

Building a Modern EHR Training Program

Improving Training Outcomes by Adopting a Hybrid Model

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all industries were suddenly thrust into a world of largely remote and virtual interactions. Healthcare organizations were profoundly affected by needing to move rapidly to an EHR training model that relied on virtual learning. While pivoting to this online training program was initially a response to the pandemic, it created momentum towards a hybrid learning model. You are likely familiar with a blended learning model as it refers to watching e-learning before an in-person class. A hybrid learning model incorporates not only the in-person and virtual aspects, but elevates it with the addition of learning software and an approach that works to bring customized learning to the individual. With the lessons learned and success stories of virtual pandemic training, the time is right to leverage both this momentum and emerging learning technologies to advance your program into the modern age.

The data is clear, hybrid training models are more effective. Users appreciate the flexibility of asynchronous, virtual training that can be customized to their knowledge and EHR skill level. A hybrid model offers many advantages to the modern and busy learners in our workforce, and we aren't the only ones taking notice. In published Gartner research from February 2021 titled, Healthcare Provider CIO Top Actions for 2021: EHR Optimization, "Refresh your EHR training program" is called out specifically as a critical step to improving overall EHR optimization efforts with a focus on "[Evaluating] emerging technologies that will improve training effectiveness and efficiency."

By the end of this e-book, you will have been introduced to strategies and tools for adopting a hybrid model that will effectively improve your EHR training. We are excited to share knowledge, guidance, and conversation starters to help you implement a hybrid approach to learning as a permanent part of your organization's EHR training program.

In this e-book, we will be using the following definitions.

- **Blended Learning:** Education consisting of a combination of in-person training and virtual training activities
- **Hybrid Learning:** Education that incorporates in-person and virtual instructor led training, virtual training activities, with the inclusion of interactive virtual learning software and one-on-one training. Hybrid learning places an emphasis on flexible asynchronous training and the ability to customize learning to meet the individual learners' needs

The Stakes and the Challenges

Training Makes a Difference

Research done by the National Center for Biotechnology Information found that, “Irrespective of which EHR solution has been deployed, physicians who report poor training are 3.5 times more likely to perceive that their EHR does not enable them to deliver quality care.” That’s how high the stakes are for you to deliver an effective training experience. The keyword here is effective. Training is so much more than delivering information with the hope that it’s remembered. It’s more than just checking the boxes of a curriculum. The quality of your training program has a direct impact on how staff perceive their own ability to deliver quality care.

A strong training program is critical to the operational and strategic success of an organization. It is what introduces and excites end users to the EHR that your organization has worked so hard to build. Good training creates ownership of the EHR - meaning users feel like the EHR is a tool that helps them in their jobs as opposed to a burden that hinders their productivity. Research by KLAS published in 2020 included this sense of ownership as one of the pillars of EHR satisfaction. This ownership is crucial in creating a relationship between users and the EHR they will log into every time they need to do their jobs. Time and time again, surveys have shown that the happier users are in this relationship, the happier they are in their work. From basic competency to personalization, providers want to feel ownership of the EHR - not the other way around.

Not only is training itself important, but the mode of training delivery is critical. Your EHR is constantly being modified and upgraded in response to user experience. Why should the training be any different? Maintaining or even reverting back to a classic in-person training experience ignores the many advances in

technology and cognitive science that have occurred. Just like refusing to update your software will eventually render it obsolete and unusable, avoiding updates to your training program will result in an antiquated system that users may find does not serve their needs.

The Challenges of Training

As you may have already experienced, there are many complex challenges that face modern day training programs. Everything from competing priorities, understaffing, reduced budget, unrealistic time constraints, lack of leadership support...the list goes on.

Additionally, more and more users are coming into their EHR training with previous EHR experience, which means that a “one size fits all” curriculum and delivery doesn’t work. Many in the workforce are now “digital natives”. They are much more intuitive when it comes to using technology and are able to use digital learning platforms effectively. They expect a customized learning pathway and an engaging learning platform and experience. Building a customized hybrid learning model shows an awareness and understanding of your users’ capabilities.

