

CONTACT CENTER TRAINING METHODS: BEST PRACTICES

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BACKGROUND

In recent years there has been an increased use of web-based training throughout various industries. Some companies have realized cost savings as well as increased efficiency in learning.¹ With the trend moving towards more web-based programs for employees, we assessed whether this method of training is as effective as traditional methods such as instructor-led training.

ABSTRACT

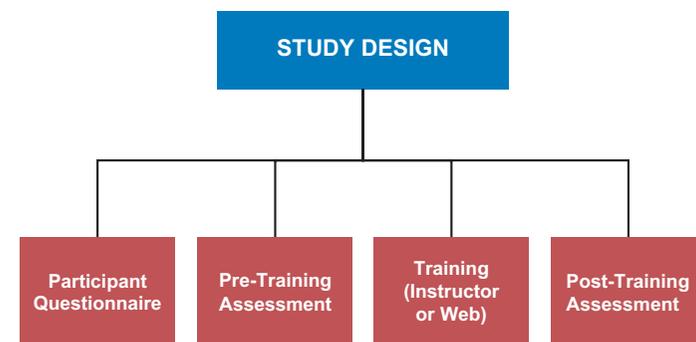
To determine if one method of training is better than another. Product information is constantly changing. A core function of the contact center is to provide customers with up to date product information. Training the contact center staff is resource intensive. Discovering if there is one preferred method of training allows for optimization of resources. The call center was divided into two equal groups and trained on the levofloxacin package insert. One group received instructor-led training, the other group received computer-based training. A timed evaluation of levofloxacin product knowledge, was given to each participant. The assessment measure included the number of questions correctly answered within the given time. The results from the two groups were analyzed as to whether one group had a greater increase in correct answers compared to the other group.

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate the understanding of effective methods for conveying new information.
- To provide information to increase efficiency of teaching programs for Customer Call Center personnel and Medical Information Specialists.
- To provide management the ability to make decisions on effective and efficient use of resources in regards to training personnel.

METHODS

- Fourteen analysts from the customer call center participated in this study.
- All participants were given a pre-training assessment consisting of 15 product specific questions. Each question had a 2 minute time limit.
- The analysts were divided into two groups of seven in accordance with preference of training.
 - One group received instructor-led training on the levofloxacin package insert
 - One group received web-based training on the levofloxacin package insert
- After training, a post-training assessment was given in a method and style consistent with the pre-training assessment.
- Differences between the groups were analyzed using the two sample t-test.
- Differences within the groups were analyzed using the paired t-test.
- ANCOVA model was used to analyze variables in the data.



Participant Questionnaire

FIGURE 1 – HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE LEVOFLOXACIN PACKAGE INSERT?

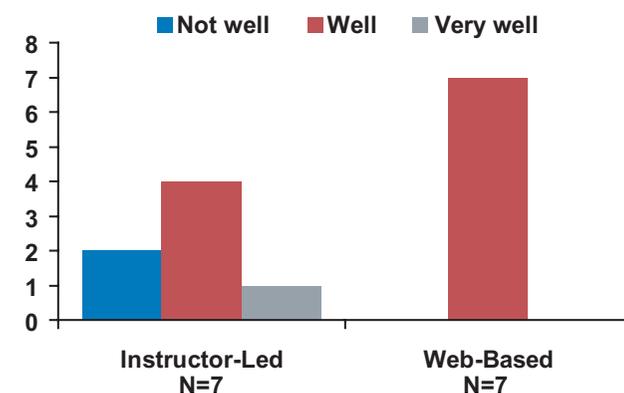


FIGURE 2 – DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE HAD ADEQUATE TRAINING ON THE PACKAGE INSERT?

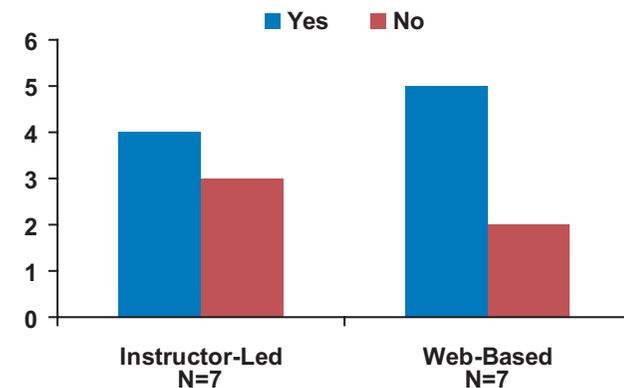


FIGURE 3 – HOW MANY YEARS OF JOB EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION?

