



Effective Microlearning: How to Breakdown Training Material for Better Knowledge Retention

TLDR

As attention spans decrease globally, microlearning has emerged as the modern solution to workplace training. This eBook shows you how to break down content into micro blocks and deliver it through innovative means such as mobile games – giving learners the tools to remain engaged and retain more knowledge than traditional training methods.

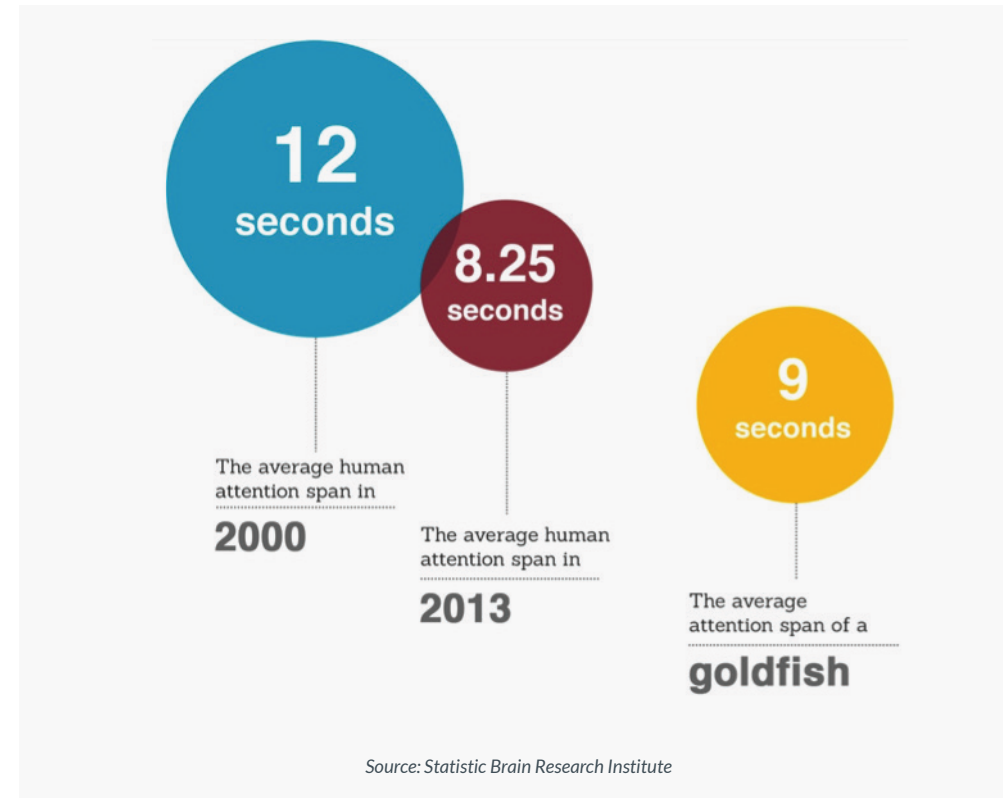
1. What is Microlearning?	Page 4
2. Does Microlearning Replace Traditional Learning?	Page 4
3. Microlearning from a Practical Perspective	Page 5
3.1 When to implement microlearning	
3.2 Examples of microlearning activities	
4. The Most Common Benefits of Microlearning	Page 6
4.1 Content is focused on the learner	
4.2 Microlearning saves time and money	
4.3 Microlearning is modern and utilizes all media types	
4.4 On demand and flexible learning	
4.5 Microlearning can be incentivized	
5. Key Questions to Ask Before Exploring Microlearning	Page 8
5.1 What kind of content do you want to teach?	
5.2 What communication method(s) do you want to utilize?	
5.3 Do you have resources to track microlearning progress?	
5.4 Who are your learners and do they share similar traits?	
5.5 What goals are trying to be met through microlearning?	
6. How to Make Training Material for Microlearning Content	Page 9
6.1 Step 1: Clarify what your main objectives are	
6.2 Step 2: Choose which kind of media you will use	
6.3 Step 3: Organize your content with microlearning in mind .	
6.4 Step 4: Deploy your content	
6.5 Step 5: Track results and adjust	
7. Microlearning Disadvantages and Solutions	Page 11
7.1 Complex information	
7.2 Fragmentation of content	
7.3 Long-term focus	
7.4 Production standards	
7.5 Technical setbacks	

How to Create Training Material for Effective Microlearning

It is estimated that as a result of rapidly changing technology, a digital skills gap is costing the US economy over **\$1.3 trillion in annual lost productivity**. Outdated training methods and content have caused workers to be a step behind of the competition. Currently, only **50% of all organizations** use apps to train their workforce. This means 50% of remaining companies have not yet begun the process of digital transformation in their training.