Fortunately, more and more solutions are being created to address the challenges you face when training. Never before has the present been riper with possibilities, opportunities, communities, and technologies. We’ll show you how smart digital learning platforms can reduce costs and bring customized and flexible learning to your organization without sacrificing quality and how to get leadership and users excited about a hybrid program. With the increased flexibility and effectiveness of a hybrid approach your training program will be better prepared to handle the unexpected - even a pandemic.

Now that we know what’s at stake and what the challenges are, what’s next?

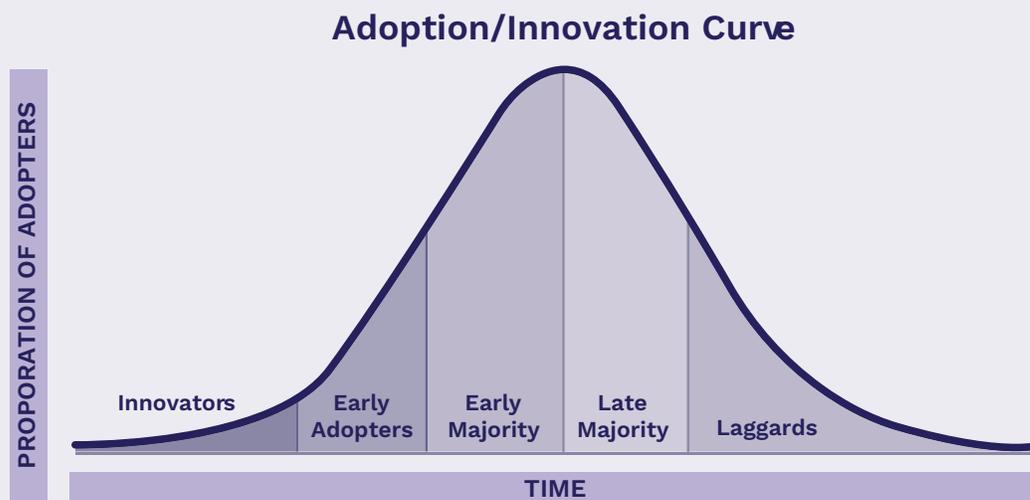
How to Start

Getting Buy-In

Buy-in, building a culture of learning, and change management go hand-in-hand when designing and executing a successful training program. That being said, it all starts with the relationship you and your team have with leadership. When your program is supported by the top decision makers in your organization you are more likely to get the resources you need and timely decision making and execution for updating your program. Here are some of the steps we recommend to get leadership onboard and excited about adopting a hybrid model.

Identifying the Innovators and Early Adopters

To drive transformation, identify who the Innovators and the Early Adopters are in the C-suite. These innovators will not always be the majority, so it's important to find those who are passionate and willing to be a part of the driving force of this change. In our experience, leveraging the energy of the Innovators and Early Adopters to generate excitement, lead buy-in, and to drive the transformation of your training program leads to better alignment and greater satisfaction across operations and staff in their training.



E-Book

How to Start

1. Start with identifying who within your organization's leadership team has been your biggest fan when it comes to innovation in training. Ask this person to be your project's sponsor through either a formal or informal sponsorship. This sponsor can act as both a champion and liaison for your program

2. Outline a short and long-term strategy to share with your sponsor. Be sure to include your team in this exercise. Some things to think about when creating your strategy:

- Back your strategy with data and experiences. Use data from your recent virtual experiences. Be sure to highlight what the positive learning experiences were and how it improved outcomes. Use data from others who have successfully implemented innovative approaches. We have provided examples within this e-book we encourage you to use.
- Address specific challenges your organization is facing and highlight how adding innovative approaches will address said challenges.
- Have immediate action items. While it's nice to have loftier goals in the long term, your short-term strategy should have tasks that can be acted on right away.
- Create realistic milestones. Even if you can't pinpoint specific dates yet, create a timeline so leadership will understand everything this undertaking entails.

3. Find ways to present your short and long-term strategy to the key influencers and decision makers of your organization. Be aware of what aspects of your plan will excite leadership.

4. Keep fueling the fire! Don't let initial conversations be just that - conversations. You've already shown initiative by creating a plan, now it's time to show your team's capability to follow through. Keep leadership in the loop by establishing a regular touch base where you

can give updates. This can be its own meeting or an agenda item on an existing meeting. By sharing progress, you will keep leadership engaged and invested.

With leadership onboard, you can begin fostering a Culture of Learning to get folks throughout the organization just as excited about training as you are!

