



# How to Launch a Successful Blended Learning Orientation Program

Learn Elliott Group's "magic" formula for creating a blended training program that develops highly trained managers who deliver super performing employees.



# Introduction

With corporate training budgets on the rise, many organizations are rapidly expanding their management orientation programs. For Elliott Group, this meant moving from classroom-based training to the world of blended learning.

If you're considering a similar move, read this real-life case study to learn from their challenges, solutions and best practices.

# Challenge

Elliott Group needed a faster, easier and more cost-efficient way to train their global managers. They had an effective four-day classroom leadership and management skills training program in place, but it had four key disadvantages:

1. To make it cost-effective, it could only be held a few times a year. Which meant some new managers could go up to six months without critical training support.
2. The program was condensed to meet the four-day timeframe. This was not optimal for content retention, and it was especially challenging for managers that spoke English as a second language.
3. Some teams experienced hardships because their manager was removed from their job for four days.

4. The program was not available to established managers and supervisors who had not previously received this training.



## About Elliott Group

For more than 100 years, the world has turned to Elliott Group for the design, manufacture and service of critical turbomachinery. Elliott products and services are used in the oil and gas, refining and petrochemical industries, as well as in other process and power applications.

The company has earned a reputation for quality, efficiency and reliability in their products and people.

> [Learn more here](#)

# Solution

After extensive research and planning, Elliott purchased the ExpertusONE LMS platform and relaunched *Elliott Turns to You* as a blended eLearning, mobile and ILT solution.

Designed to give new managers “the knowledge, confidence and competence to do their job well”, it was based on the flipped classroom pedagogical model where the lecture and homework elements are reversed.

Here’s the breakdown...

- 12 eLearning modules (on desktop or mobile) each with a: multimedia presentation of key points, short reading and quiz
- A two-day in-person skills practice workshop where managers review eLearning materials and set goals for behavior change



## Program Design—An Emphasis on Engagement

Elliott chose a blended learning approach for three critical reasons:

1. New managers are hired or promoted into their positions on a regular basis. Waiting for the next available traditional session left them without support.
2. Making the lecture content available 24/7/365 ensured new managers could review materials at a pace and during times that fit their busy schedules. It also enabled them to repeat it as many times as necessary, which was especially helpful since Elliott's a global company and has many English as a second language learners.
3. Because the ExpertusONE LMS platform has an excellent mobile LMS app, the manager-learners could also take eLearning modules on their phones or tablets—a huge advantage for frequent travelers.

## About ExpertusONE Mobile

ExpertusONE Mobile is the most advanced, fully featured LMS app available. Its Mobile First design give users a full LMS experience with the robust features and optimized functionality of top consumer mobile apps. This results in a second to none user interface—which can dramatically raise learning engagement and adoption:

- Learn anytime, anywhere via native Apple iOS/Android apps and offline sync
- Access all ExpertusONE LMS functions by launching courses, streaming videos and using social tools in real-time
- Transform classroom learning with Presence Sensing that enhances classroom collaboration, sharing and instructor communication

> [Watch 1-min. video here](#)

“

*To make the training's content best resonate with our audience, we broke it into small topic 'chunks' making it easier to consume (fit into their busy schedules) and giving them the ability to complete sections at one sitting—so the managers had the feeling of accomplishment and progress.”*

*—Ben Butina, Elliott Group  
Sr. Manager, Global Training & Development*

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“This paired with our flipped classroom model empowers learners to make the most of the two-day workshop. With a deeper understanding of the content, they can better discuss and practice what they’ve learned and implement it correctly on-the-job.”

Elliott also heavily emphasized engagement in the program’s design. They started each section with a relevant introduction—showing learners a real-world application of the practice and why it’s needed, then supporting this with engaging stories, instructional bullet points and as many specifics to their jobs as possible.

Another way they built engagement was getting buy-in from other teams. They:

- Socialized the program with HR managers, explaining what it was and why it was important, and then the HR team talked it down through their people
- Talked it over with executives so they could get their people invested and set expectations
- Promoted the program in leadership development courses to set the foundation (anticipation) for what was ahead



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## Program Delivery—Technology with a Personal Touch

Here’s Elliott’s three-step delivery process...