The second factor of importance is the diminishing average adult attention span that has dropped **33% from 12 seconds in 2000 to just 8 seconds in 2017**. The average person checks their phone **over 200 times per day** and is bombarded with content and distraction, even in the workplace.

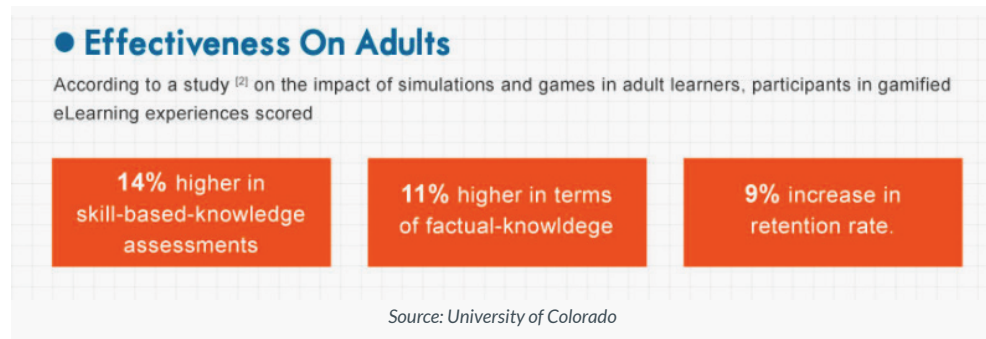
This phenomenon has created the need for innovative solutions to jumpstart professional training, knowledge retention, and learner motivation. Gamified applications have emerged as great ways to capture the attention of learners and deliver measured results. Within gamification, content is often broken down to support a platform's gameplay, in a process known as microlearning.



1. What is Microlearning?

Microlearning is a style of learning, training, and education that focuses on breaking down content into smaller sections of information. Focused on small units and shorter activities, microlearning is an effective technique that is compatible with shorter attention spans through the use of rich media formats.

Coincidentally, microlearning involves a heavy technological component and is often used in mobile training, eLearning, and other gamified applications. Rather than look at this as a negative aspect, technology can work in a learners benefit when used correctly.



At the core of microlearning is micro-content, which is short form content that highlights the most important pieces of information and displays them over a certain media format. Training content, news, social media, and games can all take advantage of micro-content to promote micro-learning. The goal is to keep the content succinct and organized.

2. Does Microlearning Replace Traditional Learning?

Microlearning is not meant as a complete replacement of traditional learning methods. What microlearning does do, is promote learning that is more in line with the world we currently live in. Here are a few statistics from a recent [Deloitte study](#) that give more insight into modern learners.

1. Modern learners have only 1% of the workweek to dedicate to personal learning and professional development (24 minutes weekly)
2. Workers get interrupted on average every five minutes, making it difficult to focus on longer assignments or tasks
3. Modern workers access the internet on average of 27 times per day
4. People on average unlock their smartphones 9 times every hour
5. People will only devote between 5-10 seconds at an attempt to grab their attention

In summary, modern workers are now distracted, impatient, and over-stimulated. The concerning aspect of these statistics is that they do not reflect the challenge of accomplishing non-critical work tasks in the office place. For example, a training session that is voluntary will be competing with heavy distraction from every angle. The commodity in this case is both time and attention – two factors that microlearning directly addresses.

3. Microlearning from a Practical Perspective

Microlearning as a form of knowledge acquisition and retention should be applied and adjusted depending on the topic. Complex skills and trades such as mastering a musical instrument would not be applicable with microlearning as a whole. In this example, microlearning could be applied to help a musician learn notes, details about instruments or songs, and act as a reinforcement to the thousands of hours of practice that would need to be applied.