Lean on industry communities to help you frame your messaging and pitches. You're not the first one to venture into this space. Others have gone before you and have shared their successes and pitfalls to avoid. Explore ATD - Association for Talent Development's (td.org) vast number of online resources. Becoming a TD member will unlock access to the top experts in the industry as well as additional resources. Other reputable online resources like Learning Solutions (learningsolutionsmag.com) and The Learning Guild (elearningguild.com) are also excellent free resources.

Just these three organizations alone can lead you to other materials and experts that you can lean on to broaden your understanding of hybrid learning possibilities and strategies. The field of learning and development is active with experts who are willing to answer questions and provide their expertise.

How to Start

Build a Learning Culture

Building a learning culture means you, as a leader, set the example of being passionate about learning. This passion, coupled with an effective training program, should incite excitement about training at all levels of your organization.

In order to create a strong learning culture, you and your training team should be fully engaged in making sure the learners in your organization are heard and supported with training that is relevant. When training feels like a waste of time, taking users from their jobs without adding value, a culture of learning can easily turn into a culture of resentment. When you ask the question, “how do my users view their training?” you should confidently be able to answer that they find it relevant and effective and even fun!

In order for your training staff to carry that passion and engagement forward, they need to possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and the right tools to make sure they can support your organization at a high level. If they don't currently have this knowledge or these abilities, create a custom learning pathway along with them to improve their expertise and confidence. Your culture of learning is strengthened when trainees know they can trust their trainers.

Having a Culture of Learning that is valued at your organization gets you a spot at the table when key initiatives need a training strategy. In this culture, the input of the training team is highly valued because you've built a robust department and program that your organization respects. Others will look up to the high standard you have set for delivering the right training at the right time and value your insight when it comes to strategy and future plans. You and your department go from reactive to proactive.

In an article from eLearning Industry (elearningindustry.com), “What Is a Learning Culture and Why Do You Need One?” Harry Cloke paints the following picture of what a day in the life of a learning culture looks like:



You start work at 9 in the morning, but before you even get off the train, you log onto your LMS on your cell phone. This is part of the routine – you're checking to see if you have any messages, or if anyone has posted a question on the social feed. As you go through your day at work, you might come across an interesting article. Without even thinking about it, you share it on the relevant discussion group on your LMS. Later that day, the LMS admin adds it to the library so everyone else can find it in the future. You get a million likes from your colleagues and they make up a song about you.

Now, that last sentence might be a bit dramatic, but it drives home the idea that a learning culture is something that can be integrated into your trainees' everyday life and can be a source of encouragement and comradery!

How to Start

Change Management

Change management is all about ensuring your learners know the answer to “why”. It makes the change and transition go that much smoother. Leave yourself plenty of onramp for communicating what’s coming next and why. For example, if you were to adopt a learning platform like Amplifire, share how adopting this new tool will cut their training times while improving their information retention because its formatting is based on cognitive science. Use your supporters and champions of these changes early and often to help spread these messages.

Make sure you are also being proactive in addressing the naysayers. Find out who in your organization could derail the project. Meet with that person or group of people ASAP. Do not avoid them - avoidance only delays the inevitable. You may not be able to win them over quickly, but at the very least they know what is going on and why so your discussions stay focused. You also win over their trust because you were forthright and transparent.

Be strategic about your change communication efforts. Add milestones in your training project plan that cover who you will be communicating with and when. Here are some successful communication methods we have seen.

- Leverage existing meetings. Many user groups and departments have some sort of weekly or daily huddle where their team members share relevant news. By bringing updates on training during these meetings, users will know their

specific group is being considered in these changes. They will also see that training has the support of the leadership they trust.

- Demo new learning software to users before their training. Show off the cool functionality while explaining the ways it will benefit their learning experience. This can garner excitement while also helping users feel better prepared for their training. They can focus on the learning objectives instead of navigating a new software.
- Invite questions about upcoming training and training changes. Whether this is a dedicated e-mail account for training questions that gets monitored by your team, or users are encouraged to reach out directly to trainers, creating a direct line of communication allows learners to have their specific concerns addressed. Not only do learners feel supported, but your team will be tapped into the anxieties of users, allowing for proactive intervention.

