

**15 ways**

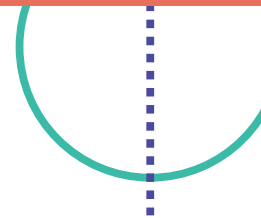
# Peer-to-Peer Learning Makes Organizations Agile & Collaborative



Captivating learning experiences

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# Introduction

Peer-to-peer training can transform a company culture and break down communication barriers between teams. When the flow of information is set free, everyone wins.

In a recent white paper, leading global professional services company Accenture stressed the need for organizations to become “learning” organizations.

The goal of a learning organization is to help workers “constantly acquire or build new skills and...to learn quickly” in today’s rapidly changing business climate. To stay competitive, enterprises must focus on “developing a culture of continuous learning, fostering informal, peer-to-peer learning, and hiring people who have the ability to learn quickly and easily.” [1]

Peer-to-peer (P2P) learning happens when employees use intuitive online tools to openly share knowledge and skills with colleagues. As Accenture states, P2P learning is a key component of an enterprise’s journey toward becoming a more agile and collaborative organization—one that is “designed around highly nimble and responsive talent.” [2]



## Why is an agile, collaborative workforce so important now?

For starters, technological innovations are happening faster than ever. New competitive threats are emerging in practically all industries. Customer behaviors, needs and expectations are constantly evolving. In this environment, employee roles and responsibilities can change quickly—which means team members need to learn and adapt quickly to succeed.

P2P learning can also help organizations beyond building an agile, more collaborative workforce. Learning and career development are among the top 10 factors that contribute to employee satisfaction, according to Forbes.[3] Amid all of today's fast-paced changes, hiring and retaining top professionals has become a major strategic focus. And happy workers tend to stick with an organization they feel is helping them grow—which is good for employees as well as their employers. "One of the top issues for Human Resource (HR) departments in 2015 was employee recruitment and retention, and this will continue to be a challenge into 2016," notes BenefitsPro.[4]

The following is a guide to how P2P learning can help your organization transition into a 'learning organization'; become more agile and competitive; heighten collaboration and productivity; and, perhaps most importantly, attract top talent and keep team members motivated, engaged, and ready for whatever comes next.





# The Need for P2P Learning

There are 15 ways in which intuitive P2P learning tools help organizations be more competitive, collaborative and nimble, regardless of their size.

## 1. P2P learning enables agile workforces

“Agile” is more than a Silicon Valley buzzword; it’s a cultural movement taking hold as enterprises of all types around the world realign in order to respond rapidly to change.

P2P learning is inherently agile itself because it facilitates the growth of a culture in which knowledge silos are easily erased. All team members share what they know and learn what their colleagues know without the complexity and costs of a traditional Learning Management System (LMS), online video courses, and other forms of standard training.

## 2. P2P learning helps prevent ‘institutional memory lapse’

When employees leave to work for another company, they often take a great deal of knowledge with them. Their knowledge could have helped their peers be more productive, innovative, and efficient; it could reduce the amount of time new hires need to “hit the ground running.”

“Organizations spend a lot of time and resources developing knowledge and capability,” notes Harvard Business Review.[5] “While some of it gets translated into procedures and policies, most of it resides in the heads, hands, and hearts of individual managers and functional experts. Over time, much of this institutional knowledge moves away as people take on new jobs, relocate, or retire. Knowledge also degrades when a new senior executive or CEO introduces a different agenda that doesn’t build on earlier knowledge, or contradicts what was done previously. And knowledge disappears even more rapidly when a firm reorganizes or merges with another and there is a subsequent reshuffling of the cast of characters.”

P2P learning systems are a cost-effective way for organizations to easily capture valuable knowledge—before it literally walks out the door and creates an ‘institutional memory lapse.’ This is a significant challenge at many organizations.



### 3. P2P learning keeps knowledge from growing stale

An organization's products, services and processes are developed much more rapidly today. Consequently, knowledge of these products, services and processes can quickly grow stale. Teams need the most up-to-date information possible to be agile with marketing, messaging, sales, and other initiatives.

