Looking for Digital Learning Inspiration

Discover successful elearning strategies by
looking through a nonprofit lens
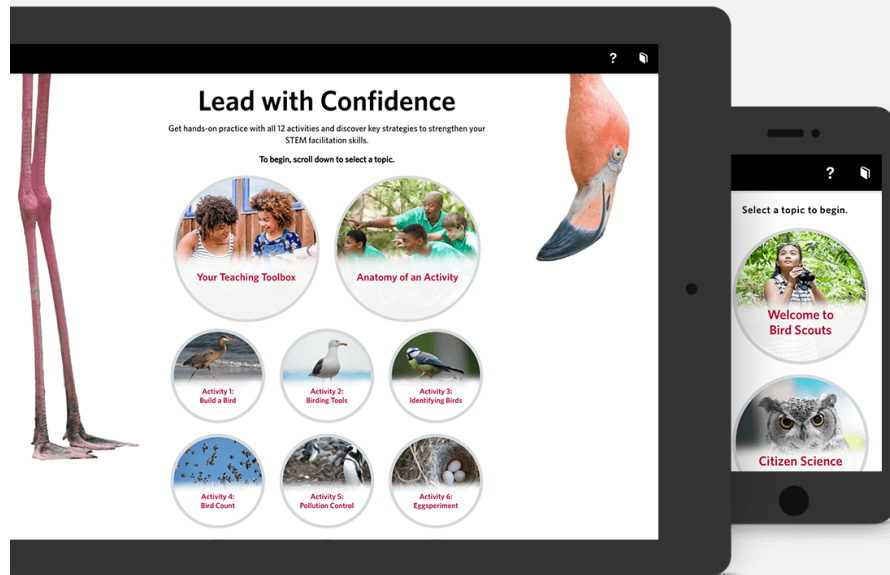
kineo
A City & Guilds Group Business

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Introduction

Where do you go for fresh ideas and best practices in learning and development? The corporate world has a whole host of L&D experts to pull insights from, but it can still be difficult to think outside the box. At Kineo, we've worked with a wide range of clients from large corporations to focused nonprofits and associations. This puts us in a unique position to understand how best to strategise your elearning initiatives, no matter what sector you work in.

When working with nonprofit organisations, we've seen that constraints are a consistent and driving force for innovation. Successful organisations don't see constraints as limiting but rather as an invitation for innovation, and the most creative solutions often emerge when we're forced to work within a specific framework or with limited resources. In the nonprofit sector, these organisations share a common challenge – how to make the biggest impact with the resources available.

In this ebook, we'll share insights from four projects we've worked on with nonprofits and associations. We'll also dive into the strategies and concepts that Kineo teams have used to develop digital learning curriculums. In each case, Kineo was able to help the client understand their challenge and design a solution that maximised the impact within the constraints. No matter what line of business you're in, we feel that these ideas will give you a fresh focus for your organisation's L&D initiatives. Our hope is that by sharing these strategies, we can inspire you to find new solutions of your own.

Three digital learning strategies to consider

The goal of digital learning for many organisations is to drive change – whether it's change across an entire organisation or behavioural change within a specific department. Most change is activated through education and the sharing of best practices and insights, and by raising awareness and increasing access to resources.

While there are many approaches and strategies we've helped clients to implement, we'll focus on three key strategies that leverage the power of a digital platform and get a significant return from limited resources. These include:

1. Storytelling

Storytelling has always been central to human experience – it's how we take complex ideas and make them tangible and approachable. The earliest examples of this approach are ancient pictographs and petroglyphs, some of which are tens of thousands of years old. So, while the idea isn't new, the experience has continued to evolve from hieroglyphics to today's rich media solutions.

Take this example from **WWF**; the visuals, music and a handful of words in this video are far more compelling than a 5-page pdf filled with facts and information could ever be. Through social channels like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, these clips can reach tens of thousands of people in a very short time.

2. Skill Building

Nonprofits and associations are often home to some of the best and brightest in a field, and a centres for industry research. Unfortunately, having all this knowledge isn't helpful if it can't be broadly distributed and put into action across their membership or constituencies. Historically, conferences, regional events and training centres were the primary channels for developing new skills and disseminating knowledge. While very effective, these face-to-face experiences are limited in the number of people they can reach. Today, leading organisations are embracing digital learning solutions and credentialing to scale their impact.