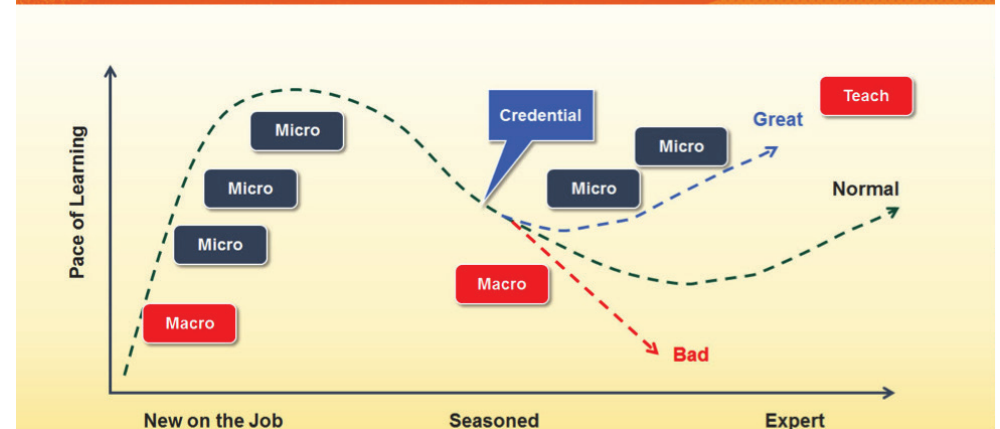
With this rationale, microlearning can be applied to just about any industry and topic, as long as the content can be organized and blocked to meet the principles of microlearning.

3.1 When to Implement Microlearning

Before discussing the creation and application of microlearning, it is important to understand when microlearning should be implemented. According to a [study by Deloitte](#), microlearning is perfect for new employees looking to ramp up their familiarity with a company or new job. Additionally, it is great for seasoned employees looking to continue a pace of learning that is more aggressive than macrolearning initiatives.

Experts can also utilize microlearning while preparing to teach content, symbolizing mastery of the subject matter at hand. This process leads up to a macro-level understanding but is reinforced with microlearning along the way. In summary, you can apply microlearning to both new and experienced employees, at different times in their career trajectory.

Where Does Macro and Micro Learning Apply?



3.2 Examples of Microlearning Activities

The medium through which microlearning is activated is diverse and can be applied visually, orally, and even physically. Books, videos, sound bites, games, puzzles, and mobile applications can all be used to promote microlearning. Here are a few of the most common ways learners use rich microlearning media:

1. Learning through gamification and micro-game activities such as trivia and mobile apps
2. Memorization practice utilizing spaced learning techniques such as flashcards
3. The process of actively answering questions such as quizzes or trivia
4. Organizing content by category, timing, or any factor that involves active organization
5. Consuming any micro-content such as texts, short-form blogs, and short videos

4. The Most Common Benefits of Microlearning

The benefits of microlearning are diverse and can vary by learner, organization, and the method in which content is transferred. Besides learning results, microlearning can impact organizations by creating greater efficiencies and as a result more savings. This chart shares an overview of traditional learning versus microlearning.

	TRADITIONAL	MICROLEARNING
 CONTENT	Costly, structured, trainer-driven	Cost-effective, flexible, learner-driven
	Boring, text-based	Games, audio/visual , graphics 
	All content is same priority	"Must Learn" and "Learn on Need"
	Single-use	Reusable, Shareable 
 DELIVERY	Segments = 60-90 minutes	Segments = 1-3 minutes
	Long slides, lectures	Small, short lessons 
	Paper-based, PDF, HTML	Mobile, web, shared content 
	Yearly, quarterly, never-ends	Minimal infrastructure /upkeep
	Group learns at same pace	Self-paced, self-directed , individual choice/path
	At one time	When you need it 
	Prior to work, or interrupting work	During work, in the moment , or on own time

Source: Grovo

In summary, these are the most-common selling points that make microlearning more impactful for organizations:

4.1 Content is focused on the learner

Microlearning content is designed and delivered in a way that puts the emphasis on the learner rather than the delivery method or person. In traditional training, the focus is typically on an instructor who is delivering information to a group of learners that do not have the chance to pause, accelerate, or adjust the learning according to their own speed.

In fact, 80% of learners say they would be more productive learning with a game and 47% prefer learning at their own pace. Microlearning integrated into mobile technology does just this by putting learners in the driver seat.