Unfortunately, the way corporate learning is created and disseminated hasn't changed much over the years. Most enterprises still rely on traditional LMS structures or piece together training docs in PowerPoints or PDFs, while the online videos used for e-learning are often expensive to produce and can't be easily edited or updated.

A fresh, agile approach to learning is needed in organizations today. The best P2P learning systems enable knowledge sharing using intuitive tools that make it easy to capture, share—and just as importantly—update information.

### 4. P2P learning unlocks the power of knowledge

The old saying “knowledge is power” still carries weight. In the age of the internet and social media, when so much information is online, the true power of knowledge is unlocked when it's shared.

“Two people will collectively know more than one,” writes author and entrepreneur Douglas C. Merrill in Forbes.[6] “Three will know more than two. And when you have...smart people sharing their knowledge, there's very little you can't accomplish together.”

### 5. P2P learning can reduce educational content costs

Often, HR teams are in charge of employee training. Already stretched thin, HR usually outsources the development of training materials to external content developers. These materials are often expensive to produce, and organizations ultimately spend even more money updating or expanding that content to meet changing business objectives.

Training used to be a tactical imperative; now, it is a strategic imperative. There's more pressure than ever before on training teams to deliver effective training materials that foster company-wide engagement. Unfortunately, traditional LMSs and other training methods make this strategic imperative costly and challenging to meet.

## **6. P2P learning expands beyond centralized training structures**

Employee training has traditionally been part of a top-down structure in which HR or a training department is in charge of driving online courses, videos, and other training materials. However, this approach doesn't often facilitate easy sharing of employee knowledge in a standardized way.

## **7. P2P learning enables a free-flowing exchange of knowledge**

Teams have become accustomed to constant, online collaboration using tools like Slack. Most traditional LMSs and other tools don't offer a Slack-like, easy way to share knowledge, but the best P2P learning tools do.

## **8. P2P learning lets workers shine**

Everyone appreciates the opportunity to shine in front of colleagues. Younger team members in particular tend to be more collaborative and love to spotlight their skills and knowledge. P2P learning enables team members to show what they know, with the side benefit of making them feel more important and valuable to the organization.

Millennials (and even younger workers) are used to taking online classes and enjoy learning on the go, on their own schedule. Thus, P2P learning is a familiar, motivating way for them to gain new skills and knowledge.

## **9. P2P learning courses are easily optimized for mobile devices**

Speaking of on-the-go, many workers today live on their mobile devices, and mobile-optimized P2P learning enables them to learn when, where, and how they want.

## **10. P2P learning enables microlearning**

Microlearning lessons are smaller than traditional full-length courses and more easily fit into employees' busy schedules. These smaller snippets of information may be quickly studied and retained, saving time and money. P2P learning systems are the perfect vehicle for microlearning content creation and delivery.

## **11. P2P learning improves productivity**

Organizations are constantly pressured to be more efficient and productive. P2P learning meets this need through the easy sharing and updating of employee knowledge for rapid training and retraining.

### **12. P2P learning helps ensure employees retain what they learn**

P2P learning, coupled with tests and assessments, helps ensure that team members truly learn what they need to know, helping them—and their teams—be more productive. It also enables managers to assess the knowledge of their teams and helps keep everyone up to speed.

### **13. P2P learning works well in a blended training environment**

P2P learning helps reinforce important information, so actual face-to-face classroom time is used more effectively and productively.

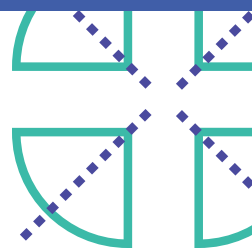
### **14. Modern elearning tools bring Web content into the flow**

P2P learning systems can easily embed content from around the web, providing richer, more up-to-date information within a linear learning flow.

### **15. P2P learning makes capturing knowledge and learning easy**

Much like WordPress, which has made blogging and content management systems (CMSs) easily accessible to people who otherwise aren't familiar with those tools, the best P2P course authoring tools are interactive and intuitive, enabling anyone in the organization to create new courses or clone and modify existing ones. And when employees can clone courses, they can take vetted content and customize it for their own needs.





