

# NlightN Multimedia -

## A Real World View



### eCommunication: making it work

#### Part 4 – the business benefit

eCommunication only works if there is a clear business benefit. Where this benefit exists and is, itself, properly communicated, the eCommunication will be given the priority and internal support needed to succeed.

The benefit of all eCommunication of whatever form, must be both objective and measurable.

#### Objective

eCommunication needs to have, at its core, an objective business benefit. For example, eMarketing must achieve a clear increase in business, eLearning must achieve a clear improvement in productivity (depending on the subject of the eLearning), CBT must achieve a clear reduction in errors (for example) and an internal communication must have a clear aim in mind.



**Kevin Partner** writes a regular bi-monthly column for **PCPro** ([www.pcpro.co.uk](http://www.pcpro.co.uk)), the UK's leading IT magazine and is an expert in eCommunication in all its forms. He's worked in the field since 1989, has seen fads and technologies come and go but the fundamentals of good practice remain the same.

Having a clear business benefit underpinning your eCommunication helps focus the mind. You should judge every element of the eCommunication on this basis: if it doesn't support the business benefit, then don't do it.

This doesn't mean doing it on the cheap, however. As I pointed out in Part 3, the most expensive way to go about eCommunication is to do it badly: poor eCommunication has no business benefits. If, by spending money on a professional design, for example, you increase the effectiveness and therefore business benefit then do it! There will come a point, however, at which you will see the benefit for each additional pound of spending decrease and this is the point at which to stop and settle on the specification as it stands.

Here's an example. You're deciding on the packaging for a training CDROM that is to go out to your Warehouse Supervisors. You've very sensibly decided that the specification should include both a colour printed front and a colour CD case insert. Why? Because you want your product to be valued by your target audience and the quickest way to undermine perceived value is to cut corners. Now your CD duplicator has asked whether you want the product to be shrink-wrapped. On the one hand, this will further increase the quality of the package but probably not enough to justify the additional cost of 10p per disk. So, this is where you draw the line. At the end of the day, you are looking for a specific business benefit in training your Warehouse Supervisors. This business benefit can be expressed in monetary terms so it needs to be compared with the monetary cost. Obviously, the cost should always be significantly less than the benefit!

## Measurable

There's no point in having an objective business benefit if you can't measure it as you'll be unable to prove whether your eCommunication project achieved its aim. Exactly how you measure the effect of your project depends on its type.

### Measuring elearning

elearning is traditionally measured by integrating it with a Learning Management System (LMS). This is, essentially, an online database that records the user's performance. So, it'll give information including:

- who did the training
- when they did it
- how long they spent
- their completion status
- their scores

...plus any further information that might be important to you.

You may well have noticed that what this doesn't tell you is the impact on business performance. However, you need, firstly, to measure whether your elearning has been fully effective as a learning product. Once this is done then you can measure any impact on the bottom line.

For example, I worked on a project within a major retailer which aimed to help shop staff sell an add-on product. We needed both to prove that take-up of the project had been very high and then to look at the bottom line figures. In this case, there was a clear increase in sales in the weeks following the communication.

## **Measuring eMarketing**

Again, with eMarketing, you need to measure two things: firstly how many people viewed your marketing and secondly, the impact on business. At the end of the day, of course, it's only the latter of these figures that matters but you will not be able to improve your eMarketing if you don't know how many people used it and what they thought of it.

For example, let's imagine you create an eMarketing CDROM and, in the weeks following its release, your turnover increases by 10%. Good, there was clearly an impact but where do you go from here? If you found out that only 20% of the people it was sent to actually viewed it then clearly there's an opportunity to further increase your turnover by creating a more engaging eMarketing product.

How do you measure it? One way is to get your audience to register for a freebie (something they will value) and you'd therefore get a good idea of the take-up by the number of registrations. You'd also, potentially, have some good contacts for further marketing. Make sure it's permission based, however, no-one likes spam.

Another option is to follow up your eMarketing with a phone call. This also hugely improves its effectiveness as a piece of eMarketing.

If your eMarketing involves a website then you can measure its effectiveness through the visitor numbers. Take care though to have a unique page for your marketing so that there's no confusion with the general ebb and flow of traffic.

**COMING UP IN PART 5: *The quality question***