3. Knowledge sharing and social learning

At their core, nonprofits and associations are communities. Individuals join, contribute or follow because they want to feel a connection to people who share common experiences, backgrounds and beliefs. Forward-thinking organisations are leveraging this desire to create powerful learning communities built on a digital platform. These communities serve as outlets for the organisation to share its insights and knowledge, but more importantly, individuals can connect to collaborate and learn from one another. A well-designed digital platform gives participants the freedom to either dip in and out to solve a specific problem, or to join a cohort and go on a more structured journey.

1

Storytelling

The stickiest learning programmes are often the ones that tell the best stories. Finding a compelling way to share your story and spread your message can take what could have been a boring content dump and turn it into a relatable and memorable experience. Digital storytelling, at its core, is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories. It combines the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and web publishing, and inserts these stories into a digital learning solution. It helps bring context to the content, which enables myriad learners from all walks of life to interpret and process it.

Let's take a look at how the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) applied Kineo's digital storytelling strategy to its learning platform and achieved success across its 12,000 members.

IAFC tackles morale and increases skill levels

The IAFC represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide, and its members (12,000 strong today) are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous material spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety policy. Its primary focus is to save lives and property.

While the work of the IAFC is unequivocally valuable, it was experiencing a business problem that required Kineo's help. High volunteer turnover within its departments was jeopardising financial stability, quality of service and, ultimately, public safety. There was an urgent need to improve recruitment and retention of quality people for the fire departments because constantly training new staff and volunteers was costly and ineffective.

That's why the IAFC teamed up with Kineo to design, develop and deploy The Volunteer Administrative Leadership Series. This engaging and interactive learning experience focused on practical, applicable knowledge through digital storytelling. It also allowed course participants to develop professional skills by playing through real-world scenarios in a gamified environment.

This leadership learning solution had a demonstrable impact in helping those in charge of administration at volunteer fire departments to run their organisations more efficiently. Results came quickly in the form of improved business operations and consistency across the network of stations. Kineo set the IAFC down the path towards a long-term increase in morale and camaraderie throughout its entire workforce.

"The Volunteer Administrative Leadership Series was built to help address a decline in membership in the volunteer fire service. We decided to tackle that problem with the idea that these departments could improve their ability to recruit and retain if they were stronger 'businesses'. Kineo helped us take that vision and turn it into a strong platform of online courses, as well as an in-person class. The project turned out to be the largest educational piece the IAFC has offered and we've trained hundreds of people on the foundations it delivers."

Spencer Cheatham
Program Manager at IAFC
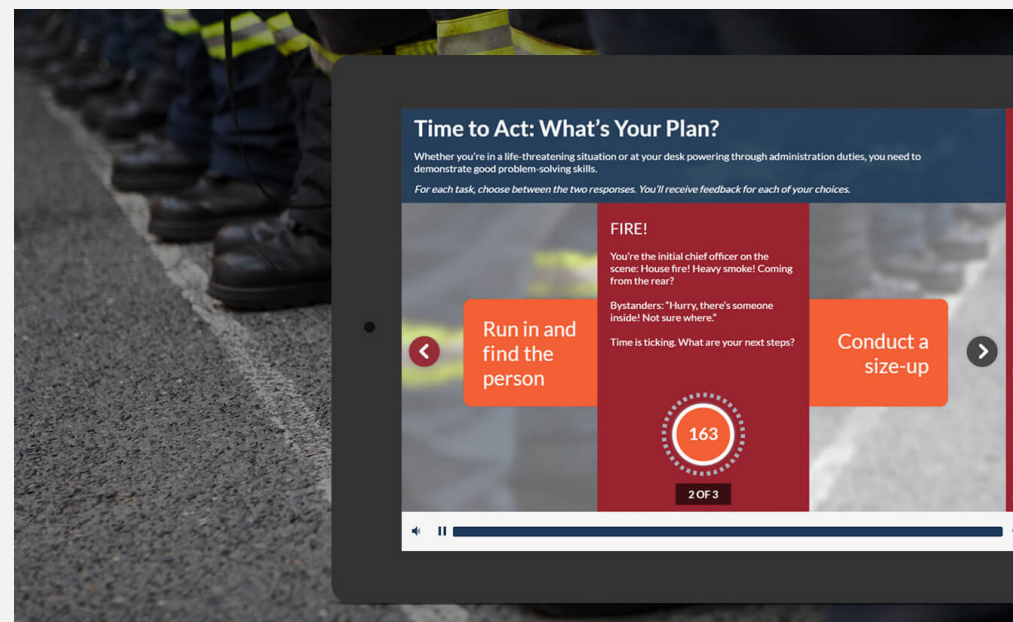
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Skill building

Around the world and across all industries, leaders and their organisations are working to unlock the value of big data in myriad digital business processes, and to create better experiences for customers, clients and employees. The key to success in these efforts is having skilled workers capable of analysing data, implementing business processes and building relationships with customers and clients.