Make your change efforts and change communication engaging and memorable. It’s important to generate some excitement, interest, and curiosity. It will ultimately help you gain momentum.

And of course, don’t forget about your own team! Training staff should be the first to know of any changes to the program. Leaving your team out of the loop can cause unnecessary panic where they are suddenly unsure of the future nature of their job, or disgruntlement that they aren’t up to date on a process that impacts their day-to-day. Create a united front through open and early communication.

Amplifire

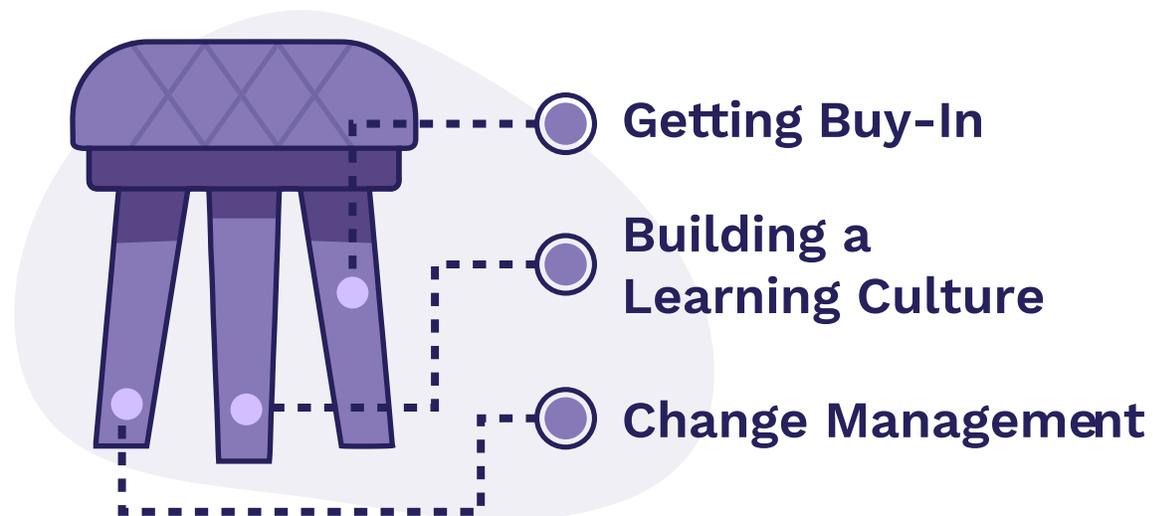
Amplifire is one of the digital learning tools we implement in our hybrid approach to training. Check out this [video](#) for more information! We’ll get into more details of how to integrate Amplifire into your organizations training model later in this e-book.

How to Start

Strengthen Each Leg

Think of buy-in from leadership, a culture of learning and change management like three legs of a stool. Each is equally important in supporting the weight of your training program. As you work on strengthening each leg, here are some important questions to ask:

- Are your stakeholders supportive of change?
- Are your operational leaders engaged and in agreement?
- Who do you need signoff from?
- How do learners currently view their training? How will the changes to your program improve the opinion learners have of their training?
- Have all impacted areas been identified and made aware of the upcoming change(s)?
- Do you have an established communication pathway for impacted stakeholders, operational leaders, IT, Epic Teams, staff, and end users?
- What is the Risk Mitigation plan for end users who choose not to adopt the change (or complete the learning)?
- How will you gather feedback on your training program?



Execution and Tools for Success

What does a hybrid learning model look like?

While we can give a general definition of a hybrid learning model, like any program it won't be a one size fits all. This model should be molded to fit your organization and learners' specific needs. Give careful thought for when it makes sense to have in-person training versus online training or using a hybrid model. Pay attention to what you know works well at your organization and where you can bring in some new strategies and tools for learning. In other words, adapt and adopt!

When assessing how you will approach hybrid learning at your organization, we suggest taking the following into account.

