

E-book by InfoCaption

How to get started with digital learning



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Why haven't we learned from Google	4
Does education have to be so formal?	5
Need-based learning is the solution.....	7
The five learning needs.....	9
Four tips for good Performance Support.....	10
What should I think about?	12
Availability.....	12
Anchoring	13
Simplicity	13
Independence	14
Change	14
Summary.....	15

Introduction

Are you curious about how your organisation can work with digital learning and what you need to get started?

In this e-book, we discuss how education is carried out in most organisations and why it is time to think differently. We also explain our view on effective digital learning and give you our best tips on how you can make the workday more efficient.

To find out how we can cover the organisations educational needs, we should first define the needs, both for the employees and the organisation. Simply put, as an employee you must be competent enough to carry out your responsibilities in the most efficient way possible. The organisation wishes for employees to complete their tasks as efficiently as possible and, perhaps more importantly, correctly. Beyond this, there are many others needs, such as employees being able to further develop their skills and share their knowledge within the organisation.



Effective digital learning according to us: Performance support

"A tool or other resource, from print to technology-based, that provides just the right amount of task guidance, support, and productivity benefits to the user - precisely at the moment of need."

Dr. Marc Rosenberg



The search engine generation

How do we solve our learning needs outside of work? We humans are lazy and always look for the fastest way to move forward. This is what leads to inventions, innovations and subsequent paradigm shifts in how we live our lives. Easy access to the internet and its endless amounts of information have changed how we relate to knowledge.

We search for knowledge on Google, YouTube, ChatGPT, or similar AI tools. Whether we are looking for a recipe or instructions on how to change a car tyre, the information is just a click away. We no longer need to store knowledge in our memory in the way we used to; instead, we access it when we need it.

When we use so many ways to gain information outside of work, why do we not do the same at work? [Why do most organisations still have a strong focus on courses as the primary way of educating employees?](#)

Well – most of what we do is organisation-specific, such as processes, routines and systems. Finding answers to questions on Google is less likely, and getting the wrong answer can, in some cases, have serious consequences.

Does education have to be so formal?

Generally, learning can be divided into two broad categories – formal and informal learning. As early as the 1980s, researchers illustrated this through the theoretical 70-20-10 model, which describes how formal learning accounts for only about 10% of total learning in an organisation. The remaining 90% consists of various forms of informal learning.

Nevertheless, formal learning is still the focus of most organisations, either in classroom teaching or as e-learning. Informal learning is more difficult to identify and can therefore be more difficult to support. However, Performance Support is an excellent tool for informal learning.



Formal learning...

...is systematic education. It is not you who decides what to learn. For example, it could be:

- Classroom Teaching
- E-learning courses
- NanoLearning

Informal learning...

... is education where the need for knowledge determines what you should learn. This is how we learn in everyday life. Examples may include:

- Google searches
- Questions to Superusers
- Performance Support



- 70% we learn through doing
- 20% we learn through others
- 10% we learn through courses

