MARKET POTENTIAL OF E-LEARNING SUPPORTED TRAINING IN INDIAN COMPANIES

To achieve the human edge, corporate strategists keep scanning better and efficient enablers to achieve this objective. Use of internet for training and learning , known as E-Learning, is widely used among large corporations in west to impart and manage training. The flavour has touched Indian companies as these companies are also on their way to face the toughest competition ever seen before. At the same time Indian IT sector, which has gained prominence in the last decade, looks at this evolving market globally as well as in the domestic space as an opportunity. Therefore, E-Learning as a training solution for skill enhancement concerns both Indian corporate in general as well as Indian IT companies.

there are lot of potential entrants who are still watching and not getting into it. In fact India Inc. vows to beat the world on the basis of its peoples intellectual strength. Some efforts as mentioned above, which are known, are there but not detailed research report is available. There have been failures and mistakes, which have thrown lots of learning. As a result players have improvised their offers. Though the progression is slow, it is expected to grow in the coming years. But if the status of the Indian Companies with regard to their intentions to build sustained edge of intellectual capital with E-Learning becomes known through a systematic study, then one can make reliable assumptions about this market where business players are trying to move or have already moved. Is E-Learning really make a headway in the training market of corporate India like west? What are the current formats and what is extent of application? What possibly will determine scope for different players on the supply side ? What will be the direction and slope? What will determine velocity here? Therefore, with all these questions in mind, the study has been an in this area to seek answers and mine into new insights. Therefore, to take it further and getting focused, the research has mainly focused on first three questions.

Research objectives

Given the growing need for intellectual competence for sustained edge in view of the fierce global competition and alignment of knowledge building goals

with overall corporate strategy, following objectives have motivated to carry the research to seek answers :

1. To study the extent of training goals alignment with the corporate strategy across Indian companies.
2. To study various training practices across Indian corporates for employee competence development and identify deficiencies.
3. To compare various training solutions with special focus on E-Learning supported training for corporates.
4. To examine in detail the perception among the corporate sponsors about these training solutions especially E-Learning supported solutions.
5. Suggest a framework to understand the sponsors perceptive for optimized training solution by training service providers.

Methodology

Companies keep looking at new enablers to compete effectively. Information has been a potential enablers and more so in the current and possible future era. But assimilating technology is a challenge.

Technology Accepatnce Model has been developed by Fred Davis and Richard Bagozzi (Bagozzi et al., 1992; Davis et al., 1989). TAM replaces many of TRA's attitude measures with the two technology acceptance measures— ease of use, and usefulness. Perceived ease of use was also coined by the ealier theories. Perceived complexity has also been recognised as an influnece on adoption of tecvhnology (Tornatzky and Klein ,1982). Various researchers have reinforced the theory maturity (Adams, Nelson & Todd, 1992; Davis et al., 1989; Hendrickson, Massey & Cronan, 1993; Segars & Grover, 1993; Subramanian, 1994; Szajna, 1994).

TAM2 is a modified version of TAM and forms the core theoretical framework adopted in this research to answer questions of E-Learning acceptability among Indian corporate sector. The extended model, referred to as **TAM2**, was tested in both voluntary

and mandatory settings. The results strongly supported TAM2 (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). They proposed following three broader constructs and nine attributes- Cognitive Influence (Perceived Usefulness, Job Relevance, Output quality, Results Demonstration, Perceived Ease of Use), Social Influence (Volutariness, Subjective norm or Compliance and Image) and Behavioral Intention. Behavioral Intention as the explained construct remains both in the broader and sub-level as well.

To sum up, three major constructs based on TAM and TAM 2 are used:

1) Cognitive Influence (Perceived Usefulness, Job Relevance, Output quality, Results Demonstration, Perceived Ease of Use).
2) Social Influence (Volutariness, Subjective norm or Compliance and Image) .
3) Behavioral Intention.

The sample has been selected for corporate survey from the list of 500 companies ranked by the Economic Times popular as ET500 which is done every year. The research sample has been chosen on the basis of 2006 list which appeared in October 2006. The instrument was developed based on the instrument validated for TAM studies with modifications over TAM2 and specific classification data required for data analysis

Data Analyses Procedures

The data from the corporate survey was scanned using SPSS Clementine. This software identified missing or erroneously marked responses, such as two responses for one question, which were inspected and confirmed. After inspection, data scoring and coding was done. The following sections will describe the data conversions and coding procedures used. The analysis has been carried out through four stages:

Step 1: Analysis of each response within the data collection instrument.

Step 2: Analysis of Constructs including analysis of attributes for specific constructs and explanatory cumulative constructs – Cognitive Constructs and Social Influence

Step3: Analysis of relationship between dependent and independent constructs.

Step4: Analysis of relationship between dependent , independent constructs, classification data and other responses to address various research objectives.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The number of companies using E-Learning and providing these services is limited in India. In spite of less number of companies offering these services in India, these have made a strong hold globally. But that doesn't solve the problem of research methodology with a large sample. Since the information technology changes in the past have been quite fast and adoption rate also has been with equal pace, it makes sense to study a short term perspective. Therefore, a mixed technique of survey based data collection with users and inputs from service providers has been used to arrive at the approximate status of near future. The study shows that are around 6 % of prospective companies among the top 500 companies in India who are likely to add E-Learning or increase their current use. There is a positive attitude towards E-Learning based training among corporates in India but its major dependence is on usage and complexity factors. The perceived benefits of this training method comes next There is yet to be complete recognition of E-Learning based training at par with face to face. At the same time the training process owners are unwilling to take the risk associated with new projects of this nature..

The study concludes that it may take some more time before the human resource intensive, high growth companies who have already outsourced lot of their training may adopt E-Learning at a definite scale. Till then the service providers need to collaborate and create cases. They need to cooperate at the industry level also like other IT based service companies have done in the past. Proper project management methods for E-Learning implementation which comprise content, delivery, people, technology and change management can help users achieve the benefits of E-Learning.