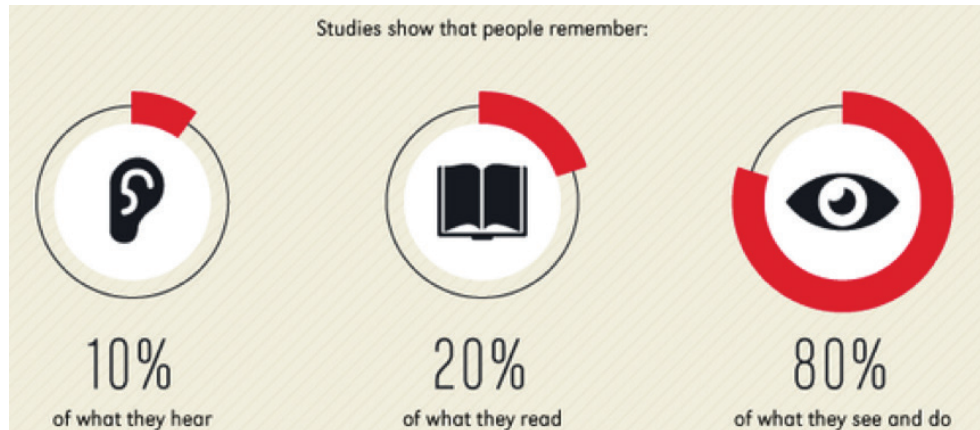
4.2 Microlearning saves time and money

This may seem counterintuitive as smaller bits of information would require longer to fulfill a whole lesson or block of information. The time and cost savings from microlearning span over a long-term range. Famous German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus found that after two days, only 25% of information is retained. Other studies have proven similar results with estimates that 70% of memory is lost within the first 24 hours.

It is estimated the microlearning makes the transfer of learning 17% more efficient and creates 50% more engagement in the process. If you manage to incorporate microlearning into a gamified application, learning programs will take on average 50% less time to complete. By fighting the forgetting curve and helping learners retain information, training and knowledge transfer become cheaper over time. This is the advantage of utilizing technology for learning.

4.3 Microlearning is modern and utilizes all media types

As previously mentioned, microlearning can be utilized with many different information transfer mediums. This adaptability can be used to target different learners based on learning preferences.



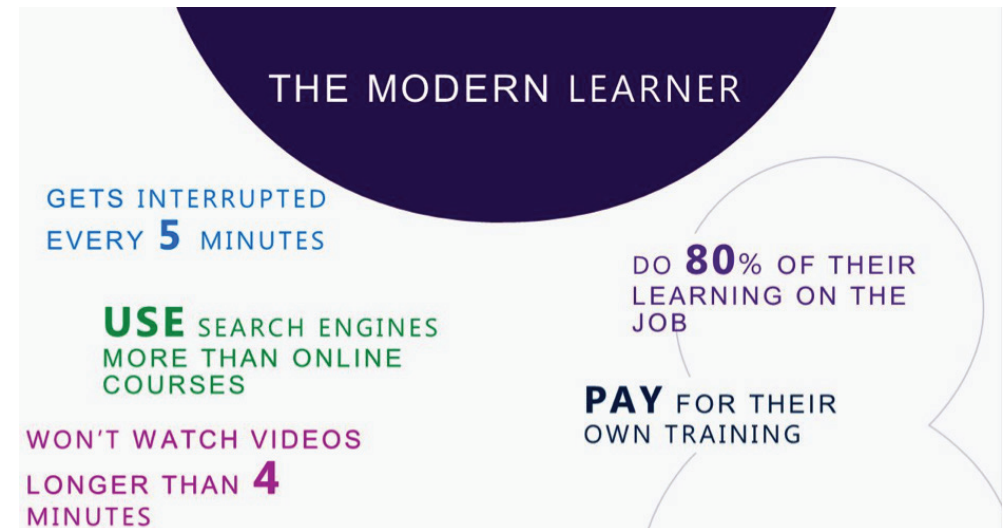
Source: Neil Patel

For example, it is estimated that 65% of people are visual learners, while the remainder are auditory and kinesthetic learners. Additionally, 80% of learners surveyed say they would be more productive learning through a game. Dartmouth University found that the action of practice, repetition, and application over time has been proven to increase retention. Games do exactly this by tracking and revisiting questions that learners struggle to remember.

Depending on a learner's style, microlearning elements can use a desired method, break it down, categorize it, and deliver it in a way that drives real engagement and interest.