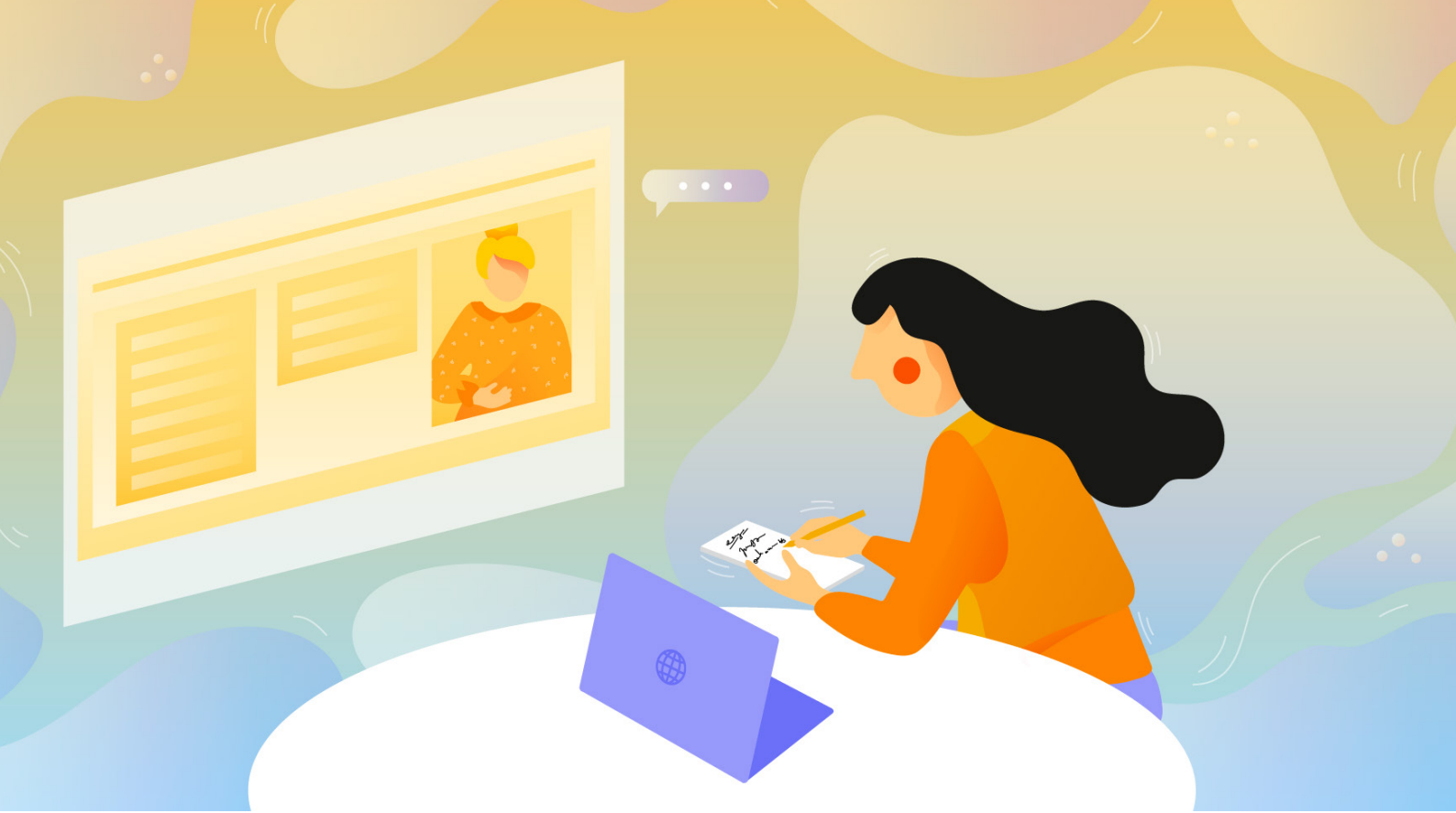
The 70-20-10 model describes how we build our skills and knowledge.
Källa: Morgan McCall and the Centre for Creative Leadership

Educators Bob Moshier and Conrad Gottfredson have examined learning needs in organisations. They concluded that there are five situations when we have a need to learn – “Five Moments of Learning Need”. These five situations are called new, more, apply, solve and change. The first two situations, new and more, are linked to what organisations often focus on – when we learn something new or learn more about something.

However, new and more are only two of the five learning needs described. As in the 70-20-10 model, Moshier and Gottfredson’s model also states that [the learning situations that affect our working days most occur in the informal part of learning.](#)

Applying, solving and changing are examples of situations that directly impact how an employee performs his or her duties.

Of course, organisations should continue to spend time and resources on education and knowledge enhancement, but the effort must be made where it has the greatest effect. It is better to adapt the educational format to the situation. It is not enough to facilitate formal learning if you want to support the overall learning needs of an organisation.



Need-based learning is the solution

We have already gone through two models. The 70-20-10 model has been instrumental in shaping how researchers view learning for decades. The model tells us that the greatest need for learning occurs during the actual execution of the work. This is the moment used in “Five Moments of Learning Need”. We will return to that later.