Digital learning and skill building is a critical enabler for driving these initiatives, and the larger the company or target audience, the greater the need for scaling any educational programme to ensure that leaders reach their entire audience and achieve their objectives – whether they're addressing an internal workforce, a broad customer base or an enabling audience, as is the case with many nonprofit organisations.

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

California Academy of Sciences is another Kineo client that used digital learning strategies successfully. By building their leadership and facilitator skills digitally, they scaled up significantly and ultimately expanded their out-of-school-time (OST) educator and student base. →

California Academy of Sciences educate their audience and grow their membership base

For-profit companies can learn a lot about digital skill building at scale from Kineo's partners at nonprofits and associations. For instance, California Academy of Sciences is another Kineo client that used digital learning strategies successfully. By building their leadership and facilitator skills digitally, they scaled up significantly and ultimately expanded their out-of-school-time (OST) educator and student base.

The California Academy of Sciences (CAS) is a renowned scientific and educational institution based in San Francisco that is dedicated to exploring, explaining and sustaining life on Earth. CAS wanted to expand their impact beyond the walls of their Golden Gate Park base, so they decided to update their Science Action Club (SAC) programme.

SAC is a nationwide OST education programme that leverages citizen science to address science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning goals, teach discrete STEM skills and build STEM identities among the next generation of critical thinkers and environmental stewards. SAC originally trained activity leaders through in-person workshops, but the scaling limitations of that model quickly sparked a transition to a train-the-

trainer approach. Even that programme was limited, so they began work on a blended solution to enable them to train as many educators as they needed to participate in the SAC programme.

CAS collaborated with the Kineo design team to develop a blended custom elearning solution that addressed the needs of both novice and experienced educators, as well as the entire age spectrum of its target students. Both the online and offline training approaches were well received by OST educators. 99% of activity leaders and trainers reported that the blended learning experience and their interest in teaching science increased their enthusiasm for leading SAC, and was beneficial for their professional growth. What's more, the new solution resulted in significantly increased levels of youth interest and

engagement, and a rise in the perceived value of STEM learning.

While this increase in overall engagement was a big win on its own, the most impactful part of the project came in the form of scalability. As a result of this collaboration with Kineo, SAC has grown its reach from just two clubs in San Francisco in 2011 to hundreds of clubs in more than 400 cities and towns across the country.
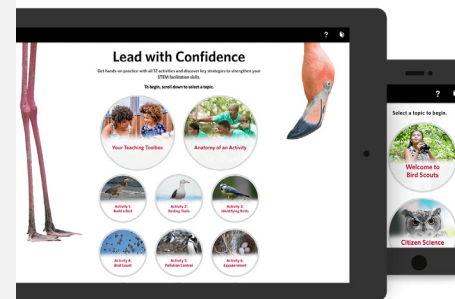
"We are so grateful to Kineo for their creativity and commitment to quality! They approached every design challenge with enthusiasm and applied innovative solutions to help us produce courses that are fun, easy to use and deeply relevant to the needs of our educators all across the country."

Laura Herszenhorn
Director of Expanded Learning and Youth Engagement

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Knowledge sharing and social learning

Knowledge sharing and social learning enable employees to share information that is critical to their work and allow their organisations to preserve those ideas as an internal resource. Research shows that these two concepts are critical to a business's success. An Indiana University study concluded that social learning improves problem-solving capabilities even more quickly than individual innovation. The study also found that businesses can find the shortest path towards continued improvement through informal knowledge sharing instead of waiting for a flash of inspiration to bring them new ideas. This finding is no less evident in digital learning, where idea sharing and social interactions should be encouraged as a drivers of growth.

ReosPartners

Reos Partners addresses emergency financial aid in schools with the power of social learning
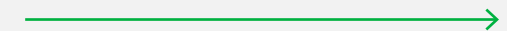
Reos Partners addresses emergency financial aid in schools with the power of social learning

Reos Partners help governments, companies and civil society organisations worldwide to make progress on their most important and complex challenges through proven transformative methods. Reos had found that 70 percent of US colleges and universities offers some form of emergency financial aid (EA), but they also noticed an increasing need for structured processes to enhance its efficiency.

Reos partnered with Kineo to develop a scalable and customisable online learning environment – or digital "playbook"– of practitioner-tested guidance that will enable users to move from a set of disconnected, ad-hoc EA activities to a formal, integrated emergency aid programme on any campus platform. The real difference with this platform is that the client owns, and can edit and share, content after launch – a very social form of learning and information sharing. The flexible building blocks of this tool allow for integration of all downloads, resources and expert videos, and it also features a discussion area where course participants can share thoughts and experiences with specific learning activities.