1. The Training Manager receives a weekly report from Elliott’s HRIS system with newly-hired or promoted managers
2. He enrolls them in the program via the LMS
3. After 30 learners have completed their eLearning, he schedules a two-day, on-site skills workshop

Example of Elliott Group’s HRIS New Hire Report

<b>ELC New Hire Report</b>							
Hire Date	Preferred Name	Location	Job Title	Business Title	Is Manager	Manager Name	Email - Work
3/1/2017	Jenna Aulton	UK / Staines Sales Office	Proposals Administrator	Proposals Administrator		Stephen Martin	jaulton@elliottturbo.com
3/1/2017	Tarek Alhawasani (Tarek Alhawasani)	Saudi Arabia / Remote	Field Service Supervisor	Field Service Supervisor	Yes	Robert Johnson	talhawas@elliottturbo.com
3/1/2017	Hassan Al Hudabi (Hassan Al Hudabi)	Switzerland / Remote	Field Service Representative I	Field Service Representative I		Robert Johnson	halhudabi@elliottturbo.com
3/20/2017	Donna Ashcroft	UK / Silchester / Office	Inside Sales Representative	Inside Sales Representative		Nicola Bryant	dashcroft@elliottturbo.com
3/27/2017	Jack Bell	US / Baton Rouge Service Center	Senior Manager - Operations II	Service Center Manager - Baton Rouge		Michael W Hines	jbell@elliottturbo.com
3/27/2017	Leslie X Soto	US / Houston Service Center	Administrative Assistant II	Administrative Assistant II		Corinne S Linderman	lsoto@elliottturbo.com
4/1/2017	Davide Codenz	Switzerland / Lachen Service Center	Assistant Financial Controller	Assistant Financial Controller		Roland vonasch	dcodenz@elliottturbo.com
4/3/2017	Jenna G Hines	US / Houston Sales Office	Engineering Manager I	Engineering Manager I	Yes	Shane R Hines	jghines@elliottturbo.com

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As for keeping learners engaged and progressing through the self-directed eLearning phase, the Training Manager or the learners' managers reach out personally.

“Learners do get reminders through the LMS. But we find adding a human element, a ‘personal touch’, shows we’re invested in them, which is encouraging,” Butina said.

Throughout the eLearning stage, the learners' managers and the Training Manager get LMS-based reports on what classes have been completed, learner progress/timeframe, and the training program as a whole.

> [Watch 1-min. video on ExpertusONE's reporting tool](#)

Learners can also quickly see their progress and what's next in queue whenever they login to the LMS from their personalized 'My Learning' page. Both the reporting and self-tracking help speed program adoption and completion.

## Example of LMS Program Enrollment Page & Elliot Group's Introduction Email

The screenshot shows a program card for "ELLIOTT TURNS TO YOU" with a "100% Completed" status. It includes a "VIEW" button, a star rating of 5 stars (1 vote), and a "LAUNCH" button. Below the main card, two additional modules are listed: "ELLIOTT TURNS TO YOU: INTRODUCTION" and "ELLIOTT TURNS TO YOU: THE LEADERSHIP ROLE", each with its own "LAUNCH" button. The main card also displays course ID "CUR-LDM-0-16-00", completion statistics, and a description of the self-paced training program.

The screenshot shows an email from Ben Butina, Training and Development manager, dated Monday, Nov 21, 2016, 12:41 PM. The email introduces the "ELLIOTT Turns to You" training program, explaining its purpose for management and leadership skills. It lists requirements: 12 computer-based courses to be completed by May 21, 2017, followed by a live two-day workshop. The email concludes with contact information for Ben Butina, Ph.D., and a link to "ETTY Access Job Aid.pdf".

# Impact

The reception and evaluation of *Elliott Turns to You* has been largely positive. Here is a sample of the program's participant feedback.