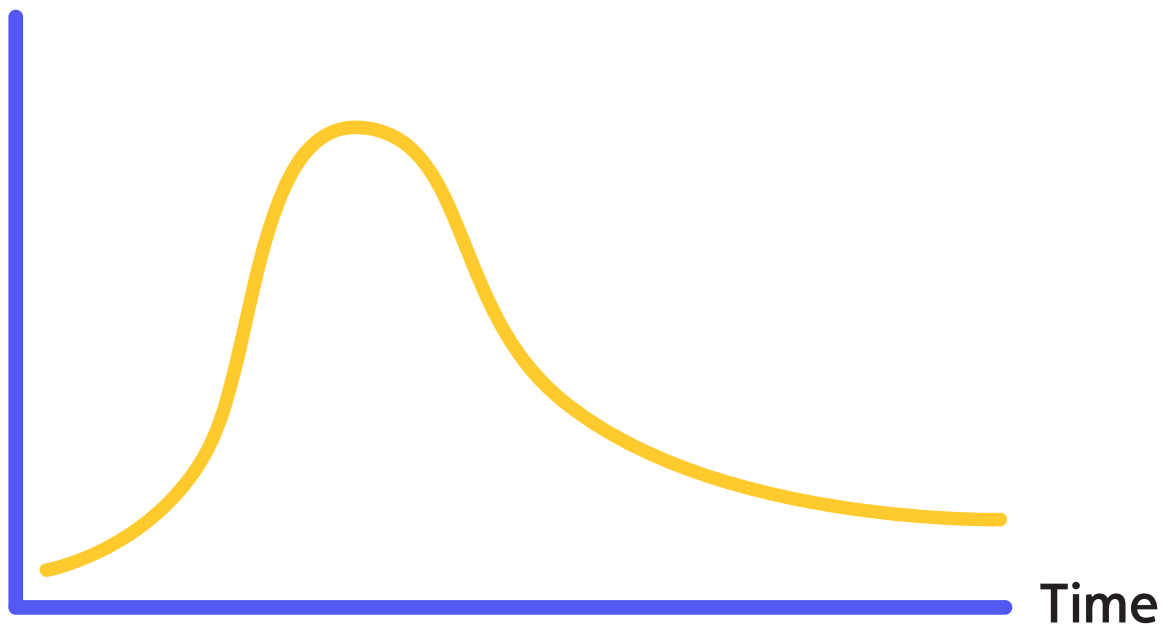
A few years ago, a study conducted by IDC (International Data Corporation) showed that many organisations fail in “apply situations”. The study showed that employees spent [36% of their working hours looking for information](#) related to their work. However, on half of those occasions, they did not find what they were looking for.

You may have heard of the forgetting curve – a scientific model that explains how people forget things over time. German scientist Hermann Ebbinghaus originally developed it in the 1880s. The forgetting curve is still relevant today.

The human brain has not undergone any noticeable changes since then. But what does the model mean? It explains that formal learning needs to be supplemented so that knowledge does not disappear. If we do not quickly apply or repeat what we have learned, within a few days we have forgotten most of it, and after a few months, even more.

There are many theories on how best to “hack” the consequences of the forgetting curve with marginally better results. But would it not be a better solution not to relate to the curve from the beginning?

Knowledge



Ebbinghaus forgetting curve ® – Here you see how the knowledge (which you can directly think of as competence) goes down quickly over time.

By providing educational support in the form of Performance Support, you do not have to relate to the forgetting curve in the same way, because the focus is on knowledge being available when you need it, rather than on the educational format itself.

On each occasion, it should be assessed whether Performance Support covers the support needed on its own, or whether it should complement other educational forms. A good Performance Support system should have a built-in function for testing and monitoring users where there is a need to document implementation.

Does that mean it is unnecessary to learn? No – but we should look at new methods of maintaining knowledge and not continue along the same old tracks. If we elaborate on the forgetting curve above, would it not be better to make it level out? There are several approaches to how this can be done.