As a result of their efforts, Reos have optimised EA processes in colleges and universities around the country. Through highly structured and innovative design and development, Kineo helped Reos apply knowledge sharing and social learning strategies to deliver a learning platform that not only established criteria and processes for EA situations, but also gave campus financial reps the ability to update these programs and

All projects are different

Every organisation comes with its own unique culture and its own set of challenges, opportunities and objectives, so no two of our digital learning projects will ever be the same. At Kineo, we think outside the boundaries of traditional learning and development practices to achieve the highest levels of innovation and design, and develop solutions that precisely meet each client's business objectives. And, like the organisations we've discussed in this ebook, Kineo can ensure that you and your team get a learning solution that is measurable and achieves the organisational and business impact you need while maximising your resources.

Kineo has the expertise and experience to guide your organisation through the process of designing, developing and deploying a digital learning solution that has the precise mix of the aforementioned elements to ensure you achieve the maximum impact.

The digital learning solution Kineo helped IAFC create empowers them to provide support to a wider audience and offers customised content for various administrative roles. This engaging, enterprise-wide learning experience uses digital storytelling to focus on practical, applicable knowledge presented in short animated scenarios about how certain decisions impact a fictional fire station's overall morale.

Storytelling

Reos were successful in a face-to-face, small group facilitated environment, but they teamed up with us to scale up their success and reach a much wider audience online. The digital transformation of their off-line methods now allows post-secondary education campuses to learn how to transform informal emergency aid efforts into an effective and efficient, integrated programme for success through knowledge sharing and social learning within the schools.

Skill building

The Science Action Club created by California Academy of Sciences makes it easy and fun to lead hands-on STEM learning in out-of-school time, where no experience is necessary! The solution Kineo helped design and develop creates a global experience that is a fun, aesthetically beautiful interactive journey supporting activity leaders in their efforts to facilitate every activity successfully. The solution works on any device, whether the activity leader pulls it up on their mobile, tablet or laptop.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND SOCIAL LEARNING

Conclusion

Now that you understand how others have chosen and deployed digital learning strategies, you may wish to consider bringing a leading global learning and development company onto your own team. We can:

1. provide strategic guidance and insights into your organisation's learning requirements
2. ensure your project is on time and on budget, and creates an impact that enables you to meet your organisational and business goals
3. ensure that the results create a lasting impression on the learners and the organisation.

This is what Kineo does and why we're different. We are a leading global provider of custom digital learning solutions that are designed to impact business results and help achieve operational greatness while elevating organisational capability and performance to enable teams to realise more than they thought possible.

We push our clients to think outside the boundaries of traditional learning and development practices, to achieve the highest levels of innovation and transform individual potential into organisational strength. We achieve this through our proprietary design, development and implementation process, producing bespoke digital learning experiences and advanced technology tools however, wherever, and whenever our clients need them.

Digital technologies are changing the learning and development landscape around the globe. Moreover, learners are themselves changing even faster and becoming more diverse in their desires and requirements. The success of any learning and development project will depend on the ability of an organisation's leaders and learning and development practitioners to determine what their business and organisational priorities are. From there, learning experiences need to be scalable, engaging and ongoing, and should adapt to the continuously changing business and workforce landscape.

Start applying digital learning strategies in your company

Designing digital learning solutions using any of the strategies we've outlined above, or any of the others that we have in our arsenal, will help you deliver measurable organisational and business impact while making the most of your resources. What's more, no matter the size of your learner audience, Kineo can ensure that your solution will lay the foundations of a thriving learning culture within your organisation or across your target audience.

At Kineo, we've been honing our design skills for over 15 years – 140 if you also take our parent company into account. We've helped some of the world's largest brands – including DropBox, Levi Strauss, the World Wildlife Fund and Credit Suisse – transform the way they train employees by designing and implementing innovative curriculums to meet their unique needs and resources.

Go ahead, pick up the phone and give us a call:

312 846-6656

Or drop us an email at:

@ info@kineo.com

Discover how we're shaping the future of learning

Everything we do at Kineo stems from a simple idea – if we design a better learning experience, together we'll get better results.

Kineo helps the world's leading businesses improve performance through learning and technology. We're proud of our reputation for being flexible and innovative, and of our award-winning work with clients across the world.

Whatever your business challenge, we will partner with you every step of the way to find the learning solution that fits best – and delivers results. So, how can we help you?

WE'RE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

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