

## Scenario Based Software Training

Software training is boring. Most of us have been there. The facilitator says “watch while I show you how an entry can be made in the new applicant tracking system. Press this key, click this button, and type in the last name and first name field. Now you do it with me. Great. Now try it on your own. Fabulous!” Ten minutes later you can move on from that mundane task that in reality takes 15 seconds.

On behalf of all the bored learners out there I say enough! Engage me, help me learn quick, help me learn what I need to know to do my job.

### **A Different Approach**

Software training can model training best practices by making it relevant, engaging the learner, and allowing the learner to think, by packaging the training in a problem solving or business scenario wrapper.

Whether the training delivery is classroom, blended, or eLearning, the approach can work.

### **Job Relevance**

To move software training from the key pushing, button clicking, orientation takes a bit of planning. Think of the task not as a software functionality task but as a business task. Not how do you enter information in the various fields but how do you complete a work order, for example.

### **Engaging the Learner**

Work order completion is compelling if your job is to create maintenance work orders, let’s say, for your company. Research what your learners need to know to be successful in their job role and provide it. Learners tend to become engaged when the topic directly impacts them. Yes it is more time and work but the results outshine the alternative.



### **Allowing the Learner to Think**

People do enjoy thinking and learning about topics that relate to their world. Lead learners through creating a work order and before you know it they will have figured out how to make work order changes and print the work order on their own.

Structure learning towards group collaboration. Engage the group to think about possible correct answers to any challenge presented.

### **Packaging Training in a Business Scenario Wrapper**

Encourage exploration and group problem solving by presenting scenarios to solve in the software. Let the group do the discovering and presenting. The energy in the room is electric.

Here is how that might work. A common example might be a group is united in the desire to learn how to create MS Word Tables, Table of Contents, and Indexes.

We do our research and learn that what these people need to do is create long complex documents. Set up the scenario by creating a long unformatted document for the class.

Pair up learners that will work together to solve the various challenges that will be presented during the learning session. Pairing works great because it brings to the table different skill and experience levels.

Discuss as a group what the first challenge might be in formatting the long document. Listen to the responses and lead the conversation towards creating tables (or whatever the first step might be). Give the group a clue about creating tables, i.e. you might say you will find the tools you will need on the menu bar. Allow the pairs to work together for a period of time appropriate to the challenge to see which pair might be able to solve the challenge correctly.

The group reconvenes. Pairs that believe they have the solution present how they solved the challenge. Procedures are fine-tuned, details, added and everyone gets an opportunity with their newly acquired knowledge to successfully solve the challenge on their own. The group is presented with the next challenge towards fixing up the unformatted document and the process repeats.

Software training is no longer boring. It is engaging and relevant. The energy generated in the learning is infectious; participants get swept up in it all. The scenario approach brings intelligence to the process.