

DIGITAL MARKETING TRAINING:

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# EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR TEACHING YOUR STAFF NEW SKILLS

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# INTRODUCTION

As the owner of an agency or manager of a team, you want to have the most knowledgeable team out there so you can be producing the best products and getting great results for your clients. This means your employees need to be constantly gaining new skills, brushing up on industry best practices, getting certified in specific programs and niche areas—and most importantly—retaining all that information they are taking in so they can actually apply it.

Do you know the knowledge levels and capabilities of your team? Is there a knowledge or skills gap that needs closed? Training programs will not only help illuminate the areas where your team is lacking, but help close those knowledge gaps for a better performing, more knowledgeable team that is able to work with a broad range of tools.

Plus, so many companies are now offering online training or other programs to further education within a specific industry, which is a great asset to leverage in job postings. But that means that those companies who don't offer training are now missing that check mark in the 'pros' list of potential employees.

The digital marketing sphere is rapidly changing, which means that digital marketing training programs must try to keep up with the latest practices—all while ensuring that their programs are leading to high rates of learning retention.

Think about the latest training program you've been a part of. Did it mention that Google is doing away with Google Plus pages for businesses? Did it tell you to update your PPC ads because of the latest change from AdWords that allows a second description line? Did it mention Snapchat as a valuable social media channel and advertising platform? Many training courses, while effective at covering the basics, may not get into the latest updates in the world of digital marketing.

So which training method is more likely to include up-to-date, relevant information? Which method will actually stick with your employees and lead to higher learning retention? Which method is more effective for your company? Let's explore!



# FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING

While specific methods may vary when it comes to in-person training (group discussion, lecture, demonstration, etc.) the common thread remains—face-to-face, human interaction. Typically when it comes to digital marketing training, any in-person training will be administered to a group rather than an individual since this is a more cost-effective way to train a team of employees.

## Group Interaction

According to The Peak Performance Center, The Learning Pyramid shows that when it comes to group discussion, learning retention raises to 50% from just 5% retention after a lecture.

This is key to understanding that while in-person training in general yields positive results, the important factor that increases retention is group interaction. You're much more likely to remember a discussion you had with someone rather than a one-sided conversation or lecture.

Playing an active part in training is key. When being trained on topics like social media or content marketing, it's much more effective to have a conversation where you can discuss the latest trends and ask questions about best practices rather than sit through a knowledge dump that may or may not answer the questions you are most interested in.