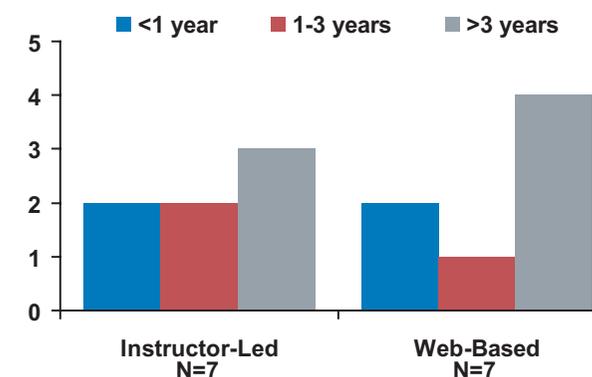


FIGURE 4 – HOW MANY YEARS OF JOB EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD IN MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS?

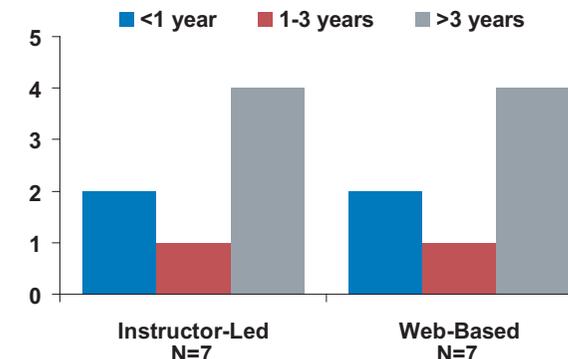
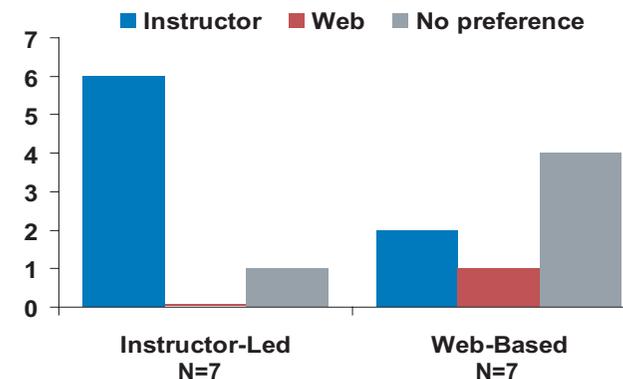


FIGURE 5 – WHICH METHOD OF TRAINING DO YOU PREFER TO PARTICIPATE IN?



Assessment Results

TABLE 1 – TRAINING ASSESSMENT SCORE AVERAGES

	Pre-Training Average Score (%)	Post-Training Average Score (%)	P Value
Instructor-Led	7.86 (52.4%)	10.57 (70.48%)	0.0056
Web-Based	10.14 (76.6%)	14 (93.3%)	0.0079
P Value	0.0705	0.0084	

TABLE 2 – TRAINING ASSESSMENT SCORE AVERAGE IMPROVEMENT

	Average Improvement
Instructor-Led	2.71 (18.08%)
Web-Based	3.86 (25.73%)
P Value	0.3511

RESULTS

- The difference between the pre-training assessment scores of the two groups was not found to be statistically significant.
- The difference between the post-training assessment scores of the two groups was found to be statistically significant ($P = 0.0084$).
- Within each group the improvement seen was statistically significant. (Instructor-led, $P = 0.0056$), (Web-based, $P = 0.0079$).
- The difference between the improvement of the two groups was not found to be statistically significant.
- ANCOVA analysis of variables found that “pre-training assessment scores” were significant in determining final outcome.
- ANCOVA analysis of variables found that “method of training” trended towards significance.

LIMITATIONS

- Limited sample size.
- Groups were not randomized due to personnel schedule issues as well as network access issues.
- Quality of training programs were not validated.

CONCLUSIONS

- Participants in both groups showed a significant improvement in scores from pre- to post-training assessment.
- Neither method showed to be superior to the other; however, there was a trend towards significance that favored the web-based method.
- Along with the method of training, other factors such as participant demographics and product knowledge are also important in designing training programs.
- Taking into account the elevated pre-training assessment score of the web-based group at baseline, this data suggests that web-based training may be more effective than instructor-led programs of the same content.

REFERENCES

- Rivera RJ, Paradise A. (2006). The 2006 ASTD State of the Industry, In Leading Enterprises.