4.4 On demand and flexible learning

This benefit overlaps with the benefit of being able to utilize various rich media types. With gamified microlearning applications, training can be completed in bite-sized segments in the convenience of a learner's home or desired study location. As seen in the chart below, flexibility is key as 80% of workers do their learning on the job and won't watch videos longer than 4 minutes.

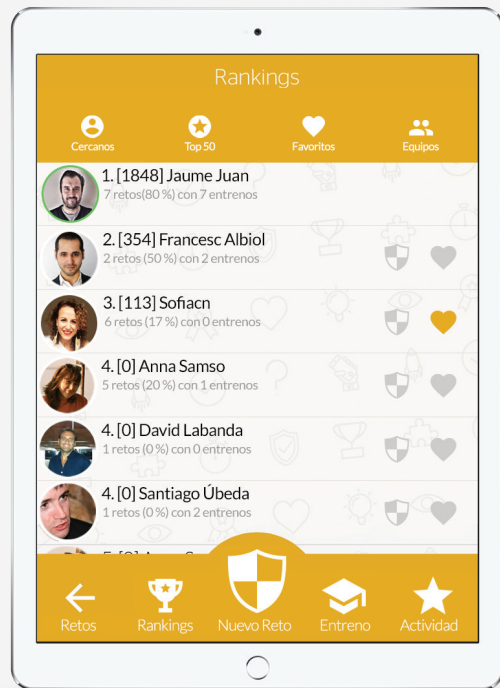


Source: Bersin by Deloitte

Mobile applications offer additional flexibility by being able to be accessed and saved at any time, with the benefit of tracking status and results. If a learner feels more comfortable learning at home or wants to complete exercises while commuting, they can with mobile apps.

4.5 Microlearning can be incentivized

Gamification applications and microlearning go hand in hand. With gamification, incentivized learning powers user motivation and engagement by offering tokens, badges, and other incentives through the advancement of an activity – something that a majority of learners would be more motivated by.



Atrivity rankings

Over **60% of learners** said they would be motivated if they had scores/points associated with leader boards/dashboards and if they could share it while competing with other people. Microlearning can be competitive, casual, or include a team element to drive motivation. A simple way to test employee preference is through a survey to see what would work best.

5. Key Questions to Ask Before Exploring Microlearning

For more traditional organizations, technology can be utilized to drive microlearning. This process of digital transformation can take time but is highly efficient over time. To better understand what approach to take, a few key questions should be explored:

- 5.1 What kind of content do you want to teach?
- 5.2 What communication method(s) do you want to utilize?
- 5.3 Do you have resources to track microlearning progress?
- 5.4 Who are your learners and do they share similar traits?
- 5.5 What goals are trying to be met through microlearning?

After answering these questions, companies should establish if they have the resources in place to develop tools and content. If not, they should explore third-party solutions that can provide complete applications and customizable outlines to use as a foundation.

6. How to Make Training Material for Microlearning Content

Content for microlearning is much more efficient than classroom training. It is estimated that one hour of classroom training takes approximately **43 to 185 hours to create**. Microlearning can cut development costs by **up to 50%**, while increasing the speed of development by 300%.

The reason for this is a mix of the content itself, as well as the delivery and speed at which it can be produced and integrated into a learning platform. Gamified applications, for example, thrive on mass customization and can be quickly modified and implemented through a central dashboard. This “plug and play” approach is also more scalable for larger companies. In order to create a microlearning content plan, start with the following steps:

6.1 Step 1: Clarify what your main objectives are

With Atrivity, the Compettia gamification app, we start with the primary business or learning objective. Objectives in this case refer to learning objectives and end goals. These goals can vary from company to company. Below are common objectives used with microlearning:

1. New employee onboarding
2. Sales enablement training
3. New product training
4. Compliance and regulatory training
5. Surveys and feedback
6. Customer service training
7. IT and new feature training
8. Company policy and HR initiatives
9. Refresher training for existing employees



Source: Customer Success at Compettia

The use cases for microlearning are extensive, but identifying a category is the first step in creating clear objectives. The next step is to break down exact goals. Try to quantify a timeframe, participation level, and basic KPIs that can track employee progress.

6.2 Step 2: Choose which kind of media you will use

This step is company dependent but the content strategy around micro learning will vary based on the kind of media you use to teach material. Videos will have different length and structures than games. Written content will require different preparation and resourcing than audio files.

