

Curriculum Planning for a Strategic Training Program

Every year, NAVEX Global develops market analysis on the trends in the ethics and compliance training marketplace. Over the last four years, the top challenge for training program decision makers has been consistent – limited hours available for training. When faced with training multiple internal audiences on multiple required and desired topics, how do you make the most of limited seat time?

First, Have a Plan

The most effective ethics and compliance training programs are defined by organizational risk and prioritization of that risk. An organizational risk assessment identifies which topics are “must haves” vs. “nice to haves” for individual audiences. Making a list of core topics, objectives and audiences illustrates of the training challenges and realities ahead.

At the same time, be realistic about building some flexibility into your program to allow for fluctuations in risk priorities, unexpected organizational changes or legislative requirements. Having an agile plan allows your stakeholders to flex as conditions change. Either way, build in points of assessment and measurement throughout your program to evaluate impact, increase buy-in and plan for budgeting.

Optimize Scheduling

Our research shows that organizations that pace their training over time and don't overwhelm individual learners with too much content at once perform better. Too much training increases burnout and decreases attention, learning and retention – the primary objectives of a successful training program.

Training deployed in a well-defined cadence with a degree of repetition and reiteration drives understanding and retention. Optimize seat time by scheduling training over months or years, prioritizing as defined by your planning phase.

This likely means selecting core topics for the full organization and defining additional topics for specific audiences, balancing learner time across the calendar. No single person in your organization should be assigned all possible training, no matter their role. You need to optimize topics and course duration – full-length courses and micro learning – over time to maximize impact.

An optimized schedule often goes hand-in-hand with a clearer path toward measuring impact and optimizing budget. With a training strategy that includes a mix of full-length and micro learning courses, timelines and milestones, and a consistent budget, you can compound the effectiveness of your program.

¹ Ethics Resource Center (2014). National Business Ethics Survey[®] of the U.S. Workforce. Arlington, VA.

Examples: Tools to Optimize Training

Standard Curriculum Plan

The example below offers a training curriculum for a program in which all learners must receive training on two core topics, and specific audiences receive additional role-based training. As you can see, we optimize learner time across a two-year period by using the calendar and both full-length and micro learning courseware. By doing so, key audiences are trained on topics relevant to their roles while not significantly extending their seat time.

This curriculum plan is built around two must-have training topics, workplace harassment and code of conduct. The model allows for six months between training on these essential topics, and the year-two training requirement for code of conduct is satisfied with a micro learning refresher course.

The risk assessment you conduct will help you decide which other topics to address, to what depth, duration and frequency. This example program includes additional topics for all learners as well as core topics for role-based learners – managers, financial team members and those working with third parties. This plan mixes full-length and micro learning courses across two years to optimize learner time, attention and understanding. In the end, there is less than four hours of possible training in year one, and two and a half hours in year two to cover all audiences.

Risk	Course	Audience	Schedule								
			Year One				Year Two				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
High	Ethics & Code of Conduct (ECOC)	All Employees	35					ML			
High	Workplace Harassment (WPH)	All Employees				60					60
Med	Conflicts of Interest (COI)	All Employees			25					ML	
Low	Ethical Leadership	All Managers		25		ML					
Low	Financial Integrity	All Managers						ML			
		All Employees in Finance		25				ML			
Low	Social Media	All Employees					25				
Med	Cyber Security	All Employees			ML			25			
Med	Bribery and Corruption	Limited Audience	25					ML			
Low	Standards of Conduct for Third Parties	Limited Audience			25					25	
Total Training by Quarter (up to mins)			60	50	55	65	30	35	30	60	
Total Training by Year (up to mins)			230				155				

Non-Standard Curriculum Plan

In many cases, much of the complexity of planning for ethics and compliance training lies with the structure of the organization. Complexities may arise due to operations in international markets, distributed workforces, diverse language requirements and other factors to evaluate when building a training curriculum.

While the situation is more complex, the approach toward planning and executing on the strategy is consistent. Keep in mind that when training is required in multiple languages and courseware development involves considerable customization, your planning period is longer and you should build in additional time for unexpected challenges. In some cases, you may need multiple, linked plans. Once you have constructed your risk-based approach and defined key audiences, your curriculum plan ties it all together.

Risk	Course	Audience	Schedule								
			Year One				Year Two				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
High	Ethics & Code of Conduct (ECOC)	All Employees	30					ML			
High	Workplace Harassment (WPH)	All Employees				60					60
Med	Workplace Violence	All US Employees		25					ML		
Med	Global Data Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French Italian Spanish 	All European Employees (in language)						25			
Med	Conflicts of Interest (COI)	All International Employees			25					ML	
Med	Standards of Conduct for Third Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portuguese (Brazilian) Chinese French 	All International Employees (in language)	25						ML		
Med	Bribery and Corruption	All International Employees		25				ML			
Low	Ethical Leadership	Limited Audience			25					25	
Total Training by Quarter (up to mins)			55	25	50	60		35	10	30	60
Total Training by Year (up to mins)			190				135				

ABOUT NAVEX GLOBAL

NAVEX Global's comprehensive suite of ethics and compliance software, content and services helps organizations protect their people, reputation and bottom line. Trusted by 95 of the FORTUNE 100 and more than 13,000 customers, our solutions are informed by the largest ethics and compliance community in the world.