# How Organizations Can Benefit from P2P Learning

P2P learning can benefit organizations in a number of strategic ways:

**Employee onboarding.** With intuitive, easy-to-use P2P learning tools, new employees can quickly learn what they need to know to get started in their jobs. This makes new employees more productive faster while reducing the time their managers or others spend training them.

**Field sales training.** With the rapid pace of change in products and services, it can be costly, time-consuming and inefficient to keep far-flung field sales forces up to date. P2P learning simplifies the field sales training process.

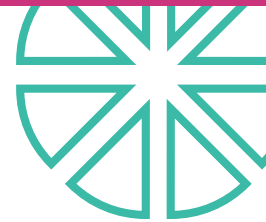
**Remote worker training.** Many organizations today have multiple locations and remote workers, some of whom work full-time from home. P2P learning helps keep employees who work outside the main office current, making them more productive and valuable to the organization.

**Customer service training.** Customer service employees are often key to turning a negative customer experience into a positive one. P2P learning easily delivers the ongoing training customer service representatives need to excel in their jobs.

**Customer support training and documentation.** P2P course authoring tools make it easy for organizations to train customers on the use of their products and services, which in turn reduces calls to a phone support center and makes for a more satisfying customer experience.

**Product tutorials for prospects.** Better informed prospects are more easily converted to customers, and P2P learning tools make it easy for organizations to educate prospective customers about the value and usefulness of their products and services.

**Content marketing.** Today, organizations develop content designed to offer useful information to prospects and customers in hopes of driving revenues, and this content marketing has become a strategic business tool. Offering interactive, engaging, online educational content via P2P tools helps give prospective customers a positive, lasting brand image.



# Strategies for Using P2P Learning

How can organizations transition to P2P learning?

**Rethink your existing training methods.** Intuitive P2P course authoring tools promote a DIY approach to knowledge sharing within the organization. Consider how the DIY approach will change (or should change) the kind of employee learning and courses your organization offers.

**Get creative – and encourage creativity.** There are many different ways to share information today, and some types of information may be more effectively shared in video than in text, or vice versa. Because the best P2P learning system tools are easy to use, your focus is on creating the content, not learning to use the tools.

**Be mobile-friendly.** Use P2P learning tools to develop content that can be accessed and viewed easily on smartphones and tablets as well as Windows PCs and Macs.

**Go with open platforms.** Look for a P2P learning solution built upon an open API platform, which will help organizations easily build interactive, customizable online courses with the greatest level of flexibility.

**Be prepared for what's next.** P2P learning platforms will soon incorporate machine learning to help predict the outcome of tests and training, helping employees identify their strengths and weaknesses so they know where to focus.

# Create a Culture of Collaboration

## A strategic transformation

For many years, an organization's training department has been focused primarily on creating and disseminating educational content for the workforce. But with today's best P2P learning tools, the training department can take on an even more important, strategic role: transforming a business into a 'learning organization' with a culture of knowledge sharing that is more collaborative, productive, agile—and successful.



## About Versal

Versal is an elearning platform for the collaboration generation. It's a course creator, a delivery system, and a knowledge sharing engine wrapped in a simple-yet-powerful SaaS package for companies of all sizes.

With Versal, training and HR leaders can transform the way information flows between teams. The course authoring canvas is robust and interactive - perfect for internal training teams to create professional elearning experiences. Yet it's also easy enough to grant access to internal experts for help, or invite everyone across the company to create learning content under your leadership.

Versal's flexible delivery options mean your content isn't locked away in a proprietary system, but can be easily embedded or accessed virtually anywhere. Mobile ready? Check. LMS integration? Yes! Website/blog/intranet embedded? For sure.

We believe the future of training will be a blended approach with professionally developed courses from training leadership teams, and a Peer-to-Peer model strategically designed and facilitated by the same training team. It's the best of both worlds.

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