Most of these different delivery styles will be mobile compatible and or able to be crafted into a gamified application. For the sake of simplicity, convenience, and flexibility, it is highly advised to create at least one mobile microlearning component. Web applications and platforms can be highly beneficial as well, although mobility is not as robust when limited to web learning.

6.3 Step 3: Organize your content with microlearning in mind

Once you have your goals and media type selected, you should start breaking down content into micro-modules, which are essentially the same as regular learning modules, just shortened to accommodate microlearning objectives. Content can be broken down just like lesson plans and set on a foundation of KPIs. For example:

1. Video content can be broken down into chapters based on a certain duration
2. Written content can be capped at a certain amount of words
3. Games can have a set amount of questions that will be scored

The goal is to create a baseline standardization to measure results and create an equal playing field. Once again, it is highly recommended to utilize technology that will provide opportunities to customize content with more scalability.

6.4 Step 4: Deploy your content

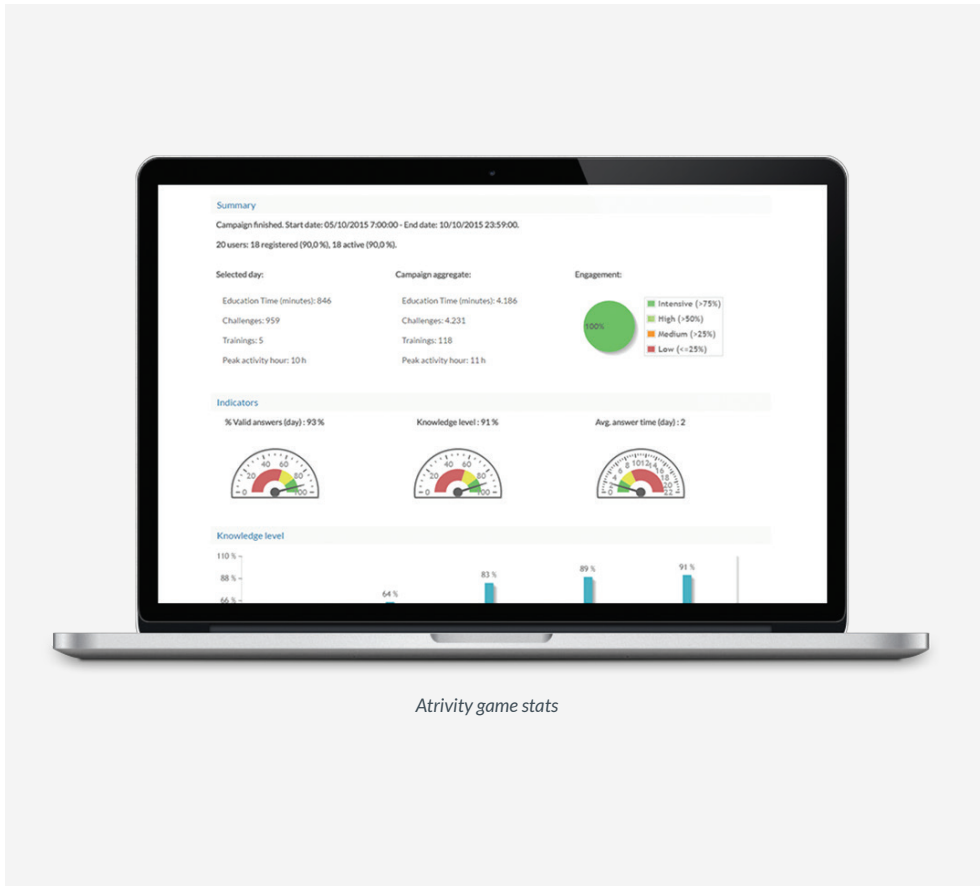
The deployment of content is essentially making it live for learners to adopt. If you want to take a conservative approach, you could run a few trial lessons with a sample set of students and collect feedback. When deploying content, it is best to utilize a learning management system (LMS) to stay organized and collect feedback. Mobile games and training apps will come with a LMS either built in or as a web product that can be utilized to stay organized.

After each module is completed, there should be a notification made to the learner. Even better, using incentives when possible will help increase engagement and motivation. Consistent communication and feedback are both critical in this stage.