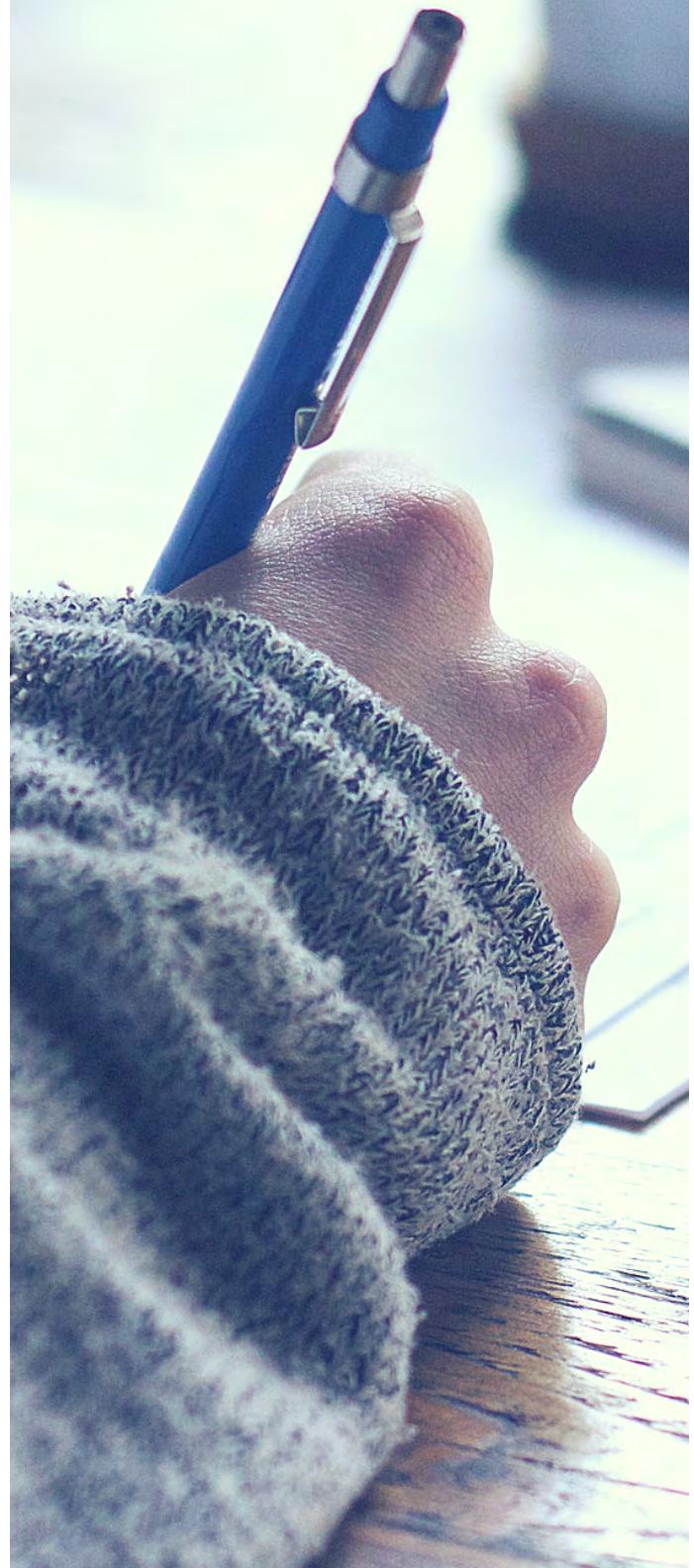


# SYNOPSIS

When it comes to digital marketing training for your team, there are varying methods to consider, each leading to a different level of learning retention. Methods of teaching and training have long consisted of a teacher or mentor giving instruction to a group of students or employees, but because of the constant advancements in technology, methods have shifted to encompass online classrooms and digital training materials—especially for the digital marketing sphere. So which method leads to the highest information retention rate?

In this white paper, we will examine the pros and cons of each training method, as well as which is most effective for your business:

- Online training
- In-house training
- Blended training



## Content Customization

Like online training platforms, speakers and presenters often have a "stock" speech or presentation to deliver that covers the same tools and material each time. However, in-person training allows the audience to guide the conversation with questions pertaining to specific interests or examples related to the company where they work.

How would this tool be beneficial to this company? Which social media platform is most popular in this industry? These are the kinds of questions that will not only help the audience engage with the material, but also move the conversation away from the generic or "stock" topics.

There are some professional speakers and trainers out there, like Matt Bailey, who will customize the material to the specific industry or company where they are presenting. These speakers put in a considerable amount of work before going to a company and presenting. Industry data is pulled and analyzed, your company is reviewed against competitors, recommendations will be made on which channels will yield the best results for your company and the latest tool sets within your industry will be considered. Matt will even work with you ahead of time to meet with stakeholders and find the "on the ground" issues that are most important to you. These are ultimately the kinds of in-person trainers and speakers you want educating your staff.



### Pros

**Material is constantly updated to encompass the latest technology and trends**

**Material can be customized to a specific industry or market**

**Typically administered to a group of employees which ensures all team members have the same knowledge base**

### Cons

**Speakers and in-house trainers are much more costly than online programs**

**Speakers involve more negotiation, contracts, and scheduling**

**Generally does not involve testing or any way to measure retention**

# ONLINE TRAINING

"Modern-day digital marketers are expected to be competent in a host of skills, including analytics, copywriting, creative direction, sales, digital media, and more. But unless you're ready to invest tens of thousands of dollars and commit years of your life to get a degree in each discipline, you need a faster, more effective way to close the skills gap and keep yourself relevant in a changing market."

Marketing Land

## Massive Open Online Courses

In her book *Reclaiming Conversations*, Sherry Turkle explores the widely popular MOOC, or Massive Open Online Course. MOOCs are favorable for large corporations because they are completely administered and monitored in-house. Training videos, lectures and tests are all contained in an online library and all work completed by trainees can be easily accessed and reviewed by managers.

However, in spite of the convenience factor and growing popularity of MOOCs, research has found that there's a missing link between online training and learning retention: human interaction! Turkle says, "Despite the power of what can take place in MOOCs, only a few years after the experiment with them began in earnest, even their most enthusiastic supporters were working hard to introduce more in-person conversation into MOOC design, certainly for MOOCs in residential settings. For it soon became clear that online learning works better if you also increase the amount of face-to-face contact between students and faculty."