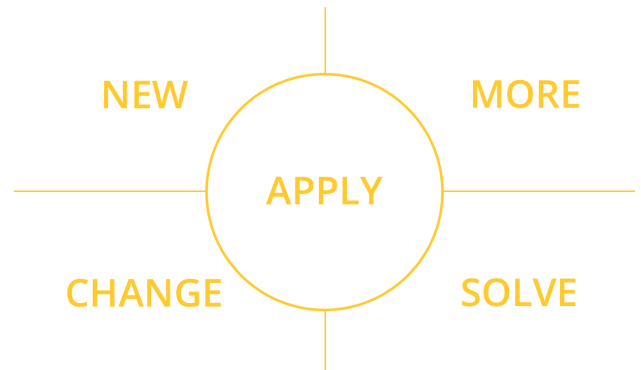
[The goal is to maintain interest and knowledge.](#)

By offering Performance Support, we gain access to knowledge in different situations. This places higher demands on availability, and employees know where to look for knowledge. There is a significant difference between the actual knowledge and learning objects in Performance Support compared to the regular course format. While most courses focus on the content and its structure, Performance Support focuses on learning being linked to the context. It is closer to the solution of the task or problem you are facing.

To establish a strategy for both formal and informal learning, one needs to understand how people learn most effectively and what paths employees take to move forward with tasks. Is it a combination of informal and formal learning? Is a half-day instructor-led course enough to learn the basics instead of the two days previously set aside, with the remainder of the training available as support material? Are there specific situations where people need an instructor-led course?

The five learning needs

Let us take a closer look at the five needs Mosher and Gottfredson defined in their model. Not all needs are equally important; however, the more support you manage to provide for each of them, the easier it becomes.



"Five moments of learning need" Are the five learning situations where we experience a need for learning."

New – This is the part of formal learning that has received the greatest attention, often in the form of instructor-led courses. This is a fairly common format for newly recruited employees and further training.

More – This is also a focus area for formal learning, when we need to learn more about something we already know a little about. It may be continuation courses that expand existing knowledge in specific subjects. As mentioned earlier, most organisations focus almost all their energy on these first two.

However, informal learning is more about:

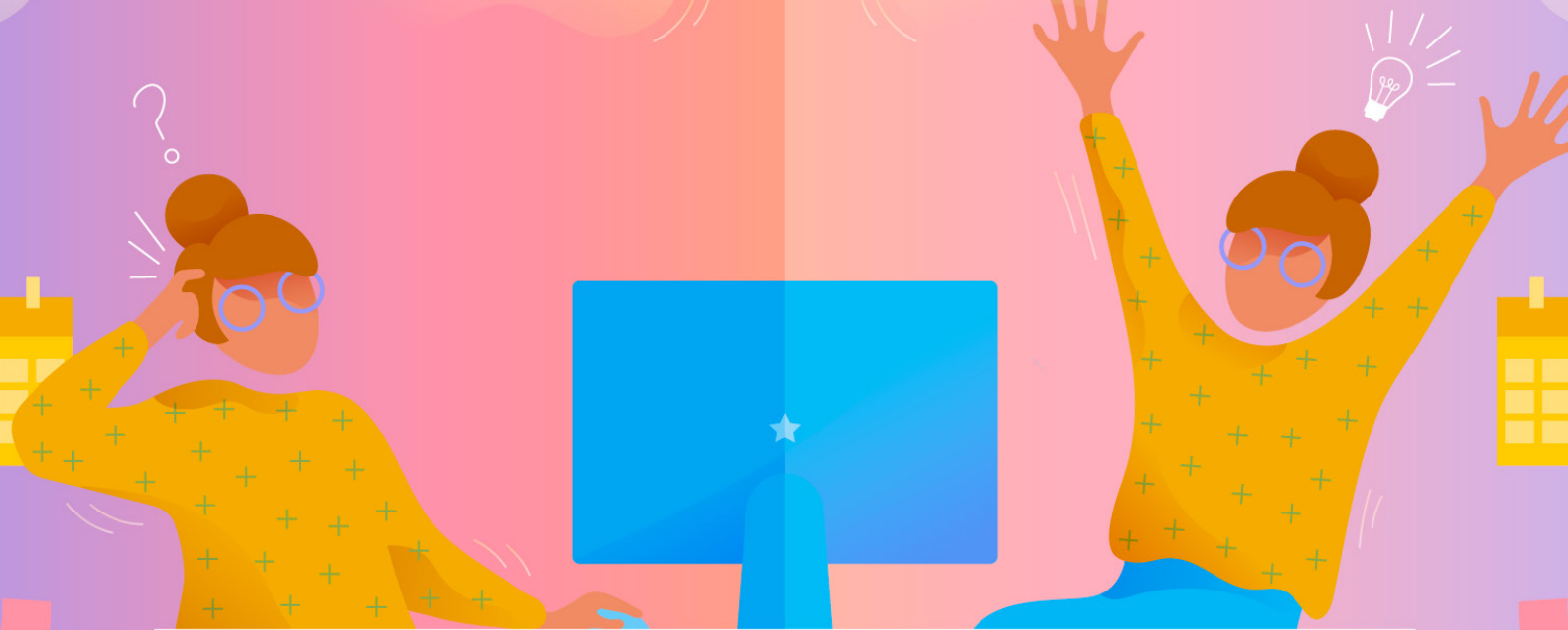
Change – When changes mean that we have to learn something new, such as when tasks change or organisational changes occur.