1. Understand the learning objectives and business goals of your organization.
 - What are your top three goals for hybrid learning at your organization? These can range from creating more engaging training to cutting back on physical resources to save costs. These conversations are great to have with your sponsor and leadership.
2. Know your audience – assess your learners' current level of knowledge to determine your approach to curriculum.
 - Are users coming in with EHR knowledge? Convert the basics to an e-learning or online course. On the flip side, is there a particular workflow that you notice is consistently a struggle for users? This likely makes it a better candidate for in-person training.
3. Assess the content – weigh the type and amount of content against the objectives
 - This is an easy place to get caught in analysis-paralysis. Don't over think it. Lean on the trainers who have been teaching this content and have a gauge on what would be most effective. Based on your analysis and decisions you can then create a blended learning pathway or blended learning map for the curriculum.
4. Define what your delivery modalities are and when to use each one.
 - What methods will you implement in your hybrid program? This can include in-person training, virtual instruction, one-on-one sessions, e-learning, other learning technologies such as Amplifire, etc.
 - Create a standard for each method so when a new lesson is needed you can quickly decide whether it will be taught virtually or in-person. This will reduce time spent analyzing requests, increase consistency, and lead to faster production and easier maintenance.

Remember, don't over value what you've already done. Keep looking for new and better ways to continually improve your learner's learning experiences.

E-Book

Explore Digital Learning Tools

Part of building a hybrid learning experience is staying informed about new emerging learning technologies in addition to the upgrades of existing learning technologies. Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages these tools may have when applied to your specific program.

When exploring new tools, a great place to start is examining the needs of your trainees so you can research which tools may be most effective for you. For instance, technologies like AR/VR address the need to train high-risk scenarios without putting learners in actual danger. Adaptive learning platforms come from a need to personalize learning based on what the learner already knows or doesn't know. There are many exciting new technologies that bring elegant solutions to previous pain points in training. For example, Amplifire is an e-learning software platform that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to understand an individual's knowledge and confidence, and then personalizes training to address knowledge gaps and areas of misinformation and uncertainty.

When thinking about the digital learning tools you can use, make sure you don't take for granted that you already know what's on the market. Even though tools like Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT) programs have been around for quite a while, they were quickly put into the spotlight during the pandemic. With the sudden demand for and high-volume use of these tools, the functionality has improved and the information on how to deliver an engaging VILT experience is robust. And, of course, e-learning authoring programs continue to become easier to use and the content created with them is now extendible beyond the desktop computer, to tablets and phones, without the need for programming skills.

You may not be able to implement every one of these digital tools; however, it's important to know what's available and what's possible. Your organization will be looking to you as the expert with knowledge of effective training solutions to apply to their complex business challenges.

Here are just a handful of resources for you to begin exploring Digital Learning Tools:

ATD and your local
ATD Chapter
[td.org](https://www.atd.org)

Learning Solutions
Magazine
[learningsolutionsmag.com](https://www.learningsolutionsmag.com)

Training Industry
[trainingindustry.com](https://www.trainingindustry.com)

The Learning Guild
[elearningguild.com](https://www.elearningguild.com)

Trainers in a Hybrid Learning Model

Buy-in, Going virtual or implementing new learning technologies does not eliminate the need for training staff. In fact, in a hybrid model, trainers can be better utilized. For example, a single course may keep a trainer in the classroom eight hours a day. In a hybrid model this classroom time can be cut in half or completely eliminated depending on how much of the course is transformed into online learning. Trainers now have time to update curriculum and training environments, attend meetings with analysts and leadership to stay in the know, learn additional skills for creating virtual content, and foster relationships with users to help them address their specific needs. With this additional time trainers can even work on their own knowledge! We have seen trainers at organizations that use a hybrid model be able to improve their L&D design skills both naturally through the process of converting curriculum to a digital format or by pursuing additional L&D education.

While it is exciting to think of all the wonderful new ways trainers can be utilized in an updated training model, we acknowledge that this transition to a hybrid model impacts not only the trainees but the trainers as well. During the pandemic, when training was rapidly moved from classroom to virtual, many trainers who were rockstars in the classroom were suddenly cast into the realm of virtual delivery with little or no expertise. You likely know which members of your team may need extra help in this transition. To ensure you are building up your trainers to be successful in a hybrid program, here are some questions to consider:

- How is your team currently splitting their time between classroom training and other responsibilities (e.g. e-learning updates, curriculum updates, etc.)?
- How comfortable is your training team with e-learning creation software?
- How comfortable is your training team with training virtually?
- How will you support trainers in the transition to a hybrid model?
- How will you collect feedback in the hybrid model to determine if a trainer needs additional support?

