ingredient in creating a thriving learning culture.



66% of learners say that they would be motivated to spend more time learning if their direct managers were involved in their workplace learning experience.

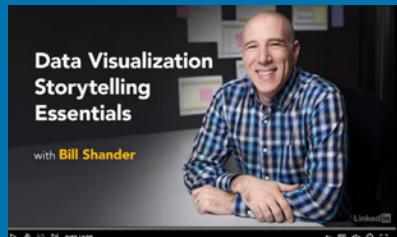
Talent developers can increase engagement with managers by empowering them to create their own custom content. Think about it—it's in their best interest to help their employees ramp faster and overcome business challenges!



Picture this...

A marketing team just launched a massive cross-functional effort that took 6 months to create and build. They meet and discuss potential improvements to their processes and how to better collaborate.

The manager of the project creates a video documenting their findings—a more scalable and engaging approach to the traditional post-mortem. He complements this by hand-picking off-the-shelf learning courses to help the team improve in key areas like data-visualization and project management.



This can be shared with the broader marketing organization to help other teams learn from their intelligent risks.

The team quickly cultivates new skills to take on the next big project, and the talent development team enables the company to overcome business challenges.



4. Scale the Knowledge of Technology Power Users

Most organizations have tools, dashboards, or resources that require advanced knowledge or specialization. These tools usually have owners that get bogged down helping the broader organization pull reports, etc.

As an L&D pro, or an owner or power user of one of these tools, you could create a custom content video documenting how to perform the tool's most popular functions. This increases the productivity of your power users and enables the broader organization to self-serve on these tools. What would this look like?

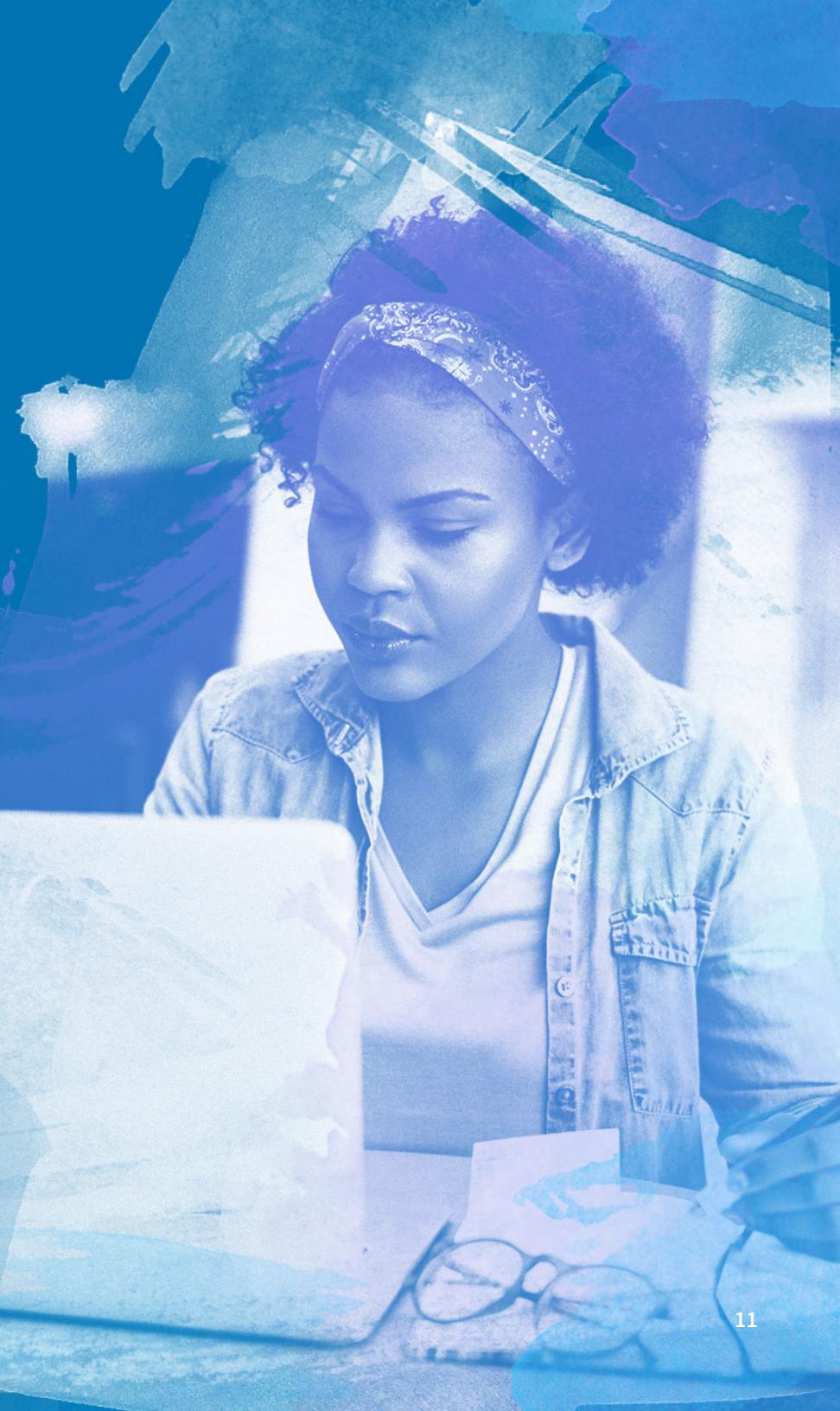


Picture this...