Solve – These are typical support situations. When a problem arises in a system or when we get stuck in a task, external errors may cause the problem, but it may also be due to a lack of knowledge on the part of the employee.

Apply – This is the most central situation in Performance Support. How often have you experienced that the course you attended was too general and not adapted to your work or organisation? Perhaps some time has passed since you attended the course and the forgetting curve has taken effect. Perhaps the assignment you are about to solve differs from what you learned during the course. The best solution would be to refresh your memory or gain a more specific understanding of how to solve the problem.

We can place the five situations into both the learning curve and the forgetting curve and see how some are used for education, while others ensure that knowledge is retained.

We see that New and More are about training for something or acquiring competence. The other situations are about supporting our fading memory: Solve, Change and Apply. These situations traditionally receive less focus. Yet they are the ones that contribute to and maintain knowledge, skills and quality of work at the desired level within the organisation.



Four tips for good Performance support

1

Use as few clicks as possible

The shorter the path to help – the greater the likelihood that it will be used. It is important not to make the path too long or too complicated. Make help available in all places where it is natural to look for it.

2

Use various tools

Some ways of presenting content are better suited than others for specific tasks. If you are explaining a work process, it may be easier to present it visually. If you want to show how something should be done in a system, it may be more appropriate to present it as a video with a screen recording.

3

Introduce the help during the course

Use informal tools actively during training. In this way, employees become familiar with the available support and gain confidence that they can access help when they return to work. It also reduces the fear of forgetting, allowing them to focus on understanding instead.

4

Allocate responsibility for the content

Many people hold knowledge and are in daily contact with users and key issues. Let those who have the knowledge describe and share it digitally. Do not allow content production to become a bottleneck where only a few employees are responsible for it.

But I already have a lot of documentation – is it possible to reuse it?

Of course! Many organisations have documentation or support documents stored on a server or intranet. The documentation is available but often difficult to find. It is also common to gather all support in a relatively long document that describes, for example, an entire system. This makes it harder to quickly find the specific part you are looking for. The only thing needed is to divide the documentation and make it accessible.

So how do I reuse it as Performance Support?

Accessibility is the most important factor. Help that no one can find is not particularly helpful. If the help is available on a search page or in a manual that describes the context, it provides much better support than help stored in a folder in an unrelated location. Read more under “Availability” below.