6.5 Step 5: Track results and adjust

Microlearning training and content should be measurable, not just for personal development tracking, but also so an organization can get an idea of the ROI of the program. This stage should also include qualitative feedback from learners. Surveys, questionnaires, or integrated feedback loops within games are all great ways to collect feedback.

Adjustments in content will be easier to do with mobile games than videos that have already been produced, so it is important to carefully prepare ahead of time.
more scalability.



Ativity game stats

7. Microlearning Disadvantages and Solutions

7.1 Complex information

Complex information can be broken down and absorbed as micro-content, but typically complex tasks and quick learning are not favorable when mixed. Heavy learning curves that require tangible and or physical practice would not be best taught fully with microlearning.

Solution: Use microlearning as a supplement to teach specific blocks or lessons of complex and extensive topics. There is always an indirect application that can be made and should be utilized. Modern learners should take full advantage of a dynamic set of resources to ensure success.

7.2 Fragmentation of content

Microlearning content blocks can be fragmented if combined with other training. Content blocks should act as standalone learning lessons that are not interfered by external training. The goal is to keep the learner's attention and focus in one place through the completion of a module. Microlearning blocks should be whole and only shift topics after a previous topic is considered mastered. It is not advised to mix external training with microlearning blocks.

Solution: Use microlearning to teach a topic from start to finish before moving to other sources. By doing so, you keep the learner's attention and build knowledge through repetition that is free from distraction.

7.3 Long-term focus

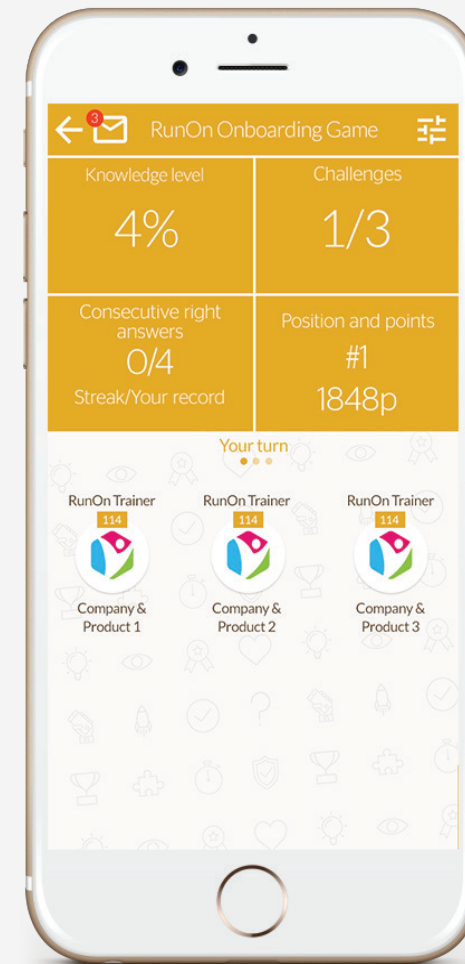
Microlearning critics argue that microlearning should not be at the core of long-term performance goals, but rather used to teach “moment of need” training sessions. In reality, this all depends on the topic, organization of content, and goals.

Solution: Start every lesson planning session with a clear vision and established goals to work after. After establishing this vision, if the content can be broken down and organized in a clear and concise manner, microlearning will emerge as an easy choice. For long-term learning, used spaced learning techniques incorporated into a gamified application to revisit and re-fresh knowledge on specific topics.

7.4 Production standards

Just because the content is shorter and easier to digest does not mean the content should also be rushed. Content should be held to rigorous production standards. Videos should be entertaining and of high-quality, writing should be clear, and games should drive engagement. The better the quality, the greater the chance of keeping learners interested and engaged.

Solution: If you lack production resources, consider using a third-party mobile application or outsource content development. Trivia games, such as Atrivity, offer complete customization with a set foundation in place. These games have been tested and produced by product specialists who understand what users enjoy. This is a simple solution for resource-strapped companies or companies without specific content production knowledge.



Atrivity onboarding game

7.5 Technical setbacks

As discussed in number four, some companies will lack the technical capabilities to create and product mobile applications, games, videos, and other types of content. This should not be considered a complete barrier to entry for microlearning. The first step is to create your vision and goals and then see what needs to be done to meet both.

Solution: Outsource or adapt and integrate a third-party application and content. These applications are made for companies of all sizes and offer flexible pricing models that correlate with the amount of users that will be using the application. Most if not all companies should be able to find a package that meets their needs and budget.