## Homogenous Content

Online training is convenient in that all the tools, reading material and testing are right there in front of you, and can be accessed easily by both the employees and the managers. But it can only be so effective in answering real questions and covering real life examples of successful digital marketing tactics specific to your industry.

Online training platforms typically consist of reading material, interactive tools, pre-recorded lectures and testing material—all created at a specific point in time and rarely updated. These materials will be the same for every company using the platform, regardless of company size or industry, meaning there will be no industry-specific data or examples to learn from.

Furthermore, many online training programs focus on presenting the latest tools and industry best practices, meaning they've selected a standardized group of tools to discuss that may or may not be beneficial or relevant to your company.

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### Pros

More cost-effective than in-house training

Online testing and certifications are typically native to the training program

Managers have access to the program and can review completion reports

More convenient for employees than trying to clear everyone's schedules for an in-house speaker

### Cons

Speakers and in-house trainers are much more costly than online programs

Speakers involve more negotiation, contracts, and scheduling

Generally does not involve testing or any way to measure retention



# BLENDED TRAINING

A blended training approach combines online tools and testing with in-person discussion. The online tools and testing are convenient and easy to access by both trainee and manager, while the in-person discussions create a connection between the speaker and trainees that help hold them accountable to their online tasks, and inevitably retain more of what they learn.

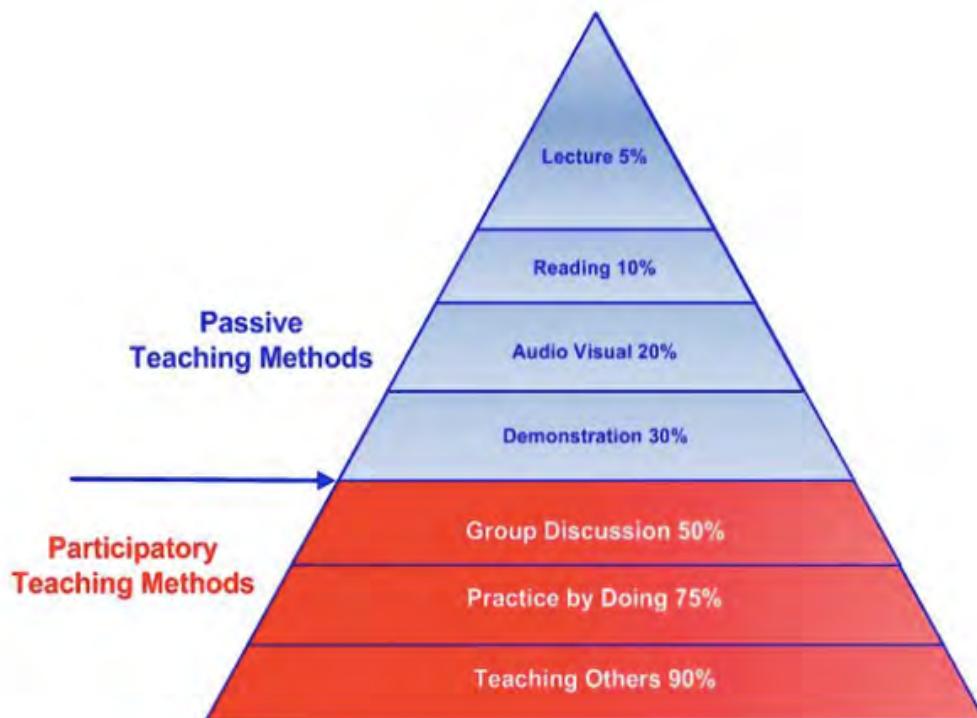
## Participatory Learning

According to The Peak Performance Center, The Learning Pyramid shows that participatory teaching methods such as group discussion, practice by doing, and teaching others lead to the highest rates of learning retention.

In each of these methods, the group of students or employees being taught or trained are active in the learning process. Talking to someone, doing something, showing someone, etc.

In an article by ThoughtCo. titled What Does Research Say About Online Learning? it explains, "According to a meta study from the Department of Education: "Students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction." Students who mix online learning with traditional coursework (i.e. blended learning) do even better."

The Learning Pyramid



## Group Accountability

In a blended approach, trainers often encourage the students to read or complete training online prior to a group discussion. If there were no trainer to be held accountable to, students would be far less likely to go on-line and read material or complete training activities. But when they know they will be meeting in a group setting and be expected to know what's being discussed, there's more of a consequence for not doing so.

