

Antoine AMIEL: MOOC's impact on training modes

I would like to start by explaining how I became an entrepreneur in the field of education and training. I believe it is a reflection of the global evolution of e-learning and training. I studied philosophy and I am interested in teaching in this respect. I wanted a project revolving around training and I noticed that what the digital can offer in all sectors is the emancipation of individuals, who can access the right training and are included in the digital sphere. This emancipation is quite strong. 10-15 years ago, it would have been much harder for me to set up a company. Today, I have access to all the training I need to update my skills and find customers. With €3,000, I was able to set up a business which is currently growing, recruiting, and where I work. Emancipation today is the heart of online training, especially corporate training. There is usually a pyramid: the training 'provider', the company and the final user – the employee/trainee. Today, the middle man has disappeared because, with the digital, trainees can access the training sessions themselves – MOOCs are an example but only account for a very small part of online training anyone can access anytime. Individuals' power struggle in the company is increasing, as they know that there are training offers, more or less free, with some degree of certification. They can go much faster, without waiting for the company to suggest a training offer. I want to stress one thing: today, it is quite likely that, in the companies you represent, a portion, even a small one, of your employees are training themselves about topics that are either completely personal (i.e. cooking classes), or professional, comparing the training sessions you offer with online training sessions offered on other platforms. I have often spoken with HR or training managers who told me they couldn't get their employees to register to the training sessions they offer. The employees answer that they have found better on these platforms.

Actually, this power play is quite uneven. Today, only people with a self-training culture, who have come up with a view of their employability, career path, who have access to information, possess this state of mind. Basically, for now, e-learning remains the way to train executives, managers. The whole point now is to manage to develop this training culture for all, including workers, operational staff, to guarantee their long-term employability. Indeed, we know that these trades are bound to change and that businesses are liable for developing this culture.

We are currently witnessing a very interesting momentum: thanks to feedback, we have reached a certain point of maturity in terms of online training, allowing us to do industrial and inclusive things that have an impact – leaning that they include everyone, including people who don't necessarily have access to online training and who don't have this culture of self-training and lifelong training.

Consequences on human resources:

1. Digital transformation

Today, most employees and businesses 'endure' this topic – it is innovation coming from the market and causes a lot of stress. More and more, in large businesses, I can see somewhat 'schizophrenic' businesses: on the one hand, you have willing leaders who want to go toward

innovation, towards the digital, who have understood all the changes it entails. On the other, the social body doesn't understand the stakes – no one has ever asked them to – and is worried about its future, its job – rightly so. A lot of businesses come up with major plans on digital transformation worth hundreds of millions of euros: mobile apps, URP, CRM, very heavy technological tools aiming at helping the company go through the change. These technologies' mutation rates are sometimes very low, often because the meaning of digital isn't understood well. Why aren't these tools catching on? It is a question of pedagogy, of succeeding in explaining the company's different populations that self-training and digital are not only business stakes but an educational stake as well, a global social stake, that all trades are going to be reinvented, which needs implies preparation.

How can MOOCs help find a collective online experience susciting commitment, so that people want to be a part of it all, grasp a topic, without sitting alone in front of a screen, and at the same time have an industrial goal? Indeed, for a company with a staff of 50,000, organizing training on the management of change and the digital transformation in training sessions of 20 people sitting down is impossible. You need to aim at several goals: industrialisation, ROI, and inclusion; sharing and appropriating collective experiences. This way, messages will get through, rather than an objective of massive diffusion that won't work.

This is considerably changing training jobs. Since the relationship between businesses, trainees and training editors has changes, the role of training services, of corporate universities, is also changing a lot? More and more, I can see training and development teams becoming at first internal consultants able to identify skills needs, to locate them, to analyse equipment rates in different countries or BUs, to give internal diagnoses regarding training needs. Then, they become salespersons, i.e. they present a project to all the managers, to BUs, they make sure a program is spread, that there is a seduction relationship with all the parties involved to sell the project. The third skill is a monitoring skill. Today, with the web, the number of training creators has been multiplied by 1,000. There are thousands of providers and as many methods: mobile training, MOOCs, hybrid learning... It is really hard to identify them all, to qualify them, to match them to needs, to test them and to industrialise them. The ability to identify all this has become extremely important. Then comes the match between businesses' needs, employees' needs and the needs of external providers, i.e. the ability to assemble and spread projects, to evaluate them. In the end, training teams' responsibilities are growing, which can give them more value in the company, a more strategic role. Indeed, the point is no longer a statutory training obligation but a societal mission to maintain the employability of tens of thousands of people in a rather violent transformation context.