8. Conclusion

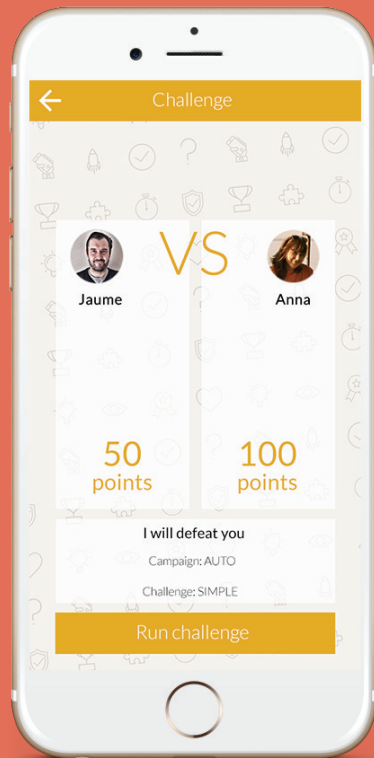
If you are an organization looking to revamp training, increase knowledge retention, and initiate digital transformation, microlearning techniques could help with all three. Using engaging media, such as mobile games and video content, microlearning utilizes smaller blocks of information that are more aligned with learner preferences and fleeting attention spans.

To get started, set clear goals, and decide if you want to produce content and eLearning methods or outsource the entire process. The upfront time and resources to build the right content pays off in increased capabilities, productivity, and employee engagement. Thanks to mobile technology, gamification applications can promote microlearning in an affordable and convenient outlet that is measurable and proven to increase learning and retention rates.

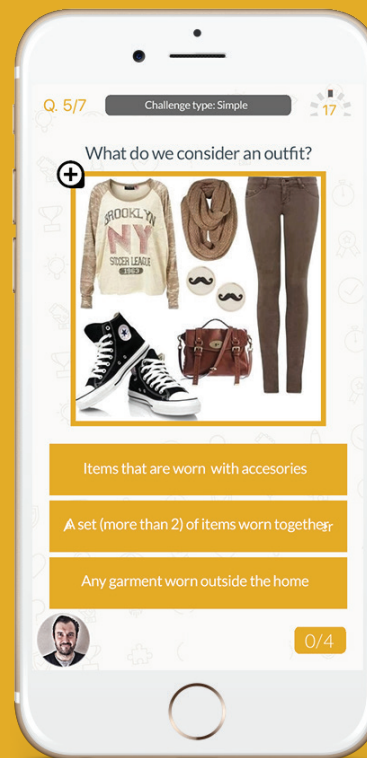
Start gamifying and using micro content for training with Atrivity.

[Register for a free trial now](#)

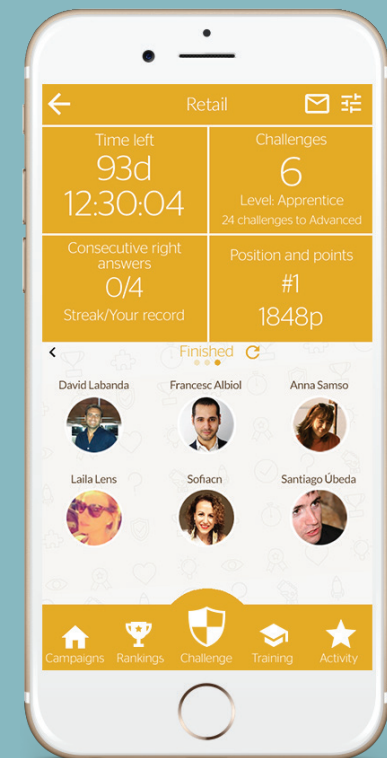
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Atrivity's 28 Uses

Sales Acceleration & Enablement

- Conventions, meetings, & events
- Sales technique training
- Product training
- Brand storytelling
- Cross-selling
- Customer knowledge
- Channel training
- Field team training
- Company policies

Marketing

- Product launches
- Promotions & campaigns
- Visual merchandising
- Studies & market trends

Customer Engagement

- Contests
- Games
- Brand engagement & social media

HR

- Onboarding
- Employer branding & culture
- Continuing training
- Compliance
- Who's who
- Knowledge assessments
- Policy awareness

Other

- Internal news
- Company communications
- Safety and regulation
- New processes
- Software training

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