Plus, traditional learning invites you to be present and part of a group whereas online training is a solo act with no one there to ask questions or discuss the information with. A blended approach gives you access to all the tools you could ask for, with the added support of a speaker or in-house trainer to help make sense of it all.



An article from Getting Smart states, "A meta-analysis of more than 1,000 online learning studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Education compared traditional in-person instruction, pure online courses and blended instruction. Studies that involved blended learning environments were found to have the greatest impact in improving student achievement."

In terms of digital marketing training, a blended approach is most beneficial for weaving real life examples into industry-specific material while following up with testing and certification online. Speakers have that personable characteristic that allows them to capture an audience and tell a story, whereas an online platform often relies on lengthy reading materials and impersonal data.

### Pros

**Online tools and resources are easy to access at any time**

**Online testing is convenient for managers to track and review**

**Includes the personal interaction component that leads to higher retention**

**Information will be more up-to-date coming from a speaker**

### Cons

**Scheduling in-person training sessions can be challenging**

**Cost is typically higher than other programs**

# THE MATT BAILEY APPROACH



Matt Bailey successfully dismantles the complexity of online marketing into practical, understandable concepts through a blended approach of both online training programs and in-house training and speaking.

**Personal Interaction is Key**  
Matt fully embraces the personal interaction component that research has proven leads to higher rates of retention. He does this by developing unique programs and presentations that bring together each specialty to show how all disciplines are weaved together for digital marketing success. It's this team or group approach, combined with Matt's intimate knowledge of the industry, that makes his method so effective.

**Standards and Best Practices**  
When it comes to teaching industry best practices, certification is key to getting the most up-to-date, accurate information. Matt Bailey's biggest differentiator from other speakers and training programs is that he is affiliated with the Online Marketing Certified Professional Program (OMCP), both as a standards and certification contributor and as a certified trainer. All content within Matt's programs follows accepted industry practices.

The Online Marketing Certified Professional Program maintains its standards and best practices with a standards committee made up of a number of company representatives and Registered Education Providers. The current standards committee includes representatives from world-renowned companies such as Google, Bing, P&G, Dell, Home Depot and Marketo.

## Why Allocate Budget for Training?

"Say that you have ten [employees]. Next year they will work a total of about twenty thousand hours for your organization. If your training efforts result in a 1 percent improvement in your subordinates' performance, your company will gain the equivalent of two hundred hours of work as the result."

Ben Horowitz, Andreessen Horowitz Co-Founder

According to Forbes, spending on corporate training is on the rise. In an article by Josh Bersin, Founder and Principal at Bersin by Deloitte, he explains that the increase in spending on corporate training can be largely attributed to the recovery from economic recession. So many people were out of work for months at a time, no one was hiring, and many people were forced to take jobs for which they were overqualified.

This has left us with a skills gap in potential employees. "While skills gaps (we call it the "supply chain of skills") continue to challenge companies, an increased investment in training is good for everyone: employees, businesses, and job seekers. This level of increase shows that businesses are aggressively expanding and companies need skilled workers to grow," says Bersin.