The interest of MOOCs is their interactive and collective dimension. As soon as a MOOC's scenario is designed, it is possible to create activities between the trainees that encourage appropriation, to bring up fears, ideas, that can also be used as project incubators, thus keeping individuals from being alone in front of their screens. MOOCs have been projected in meeting rooms as in movie theaters; in that case, workers who don't have an internet access gathered in a room, watched educational videos together and then took part in activities meant to be done together, as workshops, without a single training officer present. The manager was trained to facilitation and ran the debate with these workers to get them to work on an educational activity,

post the activity's result on a platform. This creates phenomenal collective intelligence which, if used well, encourages support and change.

2. Equipment

Today, we hear about the digital transformation all the time, it has become the buzzword of the year. Yet, when you look at CAC40 companies, the email inbox rate is around 55 per cent. It is extremely low in industrial companies, including computing equipment. Is it better to equip all the staff or let them buy their own equipment and then certify it later? In any case, it isn't possible to do massive online training if equipment isn't up to date, as yield won't follow. This is currently a major topic, which shows a sizeable difference between ambitions and reality in the field sometimes.

3. The design approach

For online training (FOAD), there has always been a massive, industrial and uniform logic: content was numerised, uploaded on a platform, people were invited and that was it. Content was always designed by the designer, which is an engineering logic. This logic can be found in the digital transformation: technologies, solutions are designed, then handed out to a team that spreads them and gets feedback from the field, from the users. However, this team was never consulted to express needs or design tools, hence the low penetration rates. With training, today, it is possible to have design approaches, meaning starting with the users, doing 'personas', modelling different types of trainees, their profiles, their relation to training and digital issues, and thus design training having regard to the targets and not to what the decider wants to have. In the end, training will be the same, the topic will be the same, but it will be adjusted, shared differently depending on the targets. Some countries or targets will have access via mobile training, others via blended learning, others via traditional class-like training.

4. Observing ROI and KPIs

I came to the field of training because I first took an interest in digital issues and their democratisation. There are quite a number of KPIs used in the digital: purchase costs, conversion rates, conversion entonnoir, all the steps, in a customer path, because of which you take the person from the website's homepage to buying a product. You will also hear about active users, monthly active users – data that equals measuring tools that can be applied to training. The tools currently used to spread online training have been improved and can gather incredible data and truly mobilise training costs in terms of active users. It is possible to design a program for 15,000 people, calculate the number of active users, of trainees – whether they log in once or go through with the program –, to calculate the cost per user, which reverses the way training costs are calculated. Indeed, one no longer speaks about a budget logic but about the cost per user and the final commitment. For this, you need to communicate, to stir up commitment, thanks to every community practice.

Regarding data, keep in mind that this is a highly sensitive issue. Recently, we produced a MOOC on managerial innovation and several people from the same company registered. The company got in touch with us at the end of the MOOC to ask for data concerning the people who had

logged in: did they finish, what did they say on the forum, and so on. Obviously we refused to hand such data over as MOOCs are a personal training approach. It brings up the idea of intermediation, which is interesting. A company that wants to train its managers to new practices may find out that several of its managers are self-training with a MOOC and define its own practices, having no way of knowing how training went for these employees. Storing such data is usually a major issue which, after talking with the people in charge of charters on data in businesses, I believe is still quite poor regarding online training. It is even more worrying that, with the evolution of MOOC platforms, it is possible to find statistics regarding the population, the participants' engagement and, if such data is linked to the SIRK (end-of-year assessments), it can become rather important as it is possible to link training modes, to assess them in terms of upskilling, and internal mobility. In a way, this data is floating in the air. The good thing is that exploiting data can help modelise trainees and therefore adjust training. There are several types of trainees: those who like to train as a group, in a recurring manner, at a fixed date: those who like to train in a mobile way, in-between two meetings, via small sessions. These examples are caricatures but there is data to support them: for a target of 10,000 people, 1,000 like to train one way, 2,000 another way, which allows defining types and adjusting the way training is spread. This way, completion and commitment rates are higher.

Conclusion:

- ✚ The link between the trainee, the company and training has been upset and could be even more if the self-training culture keeps growing, which is rather likely
- ✚ Online training has reached a maturity level allowing us to do extremely engaging things that are powerful from an educational perspective and collaborative.
- ✚ In terms of assessment, thanks to data and design, it is possible to start assessing a training session's impact, to start laying down the foundation.
- ✚ The stake is going to be to massively develop such training while maintaining a human dimension, in the service of the management of change and of the evolution of businesses.