Using Amplifire to Maximize Efficiency

In a recent implementation, Tegria was able to maximize the efficiency of trainer time by having trainers work directly with SMEs to develop content for virtual delivery with the adaptive learning platform, Amplifire. These interactions improved the trainers' EHR knowledge and the content they produced for learners. By using Amplifire, they were also able to collect data about what a learner already knew and hone-in on the areas where a learner struggled. The training staff could then spend their time following up with individual learners or groups of learners providing support or training on only the information that the learner needed. It's a win, win.

Impact

Measuring Success

We wouldn't be making these recommendations if we didn't know how much value adopting learning technologies and a hybrid learning approach can add to your organization. We've already discussed how improved training results improve happiness and confidence in users, but we can also measure the positive impact through some other impressive metrics.

UCHealth implemented a training program that took full advantage of a hybrid learning model. By using Amplifire to supplement their in-class learning they were able to see significant results ranging from monetary to efficiency. Let's take a closer look at how revamping their training program reaped significant benefits.

- **Reduced Training Time** - UCHealth saw a 56% reduction in training time. Before integrating Amplifire, time spent in the classroom for experienced Epic users ranged from 4 to 8 hours. With Amplifire's ability to allow users to focus on what they needed to learn instead of rehashing what they already knew this time dropped to a mere 1 hour or less. This also means the need to backfill staff in training is significantly reduced.
- **Reduced Resources** - A blended learning program reduces overhead costs significantly. Less money is spent on physical resources like classrooms and additional trainers. A 70% reduction in resources can be realized.
- **Increased Efficiency**- The team at UCHealth used Epic's Signal analysis tool to discover proficiency of learners using Amplifire. They found that proficiency increased at a faster rate than for learners that participated in traditional classroom training. In fact, learning with Amplifire beat classroom proficiency by 19.8%.
- **Increased Revenue** - When looking at 3 out of the 12 provider courses, UC Health experienced \$1.45 million in estimated cost savings. Better trained staff and clinicians are also less likely to make costly mistakes. In addition, reducing classroom time allows providers to return to patient care quicker resulting in increased revenue. Early data suggests each clinician is reducing time spent on training and ineffective EHR use by 20-40 hours annually.

Impact

Benefits at Every Level

Adopting a hybrid learning model for training benefits every level of a health organization. Even those who aren't directly attending training will benefit - namely the patients of your organization who are now receiving improved care due to your improved training. Truly the impact of your training program will be felt by every person in your organization and every person your organization touches.



Manager

After switching to a hybrid training model, I have noticed my staff are hitting their training goals faster and with higher proficiency. Because they are happier in the system, overall morale is up!

In a hybrid training program, I can spend less time in the classroom and more time giving one-on-one support to the users who need it. I also have time to improve curriculum and learn more about L&D to create better content.



Trainer



End-User

Now that I can choose when I do my e-learning and spend less time in the classroom, I can get back to doing my job faster. I don't feel like I'm wasting my time sitting through material I already know, and I get direct support from my trainer in the areas where I need extra help.

As a provider with a busy schedule, I appreciate having a learning experience that is flexible and adapts to my knowledge and needs. Training shouldn't be an additional stress to an already stressful job!



Provider



Patient

I feel better cared for when my clinician is able to focus on me and not their computer screen. Their confidence in the system means a lower likelihood of them making a mistake that could impact my health and safety.

Conclusion

Measure Success

As we collectively return to work and recover after over a year of adapting to the pandemic, it can be tempting to try and return to the past. Reinstating traditional models of training might be the initial reaction at your organization as people return to being face-to-face again. However, the timing has never been better for change.

For so long the conversations around the future of training referenced hopes for improved technologies alongside hesitation towards evolving the approach to EHR training. We're here to tell you that the future of training is now. The technology is not only available, but has proven to be more effective than traditional methods.

Industry leaders have taken notice and are eager to evolve the industry standard of EHR training. Technology in healthcare is here to stay, and your training methodology should adapt to stay in sync with modern practices. The time is right to engage with these exciting developments in learning technologies and strategies to grow and improve your training program.

If you are curious about how to research, plan, prepare for change, and/or implement a hybrid learning strategy at your organization, we would love to hear from you. Please do not hesitate to reach out and start a conversation!