You should also evaluate the length of the documents. Help in Word or PDF format tends to be very long and is not always optimal for providing the best possible support. If there are natural opportunities to divide the material, do not hesitate to split it up. Shorter and more concise support elements are easier to find. If what you were searching for is the only result, you have found the right one. However, if you encounter a lengthy document that requires you to search within it, you will gradually lose confidence in the support.

Evaluate whether parts of the support should be presented in other formats – everything is not suitable as text. Sometimes video works best; at other times, it may be appropriate to present the content as a process or a step-by-step guide.

To summarise – use the best tool for each specific purpose.

PS: The largest part of the work is already done – the idea of what to do and a script describing how to do it. Transferring it to other formats is easy, as you do not have to start from scratch.

What should I think about?

Once you have established the framework for a good Performance Support system, it is important to continue developing it. Performance Support depends far more on living material than courses do. But what should you consider when you begin producing new content? We have created a list of important factors to consider when turning a Performance Support solution from good to excellent.

Availability

People are lazy by nature. Create proximity with as few clicks as possible to achieve satisfied employees. By consistently pointing out where help is available instead of explaining and solving the problem yourself, employees will learn how to find help when they need it.



Anchoring

In our experience, the most successful examples of Performance Support are those where the working method is firmly anchored in the organisation. If management recognises the importance of meeting learning needs and sets clear expectations, there is a greater opportunity for knowledgeable employees to dedicate time to content production.



Simplicity

Creating material for Performance Support should be simple. Those who create the content are usually not educators but professionals who document what they know employees need to perform their work. The advantage is that they know where problems may arise and can create contextual support explaining exactly what is required.

The content can also be simplified compared to how it might appear in a course format. When faced with a specific problem in a work situation, the motivation to access learning material is much higher than when the same material is presented in a course. Therefore, there is not the same need for professional production to make the content engaging and motivating.



Independence

Design the support so that it can function independently – without needing to place the knowledge in a broader context, as is often done in courses. This can be achieved by reusing parts of formal learning and making them available after the course. In this way, what was learned in the classroom or during training is easy to find again when questions arise at work.

A course places knowledge in context and often provides a fundamental understanding of how things relate to one another. In everyday work, however, it is not always about the whole picture – for example, when a user becomes stuck in a specific part of a system. By dividing knowledge into smaller parts and presenting them separately, the user can move forward more quickly and easily without needing to contact the helpdesk or support when problems arise.