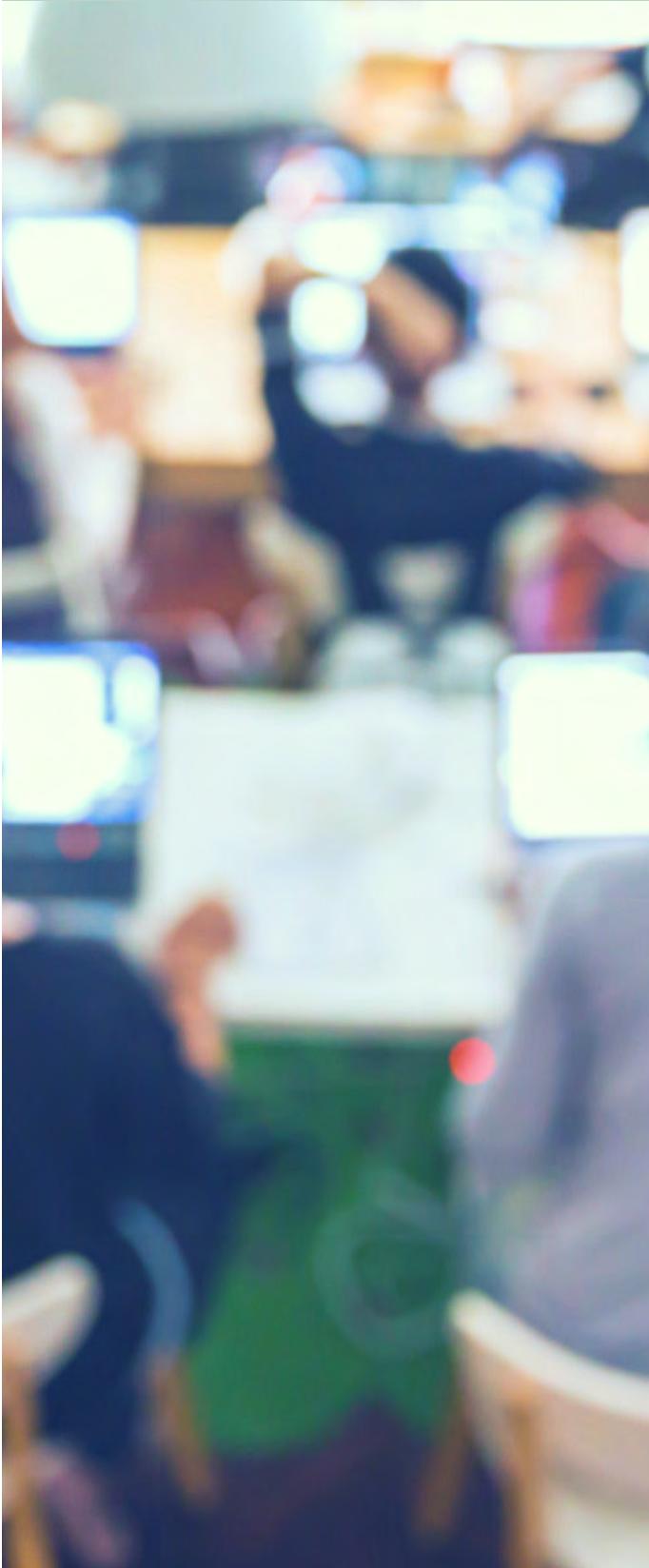
On the increase in spending on training Bersin says, "We just completed our Corporate Learning Factbook and the research is striking: US spending on corporate training grew by 15% last year (the highest growth rate in seven years) to over \$70 Billion in the US and over \$130 Billion worldwide." Growth trends suggest that these numbers will only continue to climb in the future.

So what does this increase in spending mean to you? With so many companies now offering some form of training or educational growth opportunity, it's imperative to have in order to stay level with the competition. In a sea of jobs, an applicant is going to focus on the benefits that a particular company can provide. If other companies offer training and you do not, it's likely that the applicant will quickly dismiss your job offering and go with the one that has more perks.

According to eLogic Learning, "Corporate eLearning has grown by a staggering 900% in the last 16 years" and "approximately 77% of U.S. companies offer online training as a way to improve their employee's professional development." This is something that definitely sets companies apart from the perspective of potential employees. Having these educational opportunities for employees may be the deciding factor that pushes a potential applicant to apply for a job at your company over one that does not offer training.

In addition, as more and more companies are training their employees, the competition increases. When all digital marketing agencies essentially have the same capabilities, it comes down to the team you have and the results they can achieve together.

# CONCLUSION



Training programs are essential to closing the ever-present skills gap within the digital marketing industry. Having a team of highly skilled and trained individuals is key to dominating the industry and gaining new clients over other agencies in your area. But implementing a training program is a costly feat for any company, and you need to be sure you are choosing the right program for your employees.

Although choosing an online training program or inviting a speaker to come out once a month is probably more affordable than choosing a blended training approach that involves both methods, blended training has been shown to be more effective when it comes to learning retention—and after all, that's the ultimate goal of training!

Once you've decided on your method of training, no matter what it is, the most important things to focus on are certifications and standards. When researching different training programs and/or in-house trainers and speakers, be sure that they have the proper accreditation so your team is getting the most accurate, up-to-date information out there.



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Speaker, Author & Internet Marketing Expert

## ABOUT MATT BAILEY

"MATT IS THE REAL DEAL. HE PROVIDES A CLEAR AND CONCISE GUIDEBOOK CONTAINING ALL THE TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO HELP BUSINESS OWNERS QUICKLY UNLEASH THE POWER OF INTERNET MARKETING."

E. GREENBURG, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

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