

How Microlearning Raises the Game for Retail Training Impact

No matter how powerful a learning experience is, the bigger question on the minds of today's retail executives is this:

What do we have to show for it?

When it comes to retention of key concepts, we know that people are up against “the forgetting curve.” Without effective reinforcement, what's here today could easily be gone tomorrow.



According to the forgetting curve, on average, people forget 70% of what was taught within 24 hours of a training experience.

But we also know that people don't *just* need to retain what they've learned. They also need to consistently apply it and continue to learn and grow. After all, retail managers, buyers, and associates aren't operating in a static environment where everything's going to remain unchanged a year down the road. Things might even look dramatically different a week from now. It's one of the reasons the ability to lead change and continually grow has become so important in retail leadership.

Which takes us back to those executives and their questions: How do you *know* if they're leading change successfully and staying on a growth path? And how do you track knowledge, performance, and application in terms of business impact you can measure in the stores *today*?

Well, to be honest, it hasn't always been easy. Test scores, completion rates, “smile sheets”...these all represent snapshots of moments in time, offering only a surface-level view. They don't give you the full story or the data to pinpoint performance and results.

And even at that surface level, tracking and reporting the data can be a time-consuming job. Who wants to deal with an even more complex set of data points?

Enter continuous microlearning.

This has been a game-changer for many of retailers, particularly those that have been looking for better ways to:

- Demonstrate L&D's impact on the business
- Seamlessly incorporate learning into the daily habits of very busy retail managers
- Engage people and challenge them to keep growing and adapting
- Build a culture of continuous learning

Continuous microlearning generates infinitely more data than traditional reinforcement methods, and it then translates that data into a new set of learning and business metrics. That means L&D leaders and business executives can get immediate line-of-sight to how knowledge and performance are growing in real time.

Here's how our microlearning partner Axonify describes it:

Instead of a single-assessment data point (for example, a score on a test), microlearning leverages proven brain science to continuously measure question responses at multiple time intervals and across varying degrees of difficulty, all while tracking an employee's confidence in their response to each question.

On top of that, Axonify's platform includes simple but powerful dashboards that provide leaders with a real-time view of progress and easy-to-generate reports that drill down into specific granular areas of focus.

Keeping them in the game

Of course, for the learning experience to be worth anything, people have to participate. Many retailers think that's going to be the biggest hurdle, but they're usually pleasantly surprised. With casual gameplay embedded into the learning, people actually want to practice their skills and focus on achieving learning outcomes.

This gamified approach also releases dopamine that stimulates memory paths and promotes greater knowledge retention. Since participants know it's going to be fun, challenging, and quick, they're willing to engage and stay in the game. Add in a rewards element, and it doubles the voluntary participation rate.



85% Participation Rates

Percentage of people engaged in a training session at least once in a 30-day period

9.0 Frequency Rates

How often people are training in a 3-day period

In fact, according to Axonify's key performance indicator benchmarks, **engagement among retail organizations is among the highest** of the industries it focuses on, with 85% Participation rates (percentage of people engaged in a training session at least once in a 30-day period) and 9.0 Frequency rates (how often people are training in a 30-day period). Retail also boasts the highest Current Knowledge and Confidence rates.

We can vouch for those numbers. One of our clients is getting almost 95% engagement on daily use of our Retail Store Leadership "RSL+" program by their 120 store managers, with some managers chalking up a 25-to-30-point improvement in knowledge growth.

Beyond the microlearning approach itself, we've specifically designed these "plus" programs to ensure learning — not just memorization — by repeating questions at specific intervals, even if the person got the right answer before. As they proceed through to higher levels, the questions get tougher and more nuanced: More than one answer might be correct, for example, or they'll be tasked with solving a real-world problem. These short "bursts" of learning may be quick, but they give the brain a serious workout.

In the field

Here are two examples of how retailers are using microlearning to achieve their objectives:

Reinforce and Grow New Store Managers' Knowledge

One chain is using RSL+ to reinforce and grow new store managers' knowledge. Their learning activity is reported out via an app on a smartphone to the supervisor so that they can either celebrate success or do additional coaching/training in the store.

Among the benefits of this completely integrated solution:

- Saves the retailer money in off-the-floor time and payroll
- Enables the district manager to play a key role in the onboarding process, instead of relying on regional or company HR teams



One retailer is getting almost 95% engagement on daily use of the microlearning program, with some store managers chalking up a **25-to-30-point improvement in knowledge growth.**

Provide Competitive Skill Practice and Track Performance Metrics

The story of another brand is typical of many of our clients. Store managers who've completed classroom training are now working through microlearning via the "Plus" programs to practice their skills and compete as teams against their peers in other locations, with a friendly rivalry going a long way to keep engagement levels high. In addition, the DM checks in regularly to see who hasn't logged in for a while so he can send them reminders when they "fall off the wagon," as he puts it, adding, "The app really helps me keep an eye on them."



"Our retail team is very competitive, and I'm impressed with the results I'm seeing."

His experience echoes that of another client, who told us, "It literally takes minutes, and I set aside time every day to log on and answer questions. Our retail team is very competitive, and I'm impressed with the results I'm seeing."

At the next level, leaders can begin to look at store results and performance metrics in the context of their managers' knowledge and confidence improvements to get a clearer picture of how their L&D investments are impacting the business.

And when it comes to demonstrating real impact from your training initiatives, that's a lot more powerful than a "smile sheet."

Nowhere does learning meet experience as it does in a MOHR Retail training program.

For more than 30 years, MOHR Retail has developed the critical people-to-people skills needed to create results in the retail industry. Through innovative classroom and online learning methods, as well as our ongoing national retail research projects, we continue to stay on top of the trends so we can fuel the success of specialty stores, chain stores, outlets, catalogue retailers, department stores, and more.

Contact us to discuss how to best integrate microlearning into your learning and business strategies.

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