Change

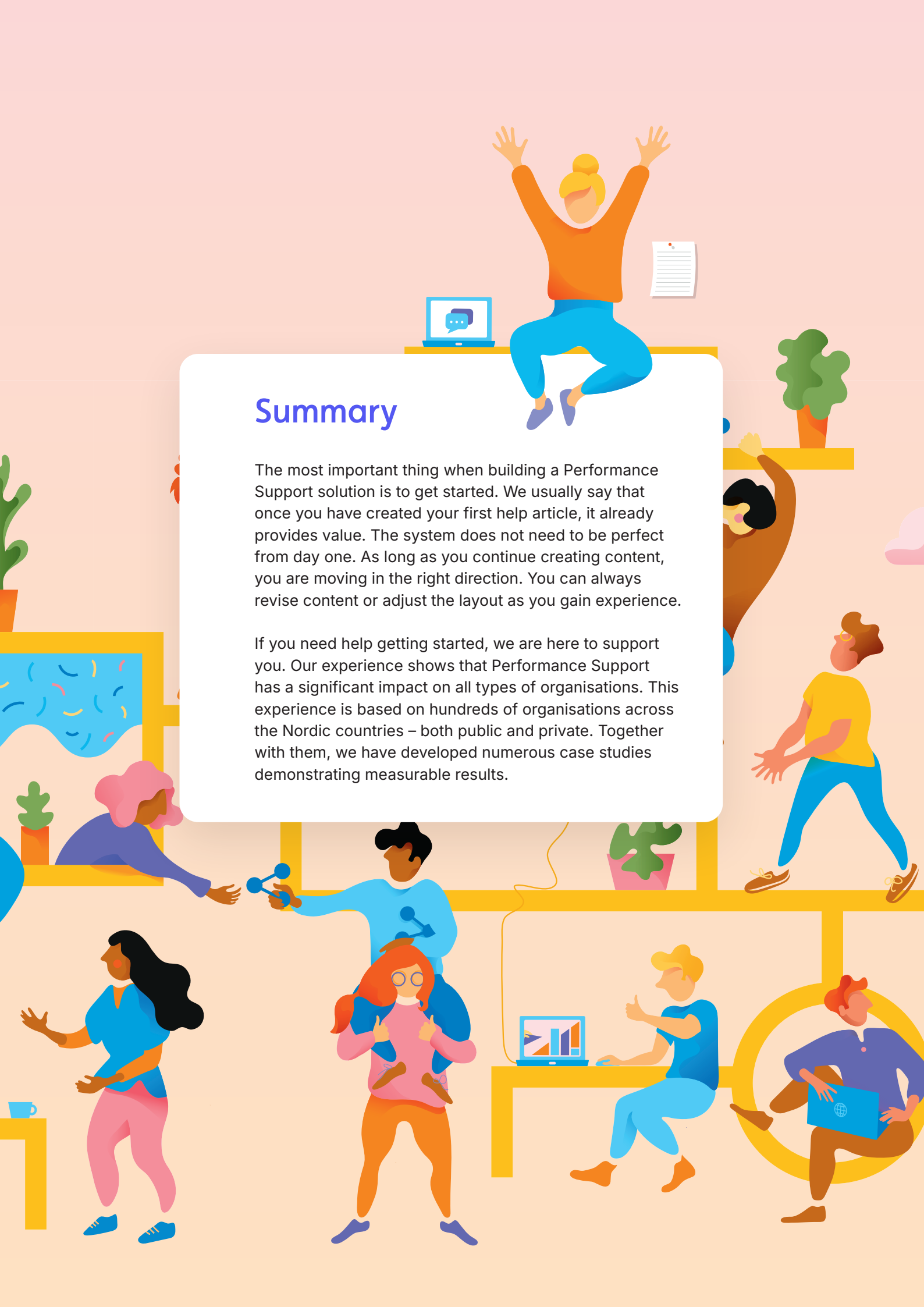
One of the most common objections to e-learning or Performance Support is the continuous work required. The tools used during the working day change and require constant attention to avoid becoming outdated.

But it is not impossible – and the benefits are significant.

First and foremost, be prepared for course content to change over time. Make information easy to update so that content remains relevant and high quality. Divide content into smaller parts so that when something changes, it is easier to update a small section instead of facing a large task that risks being postponed.

Our experience is that those with the knowledge – specialists or instructors – should be responsible for updating the information. If development and maintenance must be handled by an educational specialist who does not work regularly in the system, strong communication is required to achieve good results. Instead, when the person with the knowledge is also responsible for producing the content, satisfactory results are achieved more quickly and easily.

The most important thing: employees must be able to trust and use the information without having to question whether it is outdated.



Summary

The most important thing when building a Performance Support solution is to get started. We usually say that once you have created your first help article, it already provides value. The system does not need to be perfect from day one. As long as you continue creating content, you are moving in the right direction. You can always revise content or adjust the layout as you gain experience.

If you need help getting started, we are here to support you. Our experience shows that Performance Support has a significant impact on all types of organisations. This experience is based on hundreds of organisations across the Nordic countries – both public and private. Together with them, we have developed numerous case studies demonstrating measurable results.

We review your needs

InfoCaption is Scandinavia's leading solution for Performance Support. With InfoCaption, it is easy to create guides in different formats that can be shared with colleagues or customers.

We would be pleased to arrange a call to discuss your organisation and your knowledge and learning needs, and to explore how you can benefit from Performance Support.



Want to see how InfoCaption works?

Get a video demo by scanning or clicking the QR code.



info@infocaption.com · +(46) 08 27 15 45