“

*I thought the course material was good and very relevant. It was probably the best material I have received regarding diversity from a management perspective.*

*—Safety Manager, USA*

”



*The role playing is good and reinforces what we have learnt during the training. Topics like 'Effective Job Interviewing' and 'Performance Management' are very important for managers. I feel that most of us may not have given enough priority on these activities. Definitely an eye opener for me. Thank you!*

*—Sales Manager, Singapore*

*The mobile app made it easy for me to take training when I was on the road.*

*—Manager, USA*

*It was good to set a personal learning commitment so that what is learned is taken back to the job.*

*—Project Manager, USA*





*As I am new to management, I felt like I took something positive away from each course. Based on my experience I did not see where I would have benefitted by changing anything.*

*—High-Potential (Manager Candidate), USA*

*We were well coached on how to be a qualified manager. Also, we've learned from the course how to handle management tasks in detail.*

*—Shop Manager, China*

*Group/team activities after modules was a very clever idea. I think this involvement reinforced some of the ideas*

*—Sales Manager, USA*



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## Immediate Training Support

As for the impact of using a blended format, Elliott's managers now receive training support for their new roles immediately, rather than waiting for the next standalone ILT offering. Butina explains...

"Elliott is competing against some very large competitors, so one of the ways we win and keep business is through the quality of our people, products and services. Management training is important so that our customers understand we're building and maintaining a world-class workforce. That's why waiting for management orientation could seriously impact our business."

## Better Skills & Loyalty

Another impact of the blended training program is that the two-day workshop still retains the valued benefits of a traditional classroom experience (i.e. getting to know other managers, practicing skills in a realistic context, etc.).

"Without practicing what you've learned, much of it will be forgotten and never implemented. This face-to-face component also helps strengthen the relationships among our managers and their investment and loyalty to Elliott," Butina commented.

## More People Trained

The eLearning format also enabled Elliott to extend the training to established managers who were hired before the training existed.

"This lets them address their training gaps in a convenient way. This is another way we can uphold our high service standards company-wide," Butina remarked.

# Results

Elliott used the [Kirkpatrick Model](#) to evaluate the effectiveness of *Elliott Turns to You*.

For their Level 1 evaluations, they used ExpertusONE's built-in surveys, which "made it much easier to collect, report on and analyze feedback. Our learners also favored the speed and convenience of completing the surveys online."

Some of the Level 1 findings were:

- Learners' appreciated both the content and blended format
- Learners were able to immediately put what they learned into practice—which was Elliott's #1 program goal and wasn't always achieved with their previous standalone ILT program

The Level 2 results were also very encouraging with most learners' scores indicating a high level of learning, retention and application. These evaluations were conducted as end-of-unit quizzes for the eLearning portion and as skills competency assessments during the two-day workshop.

## Low Cost, High ROI

Given the low cost of developing and implementing the program, Elliott has experienced a tremendous ROI. Here are some of their preliminary success statistics (the program was launched in September 2016):

- 100% of employees hired or promoted into management roles were enrolled in the program
- The average time from a manager's hire date to program start was reduced from 3.5 months to 1 week
- 52% of established managers have voluntarily completed one or more courses in the program

## Meeting Learning & Business Needs

"The blended learning format has been highly successful and meets both our learning and business needs," Butina remarked. "It's ideally suited to a medium-sized company with a global and mobile workforce, because of the minimal budget that's required and the small impact on pulling learners from their jobs."

As for lessons learned, he offers this advice:

1. Involve the learner's direct manager. They want to be involved and know what's going on. They're also key to learner's successful training completion.
2. Get SME input as early as possible in the program's design. This will save a lot of time and eliminates costly revisions.
3. Communicate with your HR team to improve program success. They can promote the program to employees and gather feedback on its impact.
4. Separate your knowledge and skills development training. Knowledge training is best understood in an online, self-paced format. Skills development, on the other hand, is more impactful in person.



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# A Magic Formula

*Elliott's larger competitors can afford to spend more on their management orientation training. However, Elliott's known for their outstanding people and service. So, they believe they're onto a "magic" formula. Their eLearning/mobile/ILT training mix is the perfect solution for developing highly trained managers who deliver super performing employees.*

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## About the Author

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Dir. of Client Services, Expertus

With more than 20 years of experience, Craig specializes in leading LMS implementations and managing learning solution programs involving software enhancements and business process improvements.

If you'd like to discuss how to launch your blended learning program with a modern LMS, please [contact Craig here](#).

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