An employee decides she wants to learn SQL to pull her own reports without having to ask or wait for cross-functional partners.

She takes a few courses like [SQL Essential Training](#) and [SQL: Data Reporting and Analysis](#), and decides she is ready to try out her new skills. She watches a custom content video detailing how your unique organization uses SQL so that she knows how to leverage those new skills. After all, your database has fields that are unique to your organization, and the custom content that this employee creates can highlight company-specific use cases.

The employee and her team immediately feel the impact of the time spent learning.



5. Help Customer-Facing Teams Quickly Adapt to Change

Customer-facing teams like sales, customer success, and your call centers often need scalable training in response to business changes like new policies or products.

In these key moments, most L&D teams turn to their instructional designers to create comprehensive custom courses.

But often times, instructional designers are swamped. A typical needs analysis will show over two dozen topics for instructional designers to cover ASAP. Off-the-shelf content can help instructional designers decide what can be leveraged off-the-shelf from experts in the field, and what needs to be truly custom unique content in your organization.

Your learning solution should facilitate a seamless experience between off-the-shelf content and custom courses, so learners can complete their training on a single platform.



Picture this...

You are launching a new product. The sales team needs scalable custom content to help reps ramp quickly.

Your instructional design team creates custom content around the new product, like the core value prop and competitive positioning, that sits alongside off-the-shelf content from industry experts on topics such as [How to Handle Objections](#) and [Finance for Non-Financial Managers](#).



All stakeholders can track and measure the engagement around these learning programs and identify ways to show ROI in relation to the performance of the sales team around the launch of this new project.

"It's really hard for sales teams to step away from the phones and go to an instructor-led training. Leveraging eLearning allows us to roll out training to a larger audience in a shorter amount of time, and gives sales reps the opportunity to hit their numbers, but also get the training they need."

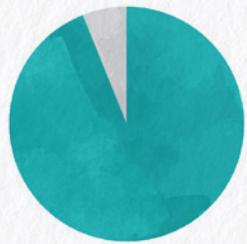
— Amy Bowers, Instructional Design Manager at Zillow Group



Conclusion

There are incredible resources roaming your offices that your employees want to learn from. These individuals know the nuances of your businesses and the unique challenges your employees face.

Tap into these resources to fuel your learning culture—increasing organizational involvement and motivating employees to spend more time learning.



94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development.

Yet the #1 challenge for talent development is getting employees to make the time for learning.

Research shows that custom content is a key motivator for employees to engage in online learning. Break out your smartphone and provide the unique access, insights, and context employees crave!

Resources

Preparing to Shoot Video

Learn how to prepare, capture, and edit great custom content video to compliment your off-the-shelf courses.



Making Video: Teach Something is a beginner-level course for non-video people who want to make short videos focused on instruction. With the right techniques, making an engaging training video can be accomplished with little more than a smartphone.



Get weekly tips on improving the quality of corporate video. Learn how to record on the go with a smartphone, set up lighting, pick wardrobe, and beyond.



A needs analysis is the first step of any ADDIE-aligned instructional design process. Learn the three-step process to conducting a needs analysis that will accurately capture and define the goals of your project.

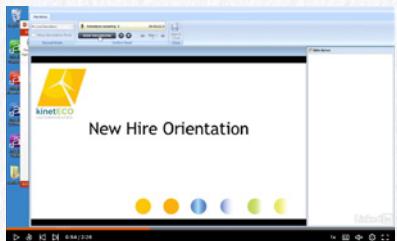


Resources

Capturing Content



Learn how to shoot video on an iPhone, apps to improve video, and overall how to dramatically improve video quality and perhaps use it in a professional application.



Discover the principles and tools companies around the world use to record their screens and create engaging eLearning content using the most popular tools on the market, including Captivate, Articulate Studio, Articulate Storyline, Lectora Inspire, and Camtasia Studio.

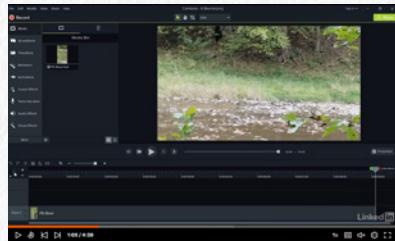


Camtasia 9—the popular video-editing software—boasts an easy-to-use interface and an array of tools that can help you create high-quality video-based trainings. Learn how to capture, produce, and share instructional videos using the tools and features offered in Camtasia 9.



Resources

Editing Content



Whether you're a business person unfamiliar with making video-based content, or a rehearsed communications professional, you can quickly learn and use Camtasia to capture and polish engaging video that people will actually watch.



Learn how to create a polished, professional movie with iMovie for iOS, the easy-to-use video editing software for the iPhone and iPad.



Get started with Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2017. Take a tour of the interface and see the entire post-production process—including ingest, organization, editing, refining, audio editing, basic effects, color correction, titling, output, and more.



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