



JAY FERNANDEZ

Guest Editor

Well into his second decade in the HR field, Jay Fernandez (jlfernan@gundluth.org) has worked for Westinghouse, Fluor Daniel and the Mayo Clinic. In his current role as manager of HRIS, he sets the strategic direction for human resources information systems for the entire Gundersen Lutheran health system. He is often called upon to speak on e-learning in healthcare and diversity issues, especially the challenges Latinos face in the workplace. Fernandez is currently finishing up work on a masters degree in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix and holds a bachelors degree in Business Administration from Washington State University. He and his wife of 16 years live with their four children in La Crosse, Wisconsin on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River.

E-learning is the current bandwagon for folks to jump on and why not, it holds the potential to revolutionize the way training departments conduct their business. I've been around e-learning for almost 15 years now and have been amazed at how it has evolved. Last year, after taking a new role, I had to lead my organization into the world of e-learning. I had the technical background but not the training background.

I was faced with many options and decided to go with a learning management system (LMS) that did not have its own content for online courses. I still needed to sort through myriad offerings to figure out how to maximize online content in our organization.

We quickly learned that content comes in many flavors. Some content looked as if it was a PowerPoint that somebody did on lunch break, still others just had a lot of facts to read and a test that followed. Take the test enough times and anybody could pass the course. Finally, we stumbled into the world of the instructional designer.

This elusive group of folks knew how to design courses so that employees learned; they actually made it fun and cost effective. I researched

ASTD (American Society of Training and Development) and working through their information, I learned what makes a good course. Let's face it, no matter how good your LMS is, if you don't have good content, then you don't have a good system.

In this issue, we pulled together some resources so that you can look at e-learning, the basics of an LMS and the content that could potentially lead you to a successful implementation. These articles will help you achieve your goal: getting employees trained with a positive return on your investment.

Nicole Saunders starts us off this issue with an overview of e-learning. She lays out what it is and what some of the challenges are with utilizing it. She draws on her experience at Wells Fargo and her own research to help us understand what it is we are actually talking about.

Deborah Schmidt of SAP then focuses on the LMS: What an LMS can do for us and what are some options so that we can realize the return on investment that we so often hear about.

Next, Larry Smith guides us through the maze of content enabling us to determine what good content actually looks like. He draws on his years of

experience as a trainer and course designer for the U.S. Department of Energy and his current work for an e-learning content developer.

Jared Schaalje and Van Newby examine how people learn, and asks us not only to look at the content, but recognize that emotions, attitudes and learning orientations also factor into your employee's success or failure.

As e-learning continues to evolve, and technology makes the learning experience more effective, those of us that can help our organizations steer through the many options and find positive results will have a bright future. I believe that you will find this issue will help you navigate through the maze and be the valuable asset that your organization needs.

Many thanks to Susan Leszczewicz, our Department Editor, for providing us with some very interesting and informative articles for this issue.